

# **FINANCE COUNCIL**

## **Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

**PRESENT** – *The Mayor, Councillor Suleman Khonat, Councillor Ali, Baldwin, Brookfield, Browne, Casey, Connor, Desai M, Fazal, Fielding, Floyd, Gee, Gunn, Harling, Hardman, Humphrys, Hussain I, Hussain M, Hussain S, Irfan, Imtiaz, Jackson, Khan S, Liddle, Mahmood, Marrow, McCaughran, McGurk, Patel Ab, Patel Alt, Raja, Rawat, Rigby, Riley, Russell, Sidat, Shorrocks, Slater Jacq, Slater Jo, Slater Ju, Slater N, Smith D, Smith J, Talbot, Taylor, and Whittingham.*

### **RESOLUTIONS**

#### **60 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chief Executive read out the notice convening the meeting.

There then followed Prayers by the Mayor's Chaplain.

A minute's silence was then held in memory of the victims of the recent earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, and also in memory of former MP for Rossendale and Darwen, Janet Anderson.

Apologies were received from Councillors Akhtar H, Akhtar P, Desai S, Khan Z and Salton.

#### **61 Minutes Of The Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** –The Minutes of the Council Forum Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

#### **62 Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were received.

#### **63 Mayoral Communications**

The Mayor reported on events he had attended since the last meeting, in particular, the events to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day and the first anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The Mayor also referred to the Mayor's Ball held the previous Friday at Stanley House, and thanked all who attended and supported the event.

#### **64 Pay Policy Statement 2023/24 and Senior Management Update**

Finance Council received a report which sought approval of the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24 and to update Council on changes to the senior

management structure considered by the Chief Executive and Chief Officers Employment Committee. The report also included details of the Chief Executive and Chief Officers pay scales and the range of salaries across the whole organisation during this period of time. The data was extracted and collated on 31 December 2022.

The Leader advised that, since publication of the agenda, interviews had been held for the post of Strategic Director, Children & Education (DCS) and Jo Siddle had been offered the role, and the Leader requested Finance Council to endorse the recommendations of the Chief Officer Employment Committee in this regard and also in relation to the deletion of the post of Strategic Director, Resources, and re-designation of and regrading of the post of Director of Finance.

## **RESOLVED –**

That Finance Council:

1. Approve the Pay Policy Statement as set out at Appendix A;
2. Endorse the recommendations of the Chief Officer Employment Committee to delete the post of the Strategic Director, Resources (SIRO) following the resignation of the postholder and in respect of the re-designation and regrading of the post of Director of Finance to Strategic Director, Finance & Resources (s151/SIRO);
3. Authorise the Monitoring Officer to update the Constitution reflecting the changes set out in this report in respect of Chief Officer responsibilities; and
4. Approve the Chief Officer Employment Committee's recommendations in respect of the appointment of Jo Siddle as Strategic Director, Children & Education (DCS).

## **65. Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24**

Members received a report, which outlined changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme and sought approval for its adoption for 2023/24.

Following discussion, Finance Council moved to a recorded vote, with Councillors voting as follows:

### **FOR**

*Ali, Brookfield, Casey, Desai M, Fazal, Fielding, Floyd, Gunn, Harling, Humphrys, Hussain I, Hussain M, Hussain S, Irfan, Imtiaz, Jackson, Khan S, Khonat, Liddle, Mahmood, McCaughran, McGurk, Patel Ab, Raja, Rawat, Riley, Shorrocks, Sidat, Smith D, Smith J, Talbot, Taylor and Whittingham.*

### **AGAINST**

*Baldwin, Connor, Gee, Hardman, Marrow, Patel Alt, Rigby, Russell, Slater Jacq, Slater Jo, and Slater Ju.*

## **ABSTAIN**

*Browne and Slater N.*

## **RESOLVED -**

That Finance Council:

1. Notes the contents of the report; and
2. Approves the Council Tax Support Scheme for the financial year 2023/24.

## **66 The Robustness of Estimates 2023/24 and Adequacy of Reserves**

Members received a report on the robustness of the Council's budget estimates for 2023/24 and the adequacy of financial reserves in accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003.

Members were reminded that Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 placed a statutory requirement on the Council's Chief Financial Officer to report on:

- 1** the robustness of the estimates within the overall budget, and
- 2** the adequacy of the proposed level of financial reserves

Councillors needed to have regard to the report when making decisions on the 2023/24 Budget (Revenue Budget and Capital Programme) and the level of Council Tax for 2023/24.

