

City Council

Monday 28 February 2022

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs Beer, Chair

Councillor Mrs Bridgeman, Vice Chair

Councillors Allen, Mrs Aspinall, Bingley, Bowyer, Mrs Bowyer, Dr Buchan, Burden, Carlyle, Churchill, Coker, Collins, Corvid, Dr Cree, Cresswell, Dann, Deacon, Derrick, Downie, Drear, Evans OBE, Goslin, Harrison, Haydon, Hendy, Hulme, Mrs Johnson, Jordan, Kelly, Laing, Loveridge, Lowry, Dr Mahony, McDonald, Morris, Murphy, Neil, Nicholson, Partridge, Patel, Penberthy, Mrs Pengelly, Rennie, Riley, Salmon, Shayer, Singh, Smith, Stevens, Stoneman, Tuffin, Vincent, Wakeham, Ms Watkin and Wheeler.

Apologies for absence: Councillor James

The meeting started at 2pm and finished at 8pm.

Note: The full discussion can be viewed on the webcast of the City Council meeting at www.plymouth.gov.uk. At a future meeting, the Council will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

35. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

36. Declarations of Interest

Ross Jago, Head of Governance, Performance and Risk, advised Members that the Monitoring Officer had agreed a dispensation in respect of the agenda item Revenue and Capital Budget and Proposed Council Tax Levels For 2022/23

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

37. Appointments to Committees, Outside Bodies

The Lord Mayor proposed that Members approve the new political proportionality as detailed in the report as a result of changes reported to Council. Councillor Mrs Bridgeman, Deputy Lord Mayor, seconded this motion.

Following a vote, Ross Jago, Head of Governance, Performance and Risk, advised Members that the vote was deemed lost as one Member had voted against the motion therefore the previous seat allocation would have to stand until the next time a review could be undertaken in advance of the 21 March 2022.

For (55) Councillors Allen, Mrs Aspinall, Bingley, Bowyer, Mrs Bowyer, Mrs Bridgeman (DLM), Dr Buchan, Burden, Carlyle, Churchill, Coker, Collins, Corvid, Dr Cree, Cresswell, Dann, Deacon, Derrick, Drean, Evans OBE, Goslin, Harrison, Haydon, Hendy, Hulme, Mrs Johnson, Jordan, Kelly, Laing, Loveridge, Lowry, Dr Mahony, McDonald, Morris, Murphy, Neil, Nicholson, Partridge, Patel, Penberthy, Mrs Pengelly, Rennie, Riley, Salmon, Shayer, Singh, Smith, Stevens, Stoneman, Tuffin, Vincent, Wakeham, Ms Watkin, Wheeler and Councillor Mrs Beer (LM).

Against (1) Councillor Downie.

Absent (1) Councillor James

The motion was lost.

Procedural Motion

The Lord Mayor proposed and the Deputy Lord Mayor seconded a motion to suspend standing orders under the Plymouth City Council Constitution Part B, 4.23 to –

1. suspend Part B 4.6 of the constitution to enable agenda item 4 to be considered by Council;
2. suspend Appendix I (rules of debate), 4.2 of the constitution, to remove the limit on length of speeches of the Leader and Leader of the opposition in respect of the substantive motion in relation to item 7 Revenue And Capital Budget And Proposed Council Tax Levels For 2022/23

Following a vote the motion was agreed.

38. **Questions by the Public**

There was one question from a member of the public:

The following question was submitted by Mr Gregg Roger Black and answered by Councillor Nick Kelly, Leader of the Council:	
<p>Question: HMS Plymouth was not saved for scrapping by the previous Labour administration which could of been used as tribute to our city. Are there any plans to honour the ship with a memorial?</p>	<p>Answer: Nine ships of the Royal Navy have carried the name HMS Plymouth since 1653, and the ship carries eight battle honours, from Porto Farine in 1655 to the Falkland Islands in 1982. The last ship to bear the name HMS Plymouth was central to the Falkland Islands campaign, engaging the submarine Santa Fe and taking direct damage from Argentine air attacks. The Council has formally requested that the Secretary of State for defence considers honouring the city by ensuring that a tenth ship of the Royal Navy bears the name HMS Plymouth. Although there are no current plans to create a memorial to a specific ship bearing the name HMS Plymouth, the City will be commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Falklands conflict this year, and paying</p>

	tribute to both the veterans of that war, and the heroic efforts both of our dockyard and our wider communities during that difficult time for our country.
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39. **Announcements**

The Lord Mayor made the following announcements:

