

Finance Committee

Meeting held 19 February 2024

PRESENT: Councillors Zahira Naz (Chair), Mike Levery (Deputy Chair), Bryan Lodge (Group Spokesperson), Toby Mallinson (Group Spokesperson), Glynis Chapman, Marieanne Elliot, Mary Lea, Shaffaq Mohammed and Ibbby Ullah

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 No apologies for absence were received.

2. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 January 2024 were approved as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 Two questions had been submitted by Aidan Cassidy from ACORN Sheffield. A representative did not attend the meeting to ask the questions therefore a written response would be provided.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

6.1 A schedule of questions to the Chair, submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16, and which contained written answers, was circulated. A supplementary question was asked under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.4, the Chair agreed to provide a written response.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

7.1 The Committee received a report containing the Committee's Work Programme for consideration and discussion. The aim of the Work Programme was to show all known, substantive agenda items for forthcoming meetings of the Committee, to enable this Committee, other committees, officers, partners and the public to plan their work with and for the Committee.

7.2 Officers agreed to request an update on the Lease of land in Millhouses Park item

and the two items which had no Committee date allocated on the Work Programme.

7.3 RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Finance Committee:-

1. approves the Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix 1, including any additions and amendments identified in Part 1;
2. gives consideration to any further issues to be explored by officers for inclusion in Part 2 of Appendix 1 of the next work programme report, for potential addition to the work programme; and
3. notes any referrals from Council (petition and resolutions) detailed in Section 2 of the report and agrees the proposed responses.

8. CAPITAL APPROVALS MONTH 9 (2023/24)

8.1 The Finance Manager submitted a report that provided details of proposed changes to the existing Capital Programme as brought forward in Month 9 2023/24.

8.2 Officers agreed to provide an update on whether the three tower blocks in the Nether Edge and Sharrow Ward were included in the Tower Block Fire Safety work.

8.3 RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Finance Committee:-

1. approves the proposed additions and variations to the Capital Programme listed in Appendix 1;
2. approves the issuing of grant funding as identified in Appendix 2; and
3. approves the acceptance of grant funding as identified in Appendix 3.

8.4 Reasons for Decision

8.4.1 The proposed changes to the Capital Programme will improve the services to the people of Sheffield.

8.4.2 To formally record changes to the Capital Programme and gain Member approval for changes in line with Financial Regulations and to reset the Capital Programme in line with latest information.

8.5 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

8.5.1 A number of alternative courses of action are considered as part of the process undertaken by Officers before decisions are recommended to Members. The recommendations made to Members represent what Officers believe to be the best options available to the Council, in line with Council priorities, given the

constraints on funding and the use to which funding is put within the Revenue Budget and the Capital Programme.

9. AMENDMENT TO COUNCIL TAX LONG-TERM EMPTY PREMIUM AND INTRODUCTION OF SECOND HOME PREMIUM

9.1 The Senior Revenues and Benefits Manager and the Assistant Policy and Support Manager presented a report that provided details of the Council's powers to make changes to the Council Tax Long-Term Empty Premium and to introduce a new Council Tax premium for second homes.

9.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Finance Committee:-

1. notes the new powers which will enable the Council to make changes to the Council Tax Long-Term Empty Premium from 2024/25, and the ability to introduce a new Council Tax Premium for second homes from 2025/26; and
2. agrees to adopt these powers and introduce the Council Tax Long-Term Empty Premium, for dwellings empty and substantially unfurnished for more than 12 months, from 1 April 2024.

9.3 Reasons for Decision

9.3.1 Legislation provides for making changes to the Long-Term-Empty Premium and for the introduction of a second home premium.

9.3.2 The Council must decide if it wants to make changes to the Long-Term-Empty Premium. If the Council decides it wants to make changes to the Long-Term-Empty Premium, it must decide if it wants to do so from 2024/25 or from 2025/26.

9.3.3 The Council must also decide if it wants to introduce a second home premium. If the Council decides to introduce a second homes premium, that is agrees to apply a premium of 100% to dwellings that meet the definition of being a second home and that it will do so from 2025/26.

9.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

9.4.1 The alternative options the Council has is to not adopt these new powers and keep the Long-Term-Empty Premium the same and to not adopt the second home premium.

10. FINANCE COMMITTEE CLIMATE STATEMENT

10.1 The Director of Finance and Commercial Services presented a report that set out the Statement of Climate Commitments relevant to the Finance Committee.

10.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Finance Committee consider and agree the Statement of Climate Commitments relevant to the Finance Committee to

ensure that the proposed actions contained in such statement are reflected in their Work Programme.

10.3 **Reasons for Decision**

10.3.1 It is important that the response to the Annual Climate Progress Report is open and transparent in setting out the challenges which the local authority faces in making progress and clarifies future expectations on the part we all have to play in addressing climate change.

10.3.2 Committee do not currently have specific strategic goals for climate. The process required to develop these, and have the statements approved to be read at each committee meeting meant that option 5.2 was not feasible with the available resource and timeframe.

10.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

10.4.1 Not providing committee climate statements considered due to the resource required to collate.

10.4.2 Providing more detailed Committee Climate Statements that provided an overview of strategic climate goals, with each Chair then reading the committees statement publicly at their respective committee meeting following release of the report.