## **RESOLVED –**

Finance Council considered and had regard to the statements from the Director of Finance (as the Council's statutory finance officer) as provided at Appendix A when determining the budget (Revenue Budget and Capital Programme) and the level of Council Tax for 2023/24.

## **67 General Revenue Budget 2023/24 (including an update on the Financial Strategy 2022/25)**

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance, Councillor Vicky McGurk, on behalf of the Labour Group, presented proposals on the General Revenue Budget 2023/24 (including an update on the Financial Strategy 2022/25).

The report set out the proposed General Fund Revenue Budget for 2023/24. A report elsewhere on the Agenda for the meeting provided details of the proposed Capital Programme for 2023/24.

The report set out details of the Autumn Statement, the Local Government Finance Policy Statement and information on the Local Government Finance Settlement, details of which were confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on 8th February 2023.

The report gave extensive information on the challenging national economic backdrop and the cost pressures faced, and the Council's budget approach, and whilst the proposed budget for 2023/24 was balanced, there remained a budget gap of c£12.2m to 2025/26, and details were provided of the measures to deal with the budget gap.

*The report contained the following recommendations, which were voted on in conjunction with the recommendations in the Capital Programme report, following debate on both items.*

## **RESOLVED -**

Finance Council is recommended to:-

- a) acknowledge the impact of the increase in the Real/National Living Wage as set out below and note that a report on the impact of this on the hourly rates and contract changes for Social Care Providers for 2023/24 will be submitted to the Executive Board in due course;
- b) approve the service investment proposals as set out in the report;
- c) approve the savings proposals as set out at Appendix B;
- d) note the estimated balance of reserves as at 31st March 2023 as shown at Appendix C;
- e) approve the General Fund Budget Requirement for 2023/24 as set out at Appendix D to this report;
- f) require each Portfolio to operate within the individual Portfolio Controllable Budgets for 2023/24 as set out at Appendix D and that these be cash limited and subject to regular monitoring and control;
- g) approve an increase in the general Council Tax of 2.99% (reflecting a weekly increase of £0.98p for Band D Council Tax payers and of £0.65p for Band A Council Tax payers);
- h) approve an additional increase in Council Tax of 2.00% to contribute towards the additional costs of Adult Social Care (reflecting a weekly increase of £0.65p for Band D Council Tax payers and of £0.44p for Band A Council Tax payers);
- i) note the update to the Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan for 2022/25 as set out Appendix F and note that a further report on the implementation of the Strategy will be submitted to the Executive Board in June 2023.

The report submitted sought approval for the 2023/24 – 2025/26 Capital Strategy, set out in Appendix 1 and Capital Programme, set out in Appendix 6.

The Capital Strategy gave a high-level overview of how the Council's capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services, along with an overview of how associated risks were managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

Decisions made on capital and treasury management would have financial consequences for the Authority for many years into the future. They were therefore subject to both a national regulatory framework and to a local policy framework, summarised in the report.

*The recommendations in the report were then voted on in conjunction with the recommendations in the Revenue Budget Report:*

## **FOR**

*Ali, Brookfield, Casey, Desai M, Fazal, Fielding, Floyd, Gunn, Harling, Humphrys, Hussain I, Hussain M, Hussain S, Irfan, Imtiaz, Jackson, Khan S, Khonat, Liddle, Mahmood, McCaughran, McGurk, Patel Ab, Raja, Rawat, Riley, Shorrocks, Sidat, Smith D, Smith J, Talbot, Taylor and Whittingham.*

## **AGAINST**

*Baldwin, Browne, Connor, Gee, Hardman, Marrow, Patel Alt, Rigby, Russell, Slater Jacq, Slater Jo, Slater Ju and Slater N.*

## **ABSTAIN**

*None.*

The recommendations contained in the reports at Agenda Items 8&9 were therefore carried.

## **RESOLVED**

Members are recommended to:

2.1. approve the Capital Strategy for 2023/26 (Appendix 1), including:

- a) the Council's Capitalisation Policy, as outlined in Appendix 2;
- b) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement, which determines the Council's policy for repayment of debt (Appendix 3);
- c) the proposed prudential indicators for the forthcoming year (Appendix 4);
- d) the proposed Investment Strategy for 2023/24, as outlined in Appendix 5;
- e) the proposed Use of Capital Receipts Strategy, as outlined in Appendix 6.

