

Minutes of	Cabinet
Meeting date	Wednesday, 9 February 2022
Members present::	Councillors Paul Foster (Chair), Mick Titherington (Vice-Chair), Anielia Bylinski Gelder, Bill Evans and Matthew Tomlinson
Officers:	Gary Hall (Chief Executive), Louise Mattinson (Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer), Asim Khan (Director of Customer and Digital), Dave Whelan (Shared Services Lead - Legal & Deputy Monitoring Officer), Darren Cranshaw (Shared Services Lead - Democratic, Scrutiny & Electoral Services) and Clare Gornall (Democratic and Member Services Officer)
Other members and officers:	Councillors Donoghue, Hunter, Sharples, P Smith, Unsworth and Walton Attending virtually:- Councillors Alty, Bell, Bretherton, Chisholm, Hancock, Mary Green, Michael Green, Mort, Ogilvie and Mrs Smith; Chris Sinnott (Deputy Chief Executive), James Thomson (Deputy Director of Finance), Andrew Daniels (Shared Service Lead - Communications and Visitor Economy).
Public:	0

87 Apologies for Absence

There were none.

88 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 19 January 2022 were presented for information.

The Leader referred to the actions arising from Minute 77. He confirmed that Councillor Ogilvie had received a update from Councillor Bylinski Gelder in relation to the Youth Council. He also referred to the information requested by Councillor Walton regarding urgent decisions, which had now been collated and would be provided as soon as possible.

Decision made (unanimously):-

That the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 19 January 2022 be approved as a correct record.

89 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

90 Notice of Executive Decisions / Cabinet Forward Plan

Decision made (unanimously):-

That the Notice of Executive Decisions / Cabinet Forward Plan for the period 1 February 2022 – 31 January 2023 be noted.

91 Draft Budget 2022/23 and Summary Position over the Medium Term

The Cabinet Member (Finance, Property and Assets) presented a report of the Director of Finance and Section 151 officer setting out the budget position for 2022/23 including the forecast for the following 2 years to 2024/25 and also to present the relevant proposals in respect of:

- The use of forecast resources identified for 2022/23
- Budget consultation

The Cabinet also considered the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee on the Draft Budget 2022/23 at its meeting on 8 February 2022, which were:

The Scrutiny Committee:

1. thanks the Cabinet Member and Director for their detailed report and answering questions;
2. supports the Cabinet Member's wish to consult earlier in future years;
3. asks that the report be updated to clarify that the Community Conversations were not aimed at supporting positive mental health in young people as confirmed at a previous meeting;
4. requests that the refurbishment of Margaret Road Playground planned for 2023/2024 be included in the report;
5. asks that a breakdown of the different funding streams for the £3.1M allocated for affordable housing be provided;
6. welcomes the offer of information on the Council's role in promoting apprenticeships with businesses and acting as an exemplar be provided to all councillors.

The Leader of the Council thanked their supply and confidence partners, Councillor Howarth and the Liberal Democrat Group, for their collaborative working on the draft budget.

Councillor Bylinkski Gelder particularly highlighted the Sports and Community Funding and said that it was expected that this would be allocated around the borough in March/April. She encouraged Community Hubs to start considering how best the funding could be used.

Decision made

1. That Cabinet agrees the contents of this report and notes the following proposed budget items, in particular:
 - A proposed 1.99% increase in council tax in 2022/23 with no proposed cuts to services
 - The forecast balanced budget for 2022/23 and the forecast budget position in 2023/24 and 2024/25

- To note the proposals in the report for investment in the Administration's priority areas
2. That Cabinet supports and accepts the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee on 8 February 2022.

Reasons for decision

The Cabinet set out its budget proposals for 2022/23. The report detailed the Administration's ambitious proposals to continue investment of both revenue and capital, to develop and deliver in their priority areas whilst maintaining a balanced budget over the medium term.

The budget forecast over the next three years has been updated as follows:

- Last year, the council was able to freeze council tax. Unfortunately, due to the continued pressures on council expenditure budgets, combined with the reduction in Government funding provided to the council over the last 10 years, a council tax increase of 1.99% is proposed in 2022/23;
- The figures include an assumption that council tax will increase by 1.99% in 2023/24 and 2024/25; this assumption will be revisited every year and will be dependent on the outcome of future Government funding announcements;
- Continued investment is reflected in ongoing revenue budgets to ensure delivery of corporate strategy priorities;
- Capital investments of over £47m are included in respect of corporate priority projects over the 3-year period;
- The figures incorporate strategies to reduce the budget deficit over the medium term.

Consultation on the proposed budget for 2022/23 commenced on Tuesday 1 February 2022. The consultation will run for 10 days and will invite responses from residents, partners, parish groups and other stakeholders through a variety of methods including a short survey. The feedback will be used to frame the allocation of resources and investments, and the results will be analysed and published for consideration as part of the Council's final budget.

Alternative options considered and rejected

None, this is the draft budget and alternative budgets may be considered as part of the final budget proposal.

92 Review of Council Tax Support Scheme

The Cabinet Member (Communities, Social Justice and Wealth Building) presented a report of the Director of Customer and Digital setting out proposals to change the South Ribble Council Tax Support Scheme from 1 April 2022.

Decision made

That Cabinet recommends the following revisions to the Council Tax Support Scheme to Council:

- a. Removal of the baseline Council Tax charge of £3.50 per week for working age claimants in receipt of:
 - Universal Credit and some level of earnings or non-disregarded other income
 - Other low-income groups not receiving Universal Credit nor a passported benefit

- b. The revised scheme is approved with effect from 1 April 2022.

Reasons for decision

The revised scheme is fairer and simpler for residents, and it is also more focused to support the households most in need.

Other options considered and rejected

None, for the reasons given above.

Chair

Date