- with regards to the war in Ukraine it was highlighted that this terrible attack upon a sovereign nation imperilled the peace and security that Europe had enjoyed over the last 77 years, and was leading to a humanitarian crisis the extent of which was yet to fully unfold. Plymouth was no stranger to the attacks of a foreign aggressor and many of the city's citizens may still recall spending nights in air raid shelters. The resilience displayed by the British public then, was clearly on display in Ukraine today as the Ukrainian Army and its Citizens fight on the edge of Western Democracies. Democratic values were to be protected and respected, which was why Plymouth stood in solidarity with Ukraine. Members were asked to join the Lord Mayor for a moment of reflection for the 210 civilians who had so far lost their lives in the conflict;
- it was with great sadness that the Lord Mayor had to report the death of Alderman Bray. Alderman Bray was elected to the City Council for the Eggbuckland Ward in May 1991 until 2000 and again in 2003 to 2007. During this time he served on various committees, including: Client Services Panel, Employment and Economic Development, Licensing, Hospitality and Twinning, Plymouth Citybus Board and the Theatre Royal Board. He was also the Chair of the Planning Committee. Members were asked to join the Lord Mayor for a one minute silence in memory of Alderman Bray.

Councillor Kelly, Leader of the Council, made the following announcements:

- with regards to the Plymouth and South Devon Freeport; the designation of the Freeport by Government had been a significant vote of confidence in the city and the partnership established. Since the Chancellor announced Plymouth as one of 8 successful bids Plymouth had submitted the outline business case and responded to any concerns raised by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The next stage was to work to the deadline of 22 April to submit the full business case whilst simultaneously setting up a Customs Site and progressing official tax site designations. The Freeport will capitalise on the power of our marine, space and defence economies as well as strengthening public and private sector partnerships. The Plymouth and South Devon Freeport would facilitate essential infrastructure works in the city as well as accelerate a regional bounce back from the pandemic and help grow the local economy;
- there was a 12 month engagement plan with lots of exciting activities

lined up for everyone in Plymouth to enjoy and to get involved in shaping the National Marine Park's future. It was starting on the first weekend in April with an open event at the National Marine Aquarium, which was a free event for Plymouth residents. It was so important that everyone in Plymouth had the chance to get involved and have their say about what the park meant to them, we want to ensure that everyone can enjoy the significant benefits that being on, in, under and next to the water provided;

Members were advised that Elaine Hayes the UK's First Interim CEO of the UK's first National Marine Park started this week; well wishes for her in her new role;

- an overview on the latest round of ARG Grants was provided; the demand and uptake had been lower than initially envisioned. The team had done a fantastic job so far in contacting and following up with businesses to offer advice and support, and the Waterfront Partnership ran a roadshow on the Barbican to generate awareness and encourage businesses to apply. Work had been done to make sure that those businesses who were impacted by the Omicron variant received the aid they were entitled to;
- the Leader wanted to add his voice to those standing in solidarity with all Ukrainian people, and in condemnation of the Russian invasion of that sovereign country. The Ukrainian flag continued to fly outside the Guildhall next to the Union flag to demonstrate support for that nation and its people.

Councillor Drear, Cabinet Member for Transport, made the following announcements:

- all hardware been delivered, initial training completed and on-street trials undertaken for the new inspection technology 'Visala'. The project was developed in partnership with Delt, Visala and the Plymouth Highways and was designed to make the inspection process more efficient and provide additional data to drive interventions across the city;
- the development of the new CCTV centre was ongoing and was designed to develop a more future proof system, funded through transforming cities fund;
- engagement with the local community in Keyham had taken place and locations had been identified that would benefit from additional lighting and the installation of CCTV cameras – delivery of the project was due to be completed by the end of March 2022.

40. **Revenue And Capital Budget And Proposed Council Tax Levels For 2022/23**

Councillor Kelly, Leader, advised Members of an alteration to appendix 9 to the report relating to the council tax for the forthcoming year as follows:

“The budget papers published for this meeting of Full Council 28 February 2022 set out estimated revenue resources from Business Rates and assumed modelling of Council Tax to reflect a rise of 1.99% for council tax in 2022/23 and 1.00% for the Adult Social Care precept.

The Leader proposes an amendment to Recommendation 2 of the Revenue and Capital Budget 2022/23 report:

2. To approve an increase to the council tax levels for 2022/23 by one point seven four percent (1.74%)
- 2a. To approve an increase to the Adult Social Care precept for 2022/23 by one percent (1.00%)

The result from this amendment is:

1. An increase in overall revenue resources of £3.345m comprising an increase of £2.124m for Council Tax and £1.221m for the Adult Social Care precept.
2. Final total resources for 2022/23 of £199.874m comprising Council Tax of £125.411m; Business Rates £65.130m; Revenue Support Grant £10.045m.
3. Reduce the 2022/23 general contingency by £0.305m.
4. A total net revenue budget for 2022/23 of £199.874m.

