

**CABINET****Tuesday, 19th September, 2023**

Present:-

Councillor P Gilby (Chair)

Councillors	Holmes	Councillors	J Innes
	Baldauf-Good		Staton
	Davies		Stone

\*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

**22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Serjeant and Sarvent.

**23 MINUTES****RESOLVED –**

That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 18 July 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**24 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' INTERESTS RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

No declarations of interest were received.

**25 FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan for the four-month period October, 2023 to January, 2024 was reported for information.

**\*RESOLVED –**

That the Forward Plan be noted.

## 26 **STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN UNIVERSITY OF DERBY AND CHESTERFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

The Executive Director presented a report setting out the background work and strategic conversations that had taken place to underpin the proposal for the University of Derby and Chesterfield Borough Council to sign a Strategic Partnership Agreement to strengthen the relationship between the two organisations.

The Strategic Partnership Agreement described the following joint strategic ambitions for Chesterfield;

- To establish Chesterfield as a University town delivering higher level skills and education for our people and employers
- To work jointly, with business partners, education providers and the public sector to deliver world leading research that drives innovation, provide world class facilities to meet the needs of our community and establish a platform to help our entrepreneurs reach their potential
- To use our combined assets, within community partnerships across Chesterfield, to help to raise people's aspirations through delivering effective core skills, careers information, support, and advice

To deliver the Strategic Partnership Agreement the Council would need to assign appropriate levels of officer resources to support the proposed governance arrangements and the joint 'working' team. The council had identified some external resources to lead and coordinate colleagues in the development of a long-term delivery plan. However, it was important that the arrangements for the delivery of collaborative projects became a business-as-usual activity for the council.

### **\*RESOLVED –**

1. That the work that has been carried out with the University of Derby and other key partners is set out in Appendix A, to establish a closer working relationship between the two organisations be noted.

2. That the signing of a Strategic Partnership Agreement between the University of Derby and Chesterfield Borough Council, as set out in Appendix B, which sets out an overarching commitment, a number of joint strategic ambitions and outcomes to embed a culture of working together to deliver change, be approved.
3. That the work underway by officers of both organisations to develop and implement a coherent and resourced delivery plan, in order to realise the outcomes set out in the Strategic Partnership Agreement, be endorsed.

## **REASON FOR DECISIONS**

The University of Derby and Chesterfield Borough Council are two anchor institutions within the borough, with existing complementary ambitions to improve outcomes for communities in Chesterfield. The strategic partnership agreement seeks to strengthen the working relationships between the two organisations, and to maximise the resources and assets of each organisation to deliver enhanced benefits to the borough.

## **27 REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES: ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

The Local Government and Regulatory Law Manager presented a report setting out the preparatory work that had been undertaken to enable an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to carry out a review of the Members' Allowances Scheme. The report invited Cabinet to consider and recommend issues to be raised with the IRP in accordance with the protocol on arrangements for consulting on the review.

A copy of the current Member's Allowance Scheme was attached at Appendix 1A of the Manager's report.

A report recommending approval of the membership of the IRP for 2023-2027 was considered by Standards and Audit Committee on 9 August 2023 and the recommendations accepted. The IRP had therefore been convened under the Terms of Reference attached at Appendix 2 of the Manager's report.

At a meeting of Full Council on 28 September 2011 members approved a written protocol for the IRP to consider member representations to the

Panel at times of future reviews of the Members' Allowances Scheme. This had been updated to reflect current member support arrangements and timescales. A copy of the revised protocol was attached at Appendix 3 of the Manager's report.

An initial first meeting of the IRP had been arranged for 16 October 2023 in advance of which members would be invited to submit written comments and indicate if they wished to make oral comments to the Panel. The protocol also provided that a report should be submitted to Cabinet in advance of the IRP meeting to enable any relevant issues to be raised.

Members discussed the report and requested that the council's Monitoring Officer raise a number of issues with the IRP including whether councillors should be able to join the local government pension scheme and the potential inclusion of telephony allowances for mobile phones.

**\*RESOLVED –**

1. That the arrangements for consulting members on the review of the Members' Allowances Scheme in line with the agreed Protocol be noted.
2. That the Council's Monitoring Officer be tasked with referring the issues raised by Cabinet members on the review of the Members' Allowances Scheme to the Independent Remuneration Panel.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS**

To ensure Chesterfield Borough Council has a fair and transparent Members Allowance Scheme.

**BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 1**

The Service Director – Finance presented a report to provide Cabinet with an assessment of the Council's forecast year-end outturn position for the General Fund Revenue Account and Capital Programme based on budget monitoring activity to the end of period 3 (June 2023).

The report was presented in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules to provide Council with regular updates on the Council's financial position. Effective budget monitoring and forecasting was critical to understanding emerging in-year budget pressures and ensuring that there were appropriate plans in place to manage and mitigate financial risks.

