



Leicester
City Council

Minute Extract

Minutes of the Meeting of the
HERITAGE, CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: MONDAY, 25 JANUARY 2021 at 4:00 pm as a Zoom meeting

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Halford (Chair)
Councillor Gee (Vice Chair)

Councillor Dr Barton

Councillor Dr Moore

Councillor Nangreave

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111. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Cole and Councillor Shelton.

112. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Moore declared an interest in that her son was employed by the Library Service.

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, this interest was not considered so significant that it was likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgment of the public interest and Councillor Moore was not therefore required to withdraw from the meeting.

122. DRAFT GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2021/22 AND DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22

The Director of Finance submitted a report setting out the City Mayor's proposed Draft General Fund Budget for 2021/22 and Draft Capital Programme 2021/22.

The Deputy Director of Finance presented the report on the Draft General Fund Budget and outlined the following:

- The budget presented was a one-year stop-gap budget due to the uncertainty created by the Covid 19 pandemic. A more thorough financial assessment would take place when there was more clarity.

- Significant additional funding would be required for Social Care. The Government expected the Council to raise Council Tax by an additional 3% to contribute to the extra costs.
- The budget was balanced, with £20m in reserves. However substantial savings would be required to balance future years budgets.
- The Local Government Finance Settlement would create some minor changes.

The Deputy Director of Finance also presented the report on the Draft Capital Programme and outlined the following:

- Like the General Fund Budget, a one-year skeleton Programme was proposed.
- Many of the current schemes delayed by the pandemic would have to continue into the next financial year.
- Schemes covered in existing Capital Programmes were not covered by the new Programme,
- Proposed new schemes which were of note to the Commission included:
 - a. Conservation of Buildings Grants
 - b. Festive Decorations
 - c. Improvements and maintenance of De Montfort Hall
 - d. A further round of Heritage Interpretation Panels

Members of the Commission discussed the reports which included the following points:

- There were concerns that the public might not understand why Council Tax was being raised, and the reasons for that needed to be made clear.
- It was suggested that the budget impacts of the pandemic could be added to the Tourism Action Plan.
- It was hoped that a more long-range budget could be presented to the Commission early in 2022.
- There would clearly be a continuing loss of income for Sports Services in the next financial year due to the pandemic. The income shortfall would be managed corporately and some of the losses would be claimed back from the Government's Fees and Charges Income Support Scheme, which was set to continue through the first quarter of the new financial year.
- A corporate contingency budget of £10m was in place for one-off costs and income losses associated with the pandemic.
- A decision would need to be taken about whether certain facilities should re-open once Covid 19 measures were eased.
- A plan was being looked at in terms of tourism for the summer months, with particular focus on encouraging staycations.
- The Council's contribution to the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Record Office had increased, following a review of costs and cost-sharing.

AGREED:

1. The Overview and Select Committee be advised that the commission:
 - a. Regretted the necessary rise in Council Tax and wanted the reasons for it to be made clear to the public.
 - b. Requested that the Executive recognise the particularly severe impact of the pandemic on Sports Services, and that the negative impact of that upon the health and wellbeing of the people of Leicester.
 - c. Requested that the Executive set out details of corporate support available in the budget for Sports Services.
 - d. Requested a commitment of financial support for recovery for Sports Services.
2. That the Draft Capital Programme 2021/22 be noted.