

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET DECISIONS

TUESDAY, 13 FEBRUARY 2024

PRESENT: Councillor M Gledhill (Chair)

Councillors C Atkins, B Cawley, D Price, D Proudlove,
M Swindlehurst and N Yates

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors A Church, K Hoptroff, L Malyon and L Swindlehurst

APOLOGIES: Councillor C Wood

37 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED)**

DECISION:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 28 November 2023 be approved as a correct record.

38 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY**

There were no declarations made.

39 **FORWARD PLAN**

DECISION:

That the Forward Plan be approved for publication.

40 **CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIORNMENT & LEISURE AND TOURISM**

40.1 **GREEN SPACES STRATEGY**

The report informed the Cabinet on the progress made to develop a new Green Spaces Strategy for the Council. The report was considered by the Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 17 January 2024.

Options considered:

- To review and approve the adoption of the Green Spaces Strategy and approve the request for a new Green Spaces Development Fund to be included in the MTFP for £50,000 to be used over financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26. Recommended.
- To not approve the adoption of the Green Spaces Strategy and not approve the request for a new Green Spaces Development Fund. Not recommended.

DECISION:

That the Green Spaces Strategy and associated Green Spaces Development Fund be approved.

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41 FINANCE

41.1 COUNCIL TAX SECOND HOME AND EMPTY PROPERTY PREMIUMS

The purpose of the report was to invite the Cabinet to recommend the implementation of the premium for empty homes (that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for one year or more) from 1 April 2024, and to implement the premium for second homes (no one's sole or main residence) from 1 April 2025. The report was considered by the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 7 February 2024.

Options considered:

- With effect from 1 April 2024, implement a 100% premium on empty properties that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for one year or more.
- With effect from 1 April 2025, implement the maximum premium of 100% on second homes (a property that is no one's sole or main residence and is substantially furnished).
- Make no changes to these classes of property.

DECISION:

That the content of the report be noted and the following be approved:

1. Implement the premium of 100% for properties that have been empty for over one year (applied to properties over two years currently) from 1 April 2024.
2. Implement the maximum premium of 100% for second homes from 1 April 2025 (this being the earliest that the new charge can apply, as legislation states that twelve months' notice is required to be given to existing owners of second homes).
3. Where premiums are to be applied, the Council is mindful of the current consultation by government, which recommends exceptions in certain circumstances outlined within this report. Subject to the outcome of that consultation, it is recommended that the Section 151 Officer be given delegated powers to implement the Council's policy on premiums in line with statute, the Council's requirements and any guidance given by the Secretary of State

41.2 THIRD QUARTER FINANCIAL, PROCUREMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2023/24

The purpose of the report was to inform members of the Council's overall performance and financial position for the period ended 31st December ("Third Quarter 2023/24"). The report was considered by the Finance and Performance Committee on 7 February 2024.

Options considered:

Detailed analysis was provided in Appendix A (Finance), Appendix B (Procurement) and Appendix C (Performance) to the report.

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DECISION:

1. That the Third Quarter 2023/24 financial, procurement and performance position detailed in Appendices A, B and C and summarised at 3.3 of the covering report be noted.
2. That the write-offs set out in Appendix D to the report be approved.

41.3 **2024/25 BUDGET & MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024/25 TO 2027/28**

The purpose of the report was to present the proposed Budget for 2024/25, updated Medium-Term Financial Plan 2024/25 – 2027/28, Capital Strategy 2024/25, proposed Fees and Charges for 2024/25 and Procurement Forward Plan 2024/25.

The report was considered by the Finance and Performance Committee on 7 February 2024 which supported the recommendations, subject to an increase of 10 pence on the base car park tariff (and a pro-rata increase across other tariffs) to replace the proposed 20 pence increase on the base car park tariff. The Cabinet accepted this recommendation to Council, taking into account the additional funding recently announced by Government. A review of the Council's approach to car park fees and charges would also be conducted.

Options considered:

The report recommended a Council Tax level and associated budget, Medium Term Financial Plan, Capital Strategy (and future capital programme) and Fees & Charges for 2024/25 designed to best deliver the Council's corporate priorities within a balanced budget. Other options were feasible, but any alternatives would need to robustly identify the service and financial implications, in order to satisfy the Council's Section 151 Officer (under the Local Government Finance Act 1988, section 114) of the need to deliver a balanced budget.

RECOMMENDED:

That Council:

1. Approves the General Fund Budget for 2024/25 as detailed in **Appendix A (section 7)**
2. Approves the revised Medium-Term Financial Plan (2024/25 to 2027/28) as detailed in **Appendix A**, including the revised Capital Programme (attached at Annex A)
3. Approves the Capital Strategy 2024/25 as set out in **Appendix B**
4. Approves the proposed Fees and Charges for 2024/25 as detailed in **Appendix C**, subject to an increase of 10 pence on the base car park tariff (and a pro-rata increase across other tariffs) to replace the proposed 20 pence increase on the base car park tariff.
5. Approves the proposed Procurement Forward Plan for 2024/25, providing the authority to procure based on procurement activity detailed in **Appendix D**

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6. Approves a Band D Council Tax of £168.02 for 2024/25 (2.99% change from 2023/24)
7. Approves a Band D Council Tax of £54.50 for Leek and £10.96 for Biddulph for 2024/25 (2.99% change 2023/24) in respect of Special District Expenses
8. Notes the Chief Finance Officer's view that the level of reserves are adequate for the Council based on this budget and the circumstances in place at the time of preparing it (**Appendix A, Annex B**)

42 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED:

That, pursuant to Section 100A(2) and (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings whereby it is likely that confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act would be disclosed to the public in breach of the obligation of confidence or exempt information as defined in Section 100 I (1) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed to the public by virtue of the Paragraphs indicated.

43 **FINANCE**

43.1 **APPLICATION FOR WRITE OFF OF NON-RECOVERABLE DEBTS**

The Cabinet approved the write off of balances which were deemed non recoverable.

The meeting closed at 2.40 pm

Chairman