

CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 7 JULY 2022

Present:

Councillor Alex Dale (Chair) (in the Chair)
Councillor Charlotte Cupit (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Mark Foster
Councillor Alan Powell

Councillor Paul Parkin
Councillor Carolyn Renwick

Also Present:

M Broughton	Director of Growth and Assets
J Dethick	Director of Finance and Resources & (Section 151 Officer)
L Hickin	Managing Director - Head of Paid Service
S Sternberg	Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer
A Maher	Interim Governance Manager

CAB/ Apologies for Absence

1/22-

23 Apologies were received from Cllr P Parkin. With the agreement of the Chair Councillor M Foster contributed to the meeting virtually, through the electronic Conference Call system. He did not participate in the decisions taken by Cabinet at the meeting.

CAB/ Declarations of Interest

2/22-

23 Councillor A Dale and Councillor C Cupit declared interests in Item 9 – Strategic Assessment for the Clay Cross Low Carbon Energy Network Strategy and in Item 10 – Strategic Assessment for Clay Cross Rail Study, in their capacity as Members of the Clay Cross Town Deal Board. They confirmed that they would participate in Cabinet’s discussion and determination on both items..

CAB/ Minutes of Last Meeting

3/22-

23 RESOLVED - The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2022 were approved as a true record.

CAB/ Medium Term Financial Plan - Financial Outturn 2021-22

4/22-

23 The report to Cabinet explained the outturn position for the 2020/22 financial year. Cabinet was asked to note the information and agree that specific revenue and capital budgets be now carried forward. As part of this, Members heard of under spends on the General Fund and the reasons for this. They also noted the slight variation in the Housing Revenue Account, as well as expenditure on the Capital Programme and Council’s Treasury Management activities.

Cabinet was reminded that a number of Government grant and relief schemes had continued throughout 2021/22 to help with the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The report explained how the Council had worked closely with the

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to deliver all grant and relief schemes as swiftly as possible to qualifying business owners and individuals across the District.

Members discussed the report. They welcomed the successful financial management, which had been achieved during the 202-21 financial year. Members recognised that the Council would need to meet a range of challenging savings targets in future years and emphasised that this should continue to be an intrinsic part of the budget setting process.

RESOLVED

- (1) That Cabinet noted the outturn position in respect of the 2021/22 financial year.
- (2) That Cabinet approved the proposed carry forward of revenue budgets as detailed in Section 2.8 of the report, totalling £0.036m.
- (3) That Cabinet approved the proposed carry forward of capital budgets detailed in Appendix 4 to the report, totalling £11.024m.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

To appraise Cabinet of the Council's successful financial management during 2022-23. To enable specific revenue and capital budgets to be carried forward into the current financial year.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The financial outturn report for 2021/22 was primarily a factual report, detailing the actual position compared to previously approved budgets. Consequently, there were no alternative options to be considered.

The allocation of resources to earmarked reserve accounts was undertaken in line with the Council's Policy and Service Delivery Framework and in the light of the risks and issues facing the Council over the period of the current Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). If these risks do not materialise, or are settled at a lower cost than anticipated, then the earmarked reserves will be reassessed and returned to balances, where appropriate.

CAB/ Independent Directors of Rykneld Homes - Remuneration Review

**5/22-
23**

Cabinet considered recommendations from Rykneld Homes Limited (RHL) to increase the remuneration of its Independent Board Members. Members heard that the company's Articles of Association required three Independent Members to serve on the Board. These three Independent Members could not be Elected Members of the Council. They could also not be employees of the Council or of RHL.

Cabinet discussed the proposed increase. Members were informed that Cabinet would be required approve any change for it to be implemented. They heard that, if approved, this would be the first increase in remuneration for Independent

Members since 2012. They also noted the company's hope that the increase would reward the skills and corporate governance experience of the existing Independent Members and help to attract suitable candidates in the future.

