

CABINET

At a meeting of Cabinet held on
10 January 2018

- (Present)** **Councillor Grunewald (Chairman)**
Councillors J Banks, Fulham, A Johnson, Long,
Murphy, Neal and Quinn
- (Not present)** **Councillors L Preston and Shields**
- (Also Present)** **Councillors Clarke, J Jackson and Maloney**

76 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Preston and Shields.

77 MINUTES

- * **Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on
6 December 2017 be approved and signed.**

78 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

No declarations of interest from Members were made.

79 ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no issues arising from Overview and Scrutiny.

80 BUDGET REPORT

A report was submitted which reported that Council had agreed a three-year Budget covering 2017-2020 at its meeting held on 1 March 2017.

The report highlighted the key issues influencing the delivery of that budget and recommended an 'in principle' Council Tax increase, which would be subject to public and other stakeholder consultation.

The Government delivered its Autumn Budget on 16 November 2017. This was set against the impending exit from the European Union and the implications of this on the economy, public spending and growth forecasts.

The Autumn Budget included a move away from the strict Austerity measures of previous Budgets with additional spending in a number of areas, a planned move away from previous budget deficit targets and a removal of public sector pay constraints.

The Government, in its previous Local Government settlement, included the offer of a fixed grant settlement for four years, subject to individual Councils publishing an efficiency plan for the same period. It was agreed that the Council would take

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up this offer and the DCLG has confirmed that the Council's efficiency plan had been accepted and that the grant guarantee was now in place.

The Liverpool City Region was asked if it wished to participate in a pilot for the move to 100% Business Rates retention. This offer was accepted and this had now been implemented and would continue into 2019-20.

The position for the remaining two years of the agreed budget was detailed in the report.

* **Resolved that:**

- (1) **the Capital Investment Programme for 2018-19 to 2020-21 be agreed;**
- (2) **an 'in principle' 5.99% increase in Council Tax is proposed, which includes a Care Precept of 3%;**
- (3) **the amount calculated by St Helens Borough Council as its tax base for the year 2018-19 shall be 50,563;**
- (4) **the amounts calculated by St Helens Borough Council as the tax base (after allowing for exemptions, discounts and collection rate) for each of its Parishes for the year 2018-19, shall be:**

Bold	1,092
Rainford	2,912
Eccleston	3,859
Windle	978
Rainhill	3,703
Billinge	2,025
Seneley Green	1,372

- (5) **delegation be provided, for the approval of the Non-Domestic Rate Return for 2018-19, to the Deputy Chief Executive and Strategic Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.**

81 **COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION**

A report was submitted which updated Members in relation to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (2017-18) which had been approved by Council on 18 January 2017.

The Council was required to formally review whether to revise or replace its council tax reduction scheme, no later than 11 March each financial year.

The current Scheme (2017-18) was approved by Council on 18 January 2017. It incorporated:

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- (a) *“Prescribed Requirements”*, issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, which sets out the minimum level of support that must be provided to pension-age households and states the classes of persons who are excluded from making a claim under the scheme; and
- (b) A locally determined scheme for working-age households.

Cabinet were asked to consider proposed changes to the St Helens Council Tax Reduction Scheme (2017-18) which were detailed in the report.

The Scheme, as a discount, had the effect of reducing the council tax base. The anticipated cost of provided support had been built into the Council’s budgetary projections and council tax base calculation for 2018-19.

* **Resolved that Council be recommended to:**

- (1) **approve the St Helens Council Tax Reduction Scheme (2018-19), detailed at appendix 1. This Scheme will apply for the financial year commencing 1 April 2018 and will replace the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme (2017-18); and**
- (2) **delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and Strategic Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Corporate Services, should it become necessary to make any amendments to the Scheme arising from changes to Regulations issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.**

82 CORPORATE FINANCIAL REPORT

A report was submitted which reviewed and updated Members on the latest financial position of the Council for the current financial year 2016/17. The Corporate Financial Report is produced quarterly and this report provides an updated position for the 3rd quarter.

The main elements of the report were contained in the attached commentary on the Council's Financial Position.

<u>Section</u>	<u>Content</u>
1	Capital Programme 2017/18 to 2019/20
2	Revenue Budget 2017/18
3	Risks, Reserves and Balances
4	Treasury Management Position Statement
5	Corporate Risk Register

* **Resolved that Council be recommended to:**

- (i) **approve the latest Capital Programme as shown at Annex A;**
- (ii) **approve the revised Revenue Budget for 2017/18 as detailed in Section 2;**

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- (iii) note the latest Risks, Reserves and Balances position;
- (iv) note the Treasury Management Position Statement; and
- (v) note the Corporate Risk Register.

83 ST HELENS COUNCIL'S COMPREHENSIVE EQUALITY POLICY 2018-21 AND ACCESSIBILITY CHARTER

A report was submitted which informed Cabinet that the Council has had a Comprehensive Equality Policy since 2003. The current version of the Policy had been in place since 2014 and due for review as part of the regular policy review cycle. There had been no major changes to equality legislation since the Equality Act 2010. However, a number of amendments had been made to the Policy as a result of review process which were listed in the report.

Cabinet were informed that St Helens Council's Accessibility Charter was a set of principles which St Helens Council will adopt in recognition of the 150-year anniversary of the Borough. It will act as a legacy and a commitment to create an environment based on equality of access, fair entitlement, concern for the wellbeing of others, and respect for individual dignity. It set out what Members, people who work for the council and people who make use of council services should expect as a minimum standard.

*** Resolved that:**

- (1) the Council's Comprehensive Equality Policy 2018-21 be approved; and
- (2) the St Helens Council Accessibility Charter be adopted.