

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 7th September 2022

**Present: Councillor A Barnes (Chair)
Councillors Ashworth, Hughes, Lythgoe, Oakes and Walmsley**

**In Attendance: Mr N Shaw, Chief Executive
Mr A Allen, Director of Communities
Ms M Lewis, Director of Economic Development
Ms C Birtwistle, Head of Legal (Monitoring Officer)
Mrs K Spencer, Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer)**

Observers on Zoom: Councillors Coogan and Smith

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No written questions had been submitted.

6. UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chair provided an update in the absence of Councillor Johnson. Councillor Foxcroft was thanked for sending through his Overview & Scrutiny notes. It was reported that additional training on the call-in procedure would be delivered in due course.

7. COUNCIL TAX ENERGY REBATE DISCRETIONARY SCHEME

The Portfolio Holder for Resources outlined the report, which asked Cabinet to approve the Council Tax Energy Rebate Discretionary Scheme, delegate minor changes and determination of the methods of payment to customers to the Chief Finance Officer.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- The Post Office vouchers have now expired. If contact hasn't been made by residents then the Council will credit their Council Tax accounts.
- Members were pleased to see that the higher bands were included.
- A campaign is to be arranged through the Council's Communication team to provide advice to older people regarding pension credits and associated benefits.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet approved the Council Tax Energy Rebate Discretionary Scheme.
2. Cabinet delegated any minor changes in amounts payable under the scheme (for example, where caused by changes in benefit caseload) to the Chief Finance Officer.
3. Cabinet delegated the determination of the methods of payment to customers to the Chief Finance Officer.

Reason for Decision:

The proposed scheme targets lower income customers for assistance in line with Government guidance for the scheme. Customers on means tested benefits have already been subject to an assessment process; the risk of fraudulent or otherwise inaccurate claims is therefore reduced. This approach means that no new application form will be required and so administration costs are reduced and the scheme will be able to be delivered quickly.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (LGA) PEER CHALLENGE PROGRESS REPORT

The Leader of the Council outlined the report, which asked Cabinet to consider the progress report and note the action plan updates.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet considered the findings of the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge progress report.
2. Cabinet noted the update on the action plan to address the Challenge's recommendations.

Reason for Decision:

To note the progress made since the Peer Challenge.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

9. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 1 2022/23

The Portfolio Holder for Resources outlined the report, which asked Cabinet to note the contents of the report and appendix.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- The pay settlement was not yet agreed.
- The Government settlement was still unknown which would have a significant impact.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet noted the contents of the Q1 2022/23 Financial Monitoring Report.

Reason for Decision:

For the robust monitoring of the General Fund and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

The meeting concluded at 18.48pm

_____ CHAIR _____

DATE