

**JOINT MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES
HELD AT 6.00PM ON
MONDAY 23 JANUARY 2023
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL**

Committee Members Present: Councillors I Yasin (Chair), J Allen, S Barkham, N Bi, C Burbage, G Casey, N Day, G Elsey, M Farooq, S Farooq, C Fenner, J A Fox, J R Fox, C Harper, M Haseeb, M Jamil, A Iqbal, A Jones, D Jones, K Knight, D Over, M Perkins, S Qayyum, M Rangzeb, R Ray, L Robinson, B Rush, M Sabir, N Sandford, A Shaheed, L Sharp, H Skibsted, B Tyler and C Wiggin

Non-Statutory Co-opted Members Present: Parish Councillor Neil Boyce, Independent Co-opted Member (non-voting)

Also present: Councillor Hogg, Group Leader of Liberal Democrats and Eva Woods Youth MP

Officers Present:

- Matthew Gladstone, Chief Executive
- Cecilie Booth, Executive Director, Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer
- Charlotte Black, Executive Director, People Services
- Adrian Chapman, Executive Director, Place and Economy
- Rochelle Tapping, Director of Law and Governance
- Jonathan Lewis, Director of Education
- Emmeline Watkins, Deputy Director of Public Health
- Patricia Phillipson, Service Director Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer
- Emma Riding, Budget Planning and Reporting Manager
- Rachel Edwards, Head of Constitutional Services
- Philippa Turvey, Democratic and Constitutional Services Manager
- Ramin Shams, Senior Democratic Services Officer
- Charlotte Cameron, Democratic Services Officer

Cabinet Members Present:

- Councillor Fitzgerald, Leader of the Council
- Councillor S Allen, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communication, Culture and Communities
- Councillor Ayres, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Skills, and the University
- Councillor Marco Cereste, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Planning, Housing and Transport
- Councillor Coles, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Governance
- Councillor Howard, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health, and Public Health
- Councillor Simons, Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene, and the Environment

Councillor Bisby, Cabinet Advisor to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Skills, and the University

Councillor Hussain, Cabinet Advisor to the Cabinet Member for
Communication, Culture and Communities

Councillor Nicolle Moyo, Cabinet Advisor for Law, and Governance

Councillor Oliver Sainsbury, Cabinet Advisor to the Leader

The Senior Democratic Services Officer opened the meeting by welcoming everyone present and those members of the public and press who were watching the livestream of the meeting through the Council's YouTube page.

1. NOMINATION OF CHAIR

The Senior Democratic Services Officer advised the Committee that in accordance with *Part 4, Section 8 – Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules, section 13, Joint Meetings of Scrutiny Committees* a Chair would be required to be appointed from among the Chairs of the Committees who were holding the meeting. Nominations were sought from those present who were Councillor Barkham Chair of the Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Day Chair of the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Robinson Chair of the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Yasin Chair of the Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Yasin was nominated by Councillor Robinson and seconded by Councillor Barkham. There being no further nominations, Councillor Yasin was appointed Chair of this committee.

The Chair welcomed everyone present and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for all members of each Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the Draft Budget 2023/24 And Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2023/26 and the Second Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel Report.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lane and Councillor Hemraj, and Councillor Iqbal was in attendance as substitute.

Apologies for absence were also received from Statutory Education Co-opted Members Peter Cantley and Dr Andy Stone, Parish Councillor Michael Samways and Independent Co-opted Members Sandie Burns MBE, Stuart Dawks, Dr Esther Norton, and Christine De Wilde.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

No declarations of interest or whipping declarations were received.

4. DRAFT BUDGET 2023/24 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023/26

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Governance introduced the report and highlighted the following:

The report presented a balanced draft budget for 2023-2024. Tributes were given to the organisation, and all involved in the budget production, where there had been huge strides to make it financially sustainable. Thanks were extended to Members and their collaborative efforts that had made this possible.

The Financial Sustainability Working Group met monthly to discuss the progress of the budget and the Cabinet Member was pleased to say that the budget included proposals suggested by the opposition groups, as outlined in section 3 of the main report.

There were many factors that affected the budget, such as soaring inflation, increased energy prices and the rapidly rising population.

The budget included the plan to increase Council tax by 4.99%, which had been in line with the expectations of central government. Officers had acknowledged that residents were facing their own financial challenges, but the rise would support the Council in meeting service demand. There had been a detailed review on demand led services within the Council and the focus within this budget had been on service transformation. However, caution was advised as there remained uncertainty around government funding and the upcoming reforms for Adult Social Care.

The feedback from residents, businesses and community groups was greatly received, and had been included in Appendix C and a formal response would be presented at Cabinet on 13 February 2023. Members were reminded that this was a draft version and there were a few technicalities to be finalised ahead of adoption at Council. These expected changes had been highlighted in section 2.4 of the main report.

The Joint Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

Section	Questions / Comment from Members	Response from Relevant Cabinet Member / Executive Director
Introduction of Draft Budget 2023/2024 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2023-2024	Members referred to the review of all contracts and queried how that had been done.	The Executive Director of Corporate Services advised that CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) had been brought in to review all contracts and