Members agreed to adjourn for 30 minutes to consider the amendment.

Councillor Kelly, Leader, introduced the Revenue and Capital Budget and Proposed Council Tax Levels for 2022/23 report as amended, this was seconded by Councillor Nicholson, Deputy Leader.

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Opposition) spoke to the motion and proposed an amendment, this was seconded by Councillor Lowry, and was as follows:

**Labour Amendment to the Leader’s Recommendation 2:
Revenue Resources and Council Tax 2022/23 and Recommendation 3 to approve
the Capital Budget**

The budget papers published for this meeting of Full Council 28 February 2022 including the Leader’s Alteration set out estimated revenue resources from Business Rates and assumed modelling of Council Tax to reflect a rise of 1.00% for the Adult Social Care precept and 1.74% for council tax in 2022/23.

The Leader of the Labour Group proposes an amendment to Recommendation 2 of the Revenue and Capital Budget 2022/23 report:

2. To approve a Council Tax freeze at the 2021/22 levels for 2022/23 (0% increase)

To note: This is in addition to the 1% Adult Social Care Precept as set out in the Leader’s Alteration

The result from this amendment is:

1. Final total resources for 2022/23 of £197.750m comprising Council Tax of £122.575m; Business Rates £65.130m; Revenue Support Grant £10.045m.
2. A total net revenue budget for 2022/23 of £197.750m.
3. We propose to fund the resultant budget shortfall of £2.124m:

	Item	£m
4.1	Re-phasing the proposed Capital Budget will see re-timing of investments to ensure the interest rate charges will reflect the approval of the subsequent Business Cases by the Leader of the Council	0.544
4.2	Working Balance Top Up to move to a target 5% value – a contribution holiday for 2022/23 only; contributions will continue again in 2023/24	0.350
4.3	Decisions of the Incoming Administration - delete the allocation	0.300
4.4	Cost reduction target This amendment proposes to set up a cross-party working group to investigate the use of the current £16m commercial rental income and drive out a £500k saving against the current expenditure	0.500
4.5	Amend to 50% proposed ICT Inflation from the current £400,000 to £200,000 to include management actions to control the expenditure	0.200
4.6	Invest 2 Save – to include an initial initiative to explore new pothole technology as implemented successfully by another local authority	0.230
	Total	2.124

The budget papers published for this meeting of Full Council 28 February 2022 set out as Recommendation 3. “To approve the Capital Budget of £688.366m for 2021 to 2026”

The proposed amendment to Recommendation 3 of the Revenue and Capital Budget 2022/23 report is:

3. To approve the Capital Budget of £688.366m for 2021 to 2026 but to include the following additional recommendations:
 - a) Setting up a cross-party working group to ensure a better use of the existing capital allocations, ensuring a full value for money review is undertaken;
 - b) The creation of a new Community Improvement Fund, with a fixed allocation per Councillor, to enable them to determine the spend within their Ward

The result from this amendment is:

5. No change to the proposed value of the Capital Budget 2021-2026
6. The setting up of a new Community Improvement Fund, which will comprise the capital resources identified by the Working Group’s review of the current Capital Programme, with a target of £950,000 (0.5% of the 2022/23 programme). This will give an allocation of £50,000 per three (3) Member Ward and £33,300 for a two (2) Member Ward.

7. The creation of a working group which will consist of:
 - a. The Cabinet Member for Finance, as Chair
 - b. The Shadow Finance Lead
 - c. Relevant Scrutiny Leads
 - d. Senior Officers (as required)
8. The Working Group will meet during the first quarter of financial year 2022/23 and report back to Full Council with the resultant amendments and proposals
9. The Working Group will consider:
 - a. Ease of application
 - b. Agreement on carry forward of un-spent allocations
 - c. Prioritisation
10. This new fund will work alongside and compliment:
 - a. The current revenue allocation to the Councillor Community Grants of £350,000, and
 - b. The current capital allocation to the Living Streets Fund of £160,000

S 151 Officer's Budget Robustness Statement

The law requires the Section 151 Officer to formally report to Council as part of the Council tax setting process their view on the robustness of estimates used in the budget setting process. This includes a view on the level of reserves which are held against specific liabilities and risks. In setting the Council Tax it is the collective obligation of all Councillors to ensure that the Council sets a balanced budget, taking account of these views.