The estimated outturn position for the financial year 2023/24 was significantly affected by unprecedented and unpredicted inflationary pressures upon pay and contracts, service demand pressures arising from the current cost-of-living crisis and income levels not having returned to their pre-pandemic levels. At the end of Quarter 1 (period 3), there was a forecast adverse position of £774k on the Council's net revenue budget of £12m.

The table at paragraph 4.17 of the Director's report provided a summary of the key variances across all Service Areas.

The Council was committed to delivering services within its approved revenue budgets and the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) had been working collectively with budget managers to agree clear, robust and immediate management action plans to address the adverse year-end forecast.

In view of the current financial pressures, there would need to be a reduction in the Council's workforce. On 18 July 2023, Joint Cabinet and Employment and General Committee had approved a new voluntary redundancy and voluntary early retirement scheme, to be opened for applications from 27 July 2023 through 15 September 2023 which would support the Council in meeting its future savings targets from 2024 onwards.

In February 2023 Council approved a 2023/24 General Fund Capital Programme of £21.343m. However, this had now been updated to reflect slippage of £6.064m from the financial year 2022/23 into 2023/24. This was reported as part of the 2022/23 Budget Outturn report to Council in July 2023.

The updated Capital Programme was set out in appendix A of the Director's report.

**\*RESOLVED –**

1. That the forecast position of the General Fund Revenue Account at the close of period 3 for the financial year 2023/24 be noted.
2. To support the strategy for achieving a balanced budget outturn position for the financial year 2023/24.
3. That the General Fund Capital Programme expenditure forecast at the close of period 3, for the financial year 2023/24 be noted.

**REASONS FOR DECISIONS**

1. This periodic monitoring report summarises the current assessment of the Council's forecast outturn and sets out the active management mitigations to be progressed to balance the 2023/24 budget. It also provides a robust basis for medium term financial planning.
2. This is the first formal monitoring report for the 2023/24 financial year and comes at a time when the Council is experiencing financial pressures due to the current economic situation, cost and pay inflation and the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**29 CAR PARKING – REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES**

The Service Director – Leisure, Culture and Community Wellbeing presented a report requesting Cabinet approval to set new fees and charges for the Council's Car Parks for implementation from 1 November 2023.

In accordance with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, fees and charges should be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the costs of providing services are fully recovered. Car parking fees and charges had historically been reviewed on a two-yearly cycle.

The Council had commissioned a wide-ranging car parking study. The study would look at the current operational arrangements for the car parks, the long-term capacity requirements for car parking to support the

town centre, the potential to use any spare capacity for regeneration opportunities and any opportunities to support the climate change agenda. The study and recommendations would be presented to Cabinet in due course to inform future approaches in relation to all aspects of car parking management including the Council's approach to setting fees and charges from April 2024 onwards.

Budget monitoring activity of car parking income in the current financial year had confirmed a significant shortfall in the achieved income to date, which in turn had led to a significant forecast shortfall projection for income to the end of the financial year. It was therefore recommended that immediate action be taken to increase car parking charges at this time to seek to improve this position.

The proposed fees and charges were set out in Appendix 1 of the Director's report.

A review of other authorities' fees and charges had been undertaken and the results of the benchmarking exercise reported at Appendix 2 of the Director's report.

Councillor Holmes asked for his vote to be recorded against the Cabinet resolution to approve the new fees and charges for the Council's Car Parks for implementation from 1 November 2023.

**\*RESOLVED –**

1. That new fees and charges for the Council's car parks, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved for implementation from Wednesday 1 November 2023.
2. That the thirty-minute car parking charge be removed so that all charges reflect hourly rates.
3. That all residents of the Borough should continue to benefit from free parking in the 2023-24 financial year before 10am and after 3pm Monday to Saturday and all-day Sunday, and Bank Holidays, at selected surface car parks using the Resident Parking Scheme.
4. That the Service Director for Leisure, Culture and Community Wellbeing, be delegated authority, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Town Centres and Visitor Economy, to apply

appropriate negotiated fees for new activities and opportunities that are introduced during the period covered by this report.

## **REASON FOR DECISIONS**

1. The Council continues to face significant financial challenges. The sustained period of austerity since 2010, the ongoing risks and uncertainties over future funding arrangements, the budgetary impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and a sustained period of exceptionally high inflation, have all impacted on the Council's financial position.
2. The Council's budget strategy is to deliver a balanced and sustainable budget. Given the forecast budget deficits it is important that all potential increases to income streams be implemented as soon as possible to help mitigate these pressures.
3. It is therefore prudent to implement an in-year uplift now, to assist the Council in achieving a balanced budget for 2023-24 and to recover ground on the increasing costs associated with car park operations since the previous fees and charges increase on 4 April 2022.