

Report of the Cabinet

The CABINET reports and recommends as follows:-

1. Sunderland City Plan 2019-2030 – Annual Assurance Process

That they have given consideration to a report of the Executive Director of Corporate Services (copy attached) which details the City Plan and Indicative Timeline assurance process and the proposed updating of the Plan and Timeline.

At the meeting of Scrutiny Coordinating Committee on 9 December 2021, Members recommended that some of the components of the *Carbon Neutral City Council by 2030*, and *Adult Mental Health Strategy Delivered (in 2026)* timeline activities be inserted into the timeline in the intervening years. This would help demonstrate progress towards completion of these activities and also their relationship with the delivery of other objectives.

Where possible, this additional detail and contributing activities will be added to the timeline in advance of publication of the final, approved version. No entries will be removed from the timeline as set out in the attached draft plan, in the process.

Accordingly, the Cabinet, having considered the details of the City Plan and Indicative Timeline assurance process, recommended to Council to approve the proposed updates to the City Plan and Indicative Timeline (as an Article 4 Plan under the Constitution).

2. Council Tax Base 2022/2023

That they have given consideration to a report of the Executive Director of Corporate Services (copy attached) on the calculation of the Council Tax Base for 2022/2023 and to seek approval to recommend to Council the Council Tax Base for 2022/2023 in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012.

Accordingly, the Cabinet recommended to Council that:-

- (a) The report for the calculation of the Tax Bases for the City Council and Hetton Town Council for 2022/2023 be approved; and
- (b) That pursuant to the report and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992 and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Sunderland City Council as its Council Tax Base for the year 2021/2022, shall be 72,161 and for the area of Hetton Town Council shall be 4,052.

3. Local Council Tax Support Scheme

That they have given consideration to a report of the Executive Director of Corporate Services (copy attached) requesting that Cabinet consider, for the purposes of paragraph 5 of Schedule 1A to the Local Government Finance Act (LGFA) 1992, whether the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS) –which is the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme under section 13A(2) LGFA 1992 – should be revised or replaced with another scheme for the financial year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Accordingly, the Cabinet recommended to Council that:-

- (i) The current LCTSS for the City of Sunderland, the main features of which are set out at Appendix A, be amended from 1 April 2022 to incorporate any legislative changes to the prescribed requirements for the Scheme (the Scheme) but that it be not otherwise revised or replaced; and
- (ii) The approved LCTSS for the financial year 2022/2023 be published on the Council's website and in any additional manner determined by the Executive Director of Corporate Services in consultation with the Cabinet Secretary.

4. Members' Allowances Scheme - Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

That they have given consideration to a joint report of the Executive Director of Corporate Services and Assistant Director of Law and Governance (copy attached) on the Members' Allowances Scheme for the next financial year.

The Independent Remuneration Panel has considered the number and level of allowances currently paid to Members and its report is attached as Appendix 1. The Panel has recommended that the basic allowance be increased by 2% to £8,536 with effect from 1 April 2022. As the NJC pay award for 2021/22 has not yet been confirmed, with the current offer by employers of 1.75% not having been accepted by Trades Unions the proposed increase is in line with the assumption included in the Council's medium term financial plan for the main pay award for Council staff, excluding any separate pay award increases that are given to specific groups, such as lower paid staff or Chief Officers.

Cabinet noted the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel but considered that in light of the ongoing pandemic and the financial pressures being faced by residents in the City, the scheme should remain unchanged.

Accordingly, the Cabinet recommended to Council:-

- (i) to note the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel; and
- (ii) to approve that the scheme of allowances remain unchanged for the following financial year, as it was considered that there should not be any increase to members' allowances at this time, in view of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the financial pressures being faced by residents in the City.

