

Council – 25 February 2021

Decision note

Item	Decision
1. Person to preside if Mayor and Deputy Mayor are absent	Not applicable as the Mayor was in attendance
2. Apologies	Councillors Creaney and Neville.
3. Minutes – 18 th January, 2021	That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January, 2021, copies having been sent to each member of the Council, be approved as a correct record.
4. To approve a correction to the Minutes held on 27 th February, 2020	Approved.
5. Declarations of interest	None
6. Local Government (Access to Information) Act	There were no items in private session
7. Mayor's announcements	Received.
8. Petitions	Received from Councillor Richard Worrall - Barns Lane, Rushall – Traffic Calming Measures.
9. Recommendations of Cabinet	
(a) Corporate Plan 2021-2022 refresh	That the refreshed 2021-22 Corporate Plan be approved.
(b) Corporate Budget Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24	Please see attached appendix 1 to this decision note.
10. Recommendation of Personnel Committee	
Pay policy statement and living wage 2021/22	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) That the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/2022 be approved; and2) That the continuation of the living wage be approved.

11. Appointment of Independent Persons

That:-

- (1) Sureya Ajaz be appointed as an independent person on the Council's Audit and Standards Committee for a period of 4 years;
- (2) Deborah Mardner be appointed as an independent person on the Council's Standards Committee for a period of 4 years;
- (3) Carl Magness be appointed as an independent person on the Council's Standards Committee for a period of 4 years; and
- (4) Council notes that Independent Persons (Standards) shall be paid an allowance of £750.00 per annum

12. Independent Remuneration Panel

That:

1. The Basic Allowance be increased from £11,146 to £11,938;
2. The Special Responsibility Allowances be increased as per option 3 as set out within the Independent Remuneration Report as follows:-

	Option 3
Council Leader	£33,325
Deputy Leader	£20,614
Cabinet Member	£16,787
Opposition Leader	£11,158
Chair of Scrutiny	£10,821
Chair of Planning	£11,006
Chair of Licensing	£10,478
Chair of Audit	£8,551
Chair of Standards	£5,348
Chair other Cttes	£5,348

3. Where an Special Responsibility Allowance is allocated to the second deputy leader, then his

	<p>or her Special Responsibility Allowance should be the same as that of the first deputy leader, as set out in the table in recommendation 2 above;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. In the same circumstances, the Special Responsibility Allowance allocated to the opposition leader should be Option 3 - £12,581; 5. It be noted that some of the expenditure in the above table may not be claimed, in cases where members hold two positions eligible for SRAs; and 6. That it be noted that the figures for expenditure on members' allowances in the above table may need to be adjusted to allow for national insurance payments.
<p>13. Membership of Committees.</p>	<p>Note that that Councillor Nawaz has replaced Councillor Jeavons for the remainder of the municipal year on Corporate Parenting Board and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p>

(b) **Corporate Budget Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24, incorporating the Capital Strategy; and the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2021/22. (Pages 46 – 241)**

(Notes: In accordance with Council procedure rule 17.8 “A recorded vote will be taken on any decision relating to the Council’s budget or Council tax”. Report of Cabinet reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting)

The budget report referred on from Cabinet on 10 February 2021 delegated authority to the S151 Officer to make any necessary amendments, after consultation with the Leader (portfolio holder for finance), to take account of the final local government settlement; final levies and precepts; final grant allocations and final technical guidance or legislation on the budget, and to make any necessary amendments to the statutory determinations and council tax bands to take account of those changes and the resulting final analysis of the budget and for these amendments to be submitted and therefore recommended to Council at its meeting on 25 February 2021).

The final Police Precept has been formally received. The final Fire Precept has been received but awaiting formal notification:

- West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner has increased the Police element of the council tax by an average band D of £15 for 2021/22, which equates to 9.23%.
- West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority have increased their element of the council tax by 1.99% for 2021/22.

Neither of the above have any impact on the General Fund, however, there has been minor changes to the Fire precept on bands A and E-H, which are reflected in the revised valuation bands within this resolution.

The WMCA (Transport) Levy and Environment Levy have also been finalised and are reflected in this report. We are awaiting formal notification from the Environment Agency.

Our final 2021/22 central government finance settlement was confirmed on 10 February 2021, and is in line with the provisional settlement.

The Statutory determinations (council gross expenditure and income) have been amended to reflect notifications of grants received since the despatch of the budget report to Cabinet on 10 February 2021. There are also still a number of final grant allocations to be received at this time, and officers will ensure that spend is adjusted to reflect final grant allocations, as appropriate.

The following revised recommendation incorporates the above changes. Due to the minor nature of these changes, and the fact that they have been incorporated into the revised resolution for Council, the updated Section B ‘Corporate Budget Plan’ has not been reproduced for this meeting but is available upon request.

