

**EXECUTIVE
 5 JANUARY 2021**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M J HILL OBE (LEADER OF THE COUNCIL)

Councillors Mrs P A Bradwell OBE (Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services) (Deputy Leader), C J Davie (Executive Councillor for Economy and Place), R G Davies (Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT), Mrs S Woolley (Executive Councillor for NHS Liaison and Community Engagement), C N Worth (Executive Councillor for Culture and Emergency Services) and B Young (Executive Councillor for Community Safety and People Management).

Councillors R B Parker (Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board) and L Wooten (Chairman of Scrutiny Panel A) were also in attendance.

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Barnes OBE (Chief Executive), Roz Cordy (Interim Assistant Director of Safeguarding), Andrew Crookham (Executive Director Resources), James Drury (Executive Director Commercial), Cheryl Evans (Democratic Services Officer), Michelle Grady (Assistant Director for Strategic Finance), Andy Gutherson (Executive Director Place), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Warren Peppard (Head of Development Management), Heather Sandy (Executive Director of Children's Services) and Nigel West (Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer).

35 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor E J Poll (Executive Councillor for Commercial and Environmental Management).

It was noted that Roz Cordy, Interim Assistant Director of Adult Frailty and Long Term Conditions, was attending the meeting on behalf of Glen Garrod, Executive Director – Adult Care and Community Wellbeing.

36 DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations made.

37 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Impact on Council Services of National Covid-19 Restrictions

Following the announcement by the UK Government on 4 January 2021 of further national restrictions in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Councillor M J Hill, OBE,

the Leader of the Council, reported that an initial assessment had indicated that this would have minimal impact on the services provided by the County Council. However, a full assessment would be made once the Government had issued detailed guidance.

38 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON
1 DECEMBER 2020

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 1 December 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

39 COUNCIL BUDGET 2021/22

A report on the Council's Budget for 2021/22 was presented by Andrew Crookham, Executive Director – Resources, and Michelle Grady, Assistant Director for Strategic Finance. The proposals, which would be subject to consultation, had been based on the provisional local government finance settlement for 2021/22, which had been issued on 17 December 2020. The announcement of the final settlement was expected in February 2021, and this was anticipated to be in line with the provisional settlement.

Further budgetary information was awaited from the Lincolnshire district councils on likely council tax and business rate income for 2021/22. There were also other risks arising from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result of these uncertainties, it was likely that the budget proposals presented to the Executive on 2 February 2021 and to the County Council on 19 February 2021 would differ from those presented at this meeting.

The key elements of the provisional local government finance settlement had been: a deferral of the review of relative needs and resources (fair funding); a limit of a 2% increase in general council tax; an increase in the National Living Wage; and a social care grant of £5.3 million for the County Council. There were also provisions relating to arrangements for irrecoverable council tax and the council tax support scheme.

The report also detailed the anticipated cost pressures for the County Council, in particular, adult social care, children's services and waste disposal; and proposed efficiency savings (without any service reductions) and additional income of £14.6 million. Overall, the budget proposals at this stage would lead to a surplus of £1.921 million for 2021/22, with deficits in the following years.

The capital programme had been refreshed with projected expenditure for 2021/22 of £204.3 million, which would be in line with the affordability provisions in the Council's capital strategy.

Following questions, the following points were confirmed:

- In relation to the efficiency savings and additional income, it was emphasised that no service reductions had been planned.
- To date £44 million of general Covid-19 support had been received from the Government, with a further £15 million expected. There had also been a series of specific grants and allocations. These Covid-19 related funds were being monitored and managed separately from the ordinary budgets of the Council.

On the Lincolnshire economy, which was more resilient than other areas, the Government had been supportive of the business community, but there had been some businesses, usually small businesses operating in the retail and hospitality sectors, who had received no support. The County Council would be developing its own proposals for providing support for businesses. The budget consultation meeting with the business community would be reported as part of the budget process to the Executive on 2 February 2021.

As a local authority providing adult social care, it was noted that the Council could increase its council tax requirement by as much as 5%. The Executive indicated that it was not inclined to make use of the full 5% additional increase available, on the basis that this would adversely impact people throughout the county, many of whom were experiencing financial difficulties as a result of Covid-19.

RESOLVED

That the budget proposals, as described in the report, be approved as its preferred option for the purposes of further consultation.

40 FINAL REPORT FROM THE DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS SCRUTINY REVIEW

Councillor L Wootten, as Chairman of Scrutiny Panel A, presented the report on its scrutiny review of Developer Contributions, which had been approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 17 December 2020. The scrutiny review had been undertaken during October and November 2020 and had focused on how to maximise developer contributions to mitigate the impact of developments on local communities; the involvement of councillors in the contributions process; and the Government's Planning for the Future White Paper.

Close collaboration with district councils was considered essential and the report made six recommendations, covering the themes of leadership, decision-making and management.

Councillor R B Parker, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, presented additional comments, which praised the scrutiny report and also included reference to the importance of local democracy and collaboration across Lincolnshire.

The following points were made by the Executive:

- The completion of the report was important and timely, given the 100,000 extra houses which had been anticipated in Greater Lincolnshire, with further demands for housing expected.
- The role of district councils, as local planning authorities, and the County Council, as the main infrastructure provider required a degree of collaboration.
- The Planning for the Future White Paper had caused several concerns, for example the expectation that local authorities would 'forward-fund' infrastructure, with the developer only paying its contributions to local authorities once the development was complete.

The Executive welcomed the report and its recommendations; and concluded that the report had provided the basis for a series of activities on developer contributions; and an action plan would be compiled to address the issues raised.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Developer Contributions Scrutiny Review final report be received.
- (2) That arrangements be made to respond to the report within two months:
 - (a) to indicate in the response which recommendations have been accepted; and
 - (b) where recommendations are accepted, to bring forward an action plan for their implementation.

The meeting closed at 11.30 am.