The Section 151 Officer advises Council as follows:

This amendment reduces the Council's funding by £2.1m in financial year 2022/23 against the leaders amendment and in each year following. Members need to be aware that services provided to the vulnerable in the City are already under extreme pressure due to rising demand and that in the future. Given that some of the offsetting savings identified in the amendment are "one off" savings i.e. savings only available in one year, from 2023/24 these will need to be replaced with fresh savings. There is a significant risk - given that 68% of the Council's expenditure lies in the area of social care for children and adults - that the decision to opt for a nil increase in Council Tax may lead to service reductions in these areas from 2023/24 which would not otherwise be needed.

Further, for the avoidance of doubt, Council needs to be aware that forgoing a Council Tax increase in 2022/23 entails a loss of funding of £2.1m in each year moving forward. This would mean savings of £10.5m over 5 years. The Section 151 Officer wishes to provide strong and clear advice to Council that adopting such a course is not in the financial interests of the Council and that will add to the need to make savings in service provision from 2023/24 onwards.

Members agreed to adjourn for 30 minutes to consider the amendment.

Following debate, with contributions from Councillors Nicholson, Wheeler, Dr Buchan, Bowyer, Stoneman, Laing, Cresswell, Mrs Bridgeman, Evans OBE, Derrick, Stevens, Deacon, Dann, Singh, Drean, Neil, Salmon, Corvid, Riley, Downie, Kelly, Goslin, Hulme, Mrs Pengelly, Coker, Jordan, Morris, Penberthy, Dr Mahony, Wakeham.

Council voted on the amendment as follows:

For (29) Councillors Allen, Mrs Aspinall, Bowyer, Mrs Bowyer, Dr Buchan, Churchill, Coker, Corvid, Dr Cree, Cresswell, Dann, Derrick, Evans OBE, Goslin, Haydon, Hendy, Hulme, Mrs Johnson, Laing, Lowry, McDonald, Morris, Murphy, Neil, Penberthy, Rennie, Stevens, Tuffin, Vincent.

Against (25) Councillors Bingley, Mrs Bridgeman (DLM), Burden, Carlyle, Collins, Deacon, Downie, Drean, Harrison, Jordan, Kelly, Loveridge, Dr Mahony, Nicholson, Partridge, Patel, Mrs Pengelly, Riley, Salmon, Shayer, Singh, Smith, Stoneman, Wakeham and Councillor Mrs Beer (LM).

Abstain (2) Councillors Ms Watkin and Wheeler.

Absent/ did not vote (1) Councillor James.

The amendment was carried and formed part of the substantive motion.

Councillors Evans OBE proposed to move to the vote (a closure motion vote). This was seconded by Councillor Rennie.

Members voted as follows:

For (52) Councillors Allen, Mrs Aspinall, Bingley, Bowyer, Mrs Bowyer, Mrs Bridgeman (DLM), Dr Buchan, Burden, Carlyle, Churchill, Coker, Collins, Corvid, Dr Cree, Cresswell, Dann, Deacon, Derrick, Drean, Evans OBE, Goslin, Harrison, Haydon, Hendy, Hulme, Mrs Johnson, Kelly, Laing, Loveridge, Lowry, Dr Mahony, McDonald, Morris, Murphy, Neil, Partridge, Patel, Penberthy, Mrs Pengelly, Rennie, Riley, Shayer, Singh, Smith, Stevens, Stoneman, Tuffin, Vincent, Wakeham, Ms Watkin, Wheeler and Councillor Mrs Beer (LM).

Against (1) Councillor Salmon.

Abstain (2) Councillors Jordan and Nicholson.

Absent/ did not vote (1) Councillor James

Members voted on the substantive motion as follows:

For (29) Councillors Allen, Mrs Aspinall, Bowyer, Mrs Bowyer, Dr Buchan, Churchill, Coker, Corvid, Dr Cree, Cresswell, Dann, Derrick, Evans OBE, Goslin, Haydon, Hendy, Hulme, Mrs Johnson, Laing, Lowry, McDonald, Morris, Murphy, Neil, Penberthy, Rennie, Stevens, Tuffin, Vincent.

Against (25) Councillors Bingley, Mrs Bridgeman (DLM), Burden, Carlyle, Collins, Deacon, Downie, Drean, Harrison, Jordan, Kelly, Loveridge, Dr Mahony, Nicholson, Partridge, Patel,

Mrs Pengelly, Riley, Salmon, Shayer, Singh, Smith, Stoneman, Wakeham and Councillor Mrs Beer (LM).

Abstain (2) Councillors Ms Watkin and Wheeler.

Absent/ did no vote (1) Councillor James.