RESOLVED - That Cabinet agreed the recommendation from Rykneld Homes Limited (RHL) to increase the remuneration of the Independent Board Member on the Rykneld Homes Limited Board.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION - The increase will help ensure the retention of existing professional skill-set for the full term allowable for Independent Members. It will also ensure that RHL has a strong recruiting position for any vacancies to these positions in the future.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED - The options of taking no action, delaying implementation of the increase or agreeing a smaller increase were considered and rejected, for the reasons specified in the report.

CAB/ Urgent Items

**6/22-
23** None.

CAB/ Exclusion of Public

**7/22-
23** RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the following item(s) of business to avoid the disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006

CAB/ Management of Corporate Debt - Write Off of Outstanding Amounts

**8/22-
23** The report to Cabinet sought approval for the write-off of outstanding debts. Cabinet discussed the report. Members asked for and received an assurance that everything possible had been done to recover the debts before determining that they could not be recovered. Consequently, they would have to be written off as the last stage of the debt management process.

RESOLVED – That Cabinet agreed to write off the amounts in respect of Council Tax, business rates and rents, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report

REASONS FOR THE DECISION - Writing of these outstanding amounts was the final option in the Debt Management process. All other options to recover this debt had been explored but had been unsuccessful.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED - As specified in the report.

CAB/ Strategic Assessment for Clay Cross Low Carbon Energy Network Strategy

**9/22-
23** Cabinet was asked to endorse the Town Fund Strategic Assessment for the Clay Cross Low Carbon Energy Network Strategy (LCENS). Members were reminded that the Council was the Accountable Body for the Clay Cross Town Fund. It was responsible for ensuring that a robust governance and assurance framework was

put in place to protect the interests of the public in how the fund was used.

Members discussed the Strategic Assessment and agreed to support it. They reflected on the contribution which the Local Carbon Energy Strategy could make in helping to reduce the town's carbon footprint, attracting new energy sector businesses and supporting a wider programme of development opportunities.

RESOLVED –

That Cabinet agreed (as accountable body for Clay Cross Town Fund) and following endorsement of the Towns Fund Board that:

- (1) The Towns Fund Strategic Assessment presented in the report provides the assurance that the Low Carbon Energy Network Strategy (LCENS) provides good value for money for the public.
- (2) The Section 151 Officer be authorised to finalise the documents in readiness for submission to the Department for Levelling-up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for final approval.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION - Approving the Strategic Assessment will now enable the Town Deal funding to be released, so that the project can progress.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED - The option of doing nothing was considered and rejected, as it would mean the LCENS could not proceed.

Paragraph 3

CAB/ Strategic Assessment for Clay Cross Rail Study

**10/2
2-23**

Cabinet was asked to endorse the Town Fund Strategic Assessment for the Clay Cross Rail Station Feasibility Study. Members were reminded that the Council was the Accountable Body for the Clay Cross Town Fund. It was responsible for ensuring that a robust governance and assurance framework was put in place to protect the interests of the public in how the fund was used.

Members discussed the Strategic Assessment and agreed to support it. They reflected on the contribution which the Rail Station Feasibility Study could make in helping to develop the business case for a future proposal to open a rail station and how this would help to improve greatly access to the town.

RESOLVED –

That Cabinet agreed (as accountable body for Clay Cross Town Fund) and following endorsement of the Towns Fund Board:

- (1) That the Towns Fund Strategic Assessment presented in the report provides the assurance that the Railway Study provides good value for money for the public.
- (2) The Section 151 Officer be authorised to finalise the documents in readiness for submission to the Department for Levelling-up, Housing and

Communities (DLUHC) for final approval.

REASONS FOR DECISION - Approving the Strategic Assessment will now enable the Town Deal funding to be released, so that the project can progress.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED - The option of doing nothing was considered and rejected, as it would mean the Rail Station study could not proceed.

Paragraph 3

CAB/ Urgent Items

11/2

2-23 None.