Revised Recommendation:

That the following be approved:

3.3.1 Revenue

- a) The financial envelope of resources for 2021/22 as set out in **Section B - Part 1** "The Revenue and Capital Budget Plan".
- b) A Walsall Council net council tax requirement for 2021/22 of £132.55m and a 4.99% increase in council tax (inclusive of 3% precept for Adult Social Care).
- c) That the recommendations of the S151 Officer in respect of the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the budget calculations and the adequacy of reserves **be approved**, including the levels of central contingency and an opening general reserve of no less than £16.64m, as set out in the S151 Officer Section 25 statement in **Annex 12** of the Budget Plan.
- d) The final levies below for outside bodies:

LEVY	AMOUNT (£)
West Midlands Combined Authority Transport Levy	11,182,889
Environment Agency	83,781

- e) The following statutory determinations (references are to the Local Government Finance Act, 1992 as amended), and subject to any final changes arising from receipt of final specific grant allocations, and technical/legislative guidance:
 - I. **£660,041,370** being the aggregate gross expenditure, which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) (a) to (f) of the Act.
 - II. **£527,495,589** being the aggregate income which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) (a) to (d) of the Act.
 - III. **£132,545,781** being the amount, by which the aggregate at (e) (I) above exceeds the aggregate at (e) (II), calculated by the council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year.
 - IV. **£1,871.87** being the amount at (e) (III) above, divided by the council tax base of 70,809.41, calculated by the council in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (average council tax at band D).
 - V. Valuation bands

Being amounts given by multiplying the amount at (e) (IV) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5 (1) of the Local Government Act 1992, is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the council in accordance with Section 30 and 36 of the Act as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwelling listed in different valuation bands.

A	B	C	D
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1,247.91	1,455.90	1,663.88	1,871.87
E	F	G	H
2,287.84	2,703.81	3,119.78	3,743.73

- f) The final precepts from the Fire and Rescue Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner, issued to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992, for each of the categories of dwelling shown below:

PRECEPTING AUTHORITY	VALUATION BANDS			
	A	B	C	D
Police And Crime Commissioner	118.37	138.09	157.82	177.55
	E	F	G	H
	217.01	256.46	295.92	355.10
Fire & Rescue	A	B	C	D
	42.02	49.03	56.03	63.04
	E	F	G	H
	77.04	91.05	105.06	126.07

- g) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (e) (v) and (f) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts of council tax for 2021/22 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

A	B	C	D
1,408.30	1,643.02	1,877.73	2,112.46
E	F	G	H
2,581.89	3,051.32	3,520.76	4,224.90

- h) That notice **be given** of the council tax within twenty one days of it being set by publishing details of the same in the “Express and Star” newspaper circulating in the Authority’s area.
- i) That the S151 Officer **be instructed** to take all necessary action in relation to council tax, community charge and national non-domestic rates, including, where appropriate, the signing of all documents, billing, the giving of notices and the taking of necessary steps to ensure collection thereof.
- j) That the S151 Officer **be given delegated authority** to make transfers to and from reserves in order to ensure that reserves are maintained as necessary and in particular, adjusted when reserves are no longer required, or need to be replenished.
- k) That, pursuant to Section 52ZB and 52ZC of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the relevant basic amount of council tax for the Council is not excessive in relation to determining whether a referendum is required.

3.3.2 Capital

- a) The allocation of capital expenditure plans as set out in **Section B - Part 1** “The Revenue and Capital Budget Plan” and that the capital and leasing programme as set out in **Annex 9 be approved** bearing in mind the principle that unless affordable from within current resources, specific projects funded by borrowing will not be commenced until a payback agreement is in place. Schemes funded from grant will commence when final allocations are published. Reserve list items will only commence should funding become available during the financial year.
- b) That the S151 Officer be **given delegated authority** to determine how each source of finance is used to fund the overall capital programme and to alter the overall mix of financing as necessary, to maximise the flexibility of capital resources used and minimise the ongoing costs of borrowing to the council.
- c) That the S151 Officer, after consultation with the Leader (portfolio holder for finance), be **given delegated authority** to release capital resources held back for any contingent items that may arise (earmarked capital receipts for essential or emergency spend), and also for any match funding requirements that may be required of the Council in order to secure additional external capital funding (e.g. bids for government or other funding).
- d) The Capital Strategy set out in **Annex 8** of the Budget Plan **be approved**.
- e) The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy set out in **Annex 11** of the Budget Plan be approved.

3.3.3 Treasury Management

- a) **Section B – Part 2A** – The Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2021/22 onwards, including the council’s borrowing requirement, borrowing limits, and the adoption of the prudential indicators, **be approved**.
- b) That decisions to effect movements between conventional borrowing and other long term liabilities, such as leases, **be delegated** to the S151 Officer.
- c) That decisions to use capital receipts or borrowing within the framework of approved prudential indicators **be delegated** to the S151 Officer.
- d) **Section B – Part 2B** – Treasury Management Policies, **be approved**.