2.2. Approve the proposed Capital Programme for 2023/24, as outlined in Appendix 6 and Appendix 6A.

2.3. Note the indicative programmes for 2024/25 and 2025/26 as shown in Appendix 6 and acknowledge that these will be subject to further review as part of the development of future years' capital programmes.

2.4. Delegate authority to the Director of Finance to determine the most appropriate method of financing the capital programme.

## **69 Council Tax 2023/24**

A report was submitted on the Council's requirement to set amounts of Council Tax Before 11<sup>th</sup> March in the financial year preceding that for which it was set.

In setting its Council Tax requirement, the Council took into account any funding from reserves, income it expected to raise and general funding it would receive from Government as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement.

The Council was also required to set a basic amount of Council Tax for the financial year 2023/24. The Council Tax was set on the basis of:

- a) The precept on the Collection Fund issued by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire.
- b) The precept on the Collection Fund issued by the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority.
- c) The Borough Council's precept on the Collection Fund, which is dependent on two factors: (i) Its Council Tax requirement, and (ii) The precepts issued by the seven Parish / Town Councils.

The Council was recommended to approve the draft resolution setting the Council Tax for 2023/24, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report submitted and in also in the Appendix to these Minutes. Following discussion, Finance Council moved to a recorded vote, with Councillors voting as follows:

### **FOR**

*Ali, Brookfield, Casey, Desai M, Fazal, Fielding, Floyd, Gunn, Harling, Humphrys, Hussain I, Hussain M, Hussain S, Irfan, Imtiaz, Jackson, Khan S, Khonat, Liddle, Mahmood, McCaughran, McGurk, Patel Ab, Raja, Rawat, Riley, Shorrocks, Sidat, Smith D, Smith J, Talbot, Taylor and Whittingham.*

### **AGAINST**

*Baldwin, Connor, Gee, Hardman, Marrow, Patel Alt, Rigby, Russell, Slater Jacq, Slater Jo, Slater Ju, and Slater N.*

### **ABSTAIN**

*Browne.*

**RESOLVED –**

That the draft resolution setting the Council Tax for 2023/24, be approved as set out in Appendix 1 of the report submitted and in also in the Appendices to these Minutes.

Signed at a meeting of the Council Forum

On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023

(being the ensuing meeting of the Council) by

MAYOR

## Appendix 1

### Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

#### Draft Council Tax Resolution 2023/24 – Finance Council 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023

##### **The Council is recommended to resolve as follows:**

1. That it be noted that on 16th December 2022, the Council calculated the Council Tax Base for the year 2023/24 in accordance with regulations made under Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the Act):
  - a) 36,292.84 being the Council Tax Base for the whole of the Council area (Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Act); and
  - b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates, as detailed in Appendix 2.
2. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2023/24 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
  - a) £443,203,237 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) (a) to (f) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
  - b) £378,342,525 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) (a) to (d) of the Act.
  - c) £64,860,712 being the amount by which the aggregate at 2 (a) above exceeds the aggregate at 2 (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
  - d) £1,787.15 being the amount at 2 (c) above (Item R) divided by the amount at 1(a) above (Item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
  - e) £166,035.96 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (see Appendix 2).
  - f) £1,782.58 Being the amount at 2 (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 2 (e) above by Item T (1 (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2)



of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.

3. That it be noted that for the year 2023/24 the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Lancashire has issued a precept to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as indicated in the tables below.
4. That it be noted that for the year 2023/24 the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority has issued a precept to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as indicated in the tables below, however at the time of writing this report, the precept had yet to be presented to the Lancashire Fire Authority meeting (scheduled for Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023).
5. That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables below as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2023/24 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

a) Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

<u>Part of the Council's Area</u>	<u>Valuation Bands</u>							
	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>H</u>
Eccleshill Parish	£1,205.91	£1,406.89	£1,607.88	£1,808.86	£2,210.83	£2,612.80	£3,014.77	£3,617.72
Livesey Parish	£1,194.00	£1,393.00	£1,592.00	£1,791.00	£2,189.00	£2,587.00	£2,985.00	£3,582.00
North Turton Parish	£1,200.44	£1,400.51	£1,600.59	£1,800.66	£2,200.81	£2,600.95	£3,001.10	£3,601.32
Pleasington Parish	£1,192.11	£1,390.80	£1,589.48	£1,788.17	£2,185.54	£2,582.91	£2,980.28	£3,576.34
Tockholes Parish	£1,217.28	£1,420.16	£1,623.04	£1,825.92	£2,231.68	£2,637.44	£3,043.20	£3,651.84
Yate and Pickup Bank Parish	£1,203.14	£1,403.66	£1,604.19	£1,804.71	£2,205.76	£2,606.80	£3,007.85	£3,609.42
Darwen Town Council	£1,196.85	£1,396.33	£1,595.80	£1,795.28	£2,194.23	£2,593.18	£2,992.13	£3,590.56
All other parts of the Council's area	£1,188.39	£1,386.45	£1,584.52	£1,782.58	£2,178.71	£2,574.84	£2,970.97	£3,565.16

b) Major Precepting Authorities

<u>Precepting Authority</u>	<u>Valuation Bands</u>							
	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>H</u>
Lancashire Police Authority	£167.63	£195.57	£223.51	£251.45	£307.33	£363.21	£419.08	£502.90
Lancashire Combined Fire Authority	£54.85	£63.99	£73.13	£82.27	£100.55	£118.83	£137.12	£164.54

c) Aggregate Council Tax

<u>Part of the Council's Area</u>	<u>Valuation Bands</u>							
	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>H</u>
Eccleshill Parish	£1,428.39	£1,666.45	£1,904.52	£2,142.58	£2,618.71	£3,094.84	£3,570.97	£4,285.16
Livesey Parish	£1,416.48	£1,652.56	£1,888.64	£2,124.72	£2,596.88	£3,069.04	£3,541.20	£4,249.44
North Turton Parish	£1,422.92	£1,660.07	£1,897.23	£2,134.38	£2,608.69	£3,082.99	£3,557.30	£4,268.76
Pleasington Parish	£1,414.59	£1,650.36	£1,886.12	£2,121.89	£2,593.42	£3,064.95	£3,536.48	£4,243.78
Tockholes Parish	£1,439.76	£1,679.72	£1,919.68	£2,159.64	£2,639.56	£3,119.48	£3,599.40	£4,319.28
Yate and Pickup Bank Parish	£1,425.62	£1,663.22	£1,900.83	£2,138.43	£2,613.64	£3,088.84	£3,564.05	£4,276.86
Darwen Town Council	£1,419.33	£1,655.89	£1,892.44	£2,129.00	£2,602.11	£3,075.22	£3,548.33	£4,258.00
All other parts of the Council's area	£1,410.87	£1,646.01	£1,881.16	£2,116.30	£2,586.59	£3,056.88	£3,527.17	£4,232.60

## Appendix 2

### Town and Parish Council Precepts

Parish / Town Council	<u>2022/23</u>				<u>2023/24</u>				<b><u>Council Tax Increase / (Reduction)</u></b> <u>Council Tax Band D</u> <u>2023/24 less 2022/23</u> £
	<u>Tax Base</u>	<u>Precepts</u>	<u>Grant</u>	<u>Council Tax</u> <u>Band D</u>	<u>Tax Base</u>	<u>Precepts</u>	<u>Grant</u>	<u>Council Tax</u> <u>Band D</u>	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Eccleshill Parish	94.66	2,462.11	413.50	26.01	92.44	2,429.00	413.50	26.28	0.27
Livesey Parish	2,235.21	18,463.00	1,371.00	8.26	2,335.57	19,665.00	1,371.00	8.42	0.16
North Turton Parish	1,771.66	32,159.00	1,241.00	18.15	1,778.74	32,159.00	1,241.00	18.08	(0.07)
Pleasington Parish	257.93	1,450.00	0.00	5.62	259.25	1,450.00	0.00	5.59	(0.03)
Tockholes Parish	208.33	8,574.91	146.00	41.16	207.90	9,010.96	146.00	43.34	2.18
Yate and Pickup Bank Parish	143.68	3,180.00	260.00	22.13	145.82	3,227.00	260.00	22.13	0.00
Darwen Town Council	7,560.39	98,095.00	23,905.00	12.97	7,722.97	98,095.00	23,905.00	12.70	(0.27)
<b>TOTAL / AVERAGE</b>	<b>12,271.86</b>	<b>164,384.02</b>	<b>27,336.50</b>	<b>4.64</b>	<b>12,542.69</b>	<b>164,384.02</b>	<b>27,336.50</b>	<b>4.57</b>	<b>(0.07)</b>