

BUDGET CONSULTATION - NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATEPAYERS

WEDNESDAY, 6 JANUARY 2021

PRESENT:- Councillors David Renard (Leader of the Council and Chair), Russell Holland (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills) and Mick Bowden (Corporate Director Finance and Assets).

1. Welcome and Introduction

Councillors David Renard (Leader of the Council and Chair) welcomed participants to the virtual meeting.

It was noted that Under Section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 the Council had a duty to consult with representatives of Non-Domestic Ratepayers regarding its proposals for expenditure. The Council had set out to achieve this by way of (a) a Public Notice placed in the Swindon Evening Advertiser on 28th December 2020, (b) a similar notification being placed on the Council's website from 8th December 2020, and (c) arrangements for the virtual meeting being circulated to the business community by the Business and Economy Manager via the Business Newsletter. It was noted that Mr Aled Thomas (Swindon Advertiser) had joined the meeting as an observer. To enable those observing to join the meeting, it was recommended that they e-mailed CommitteeServices@swindon.gov.uk to enable the clerk to forward an invitation allowing them to participate in the meeting. No requests were received.

The Chair noted that a link to the publically available agenda papers that included the Budget Management Update 2020/21 report was submitted to the Cabinet on 2nd December 2020 and that the Cabinet's Budget proposals had been included in the invitation.

2. Budget Management Update 2020/21

Councillor Russell Holland introduced the report and referred to the reduction in the financial grant from Central Government over the past years. He drew attention to the increase in demand for Adult Social Care, together with Children Services, that were having an adverse financial impact on the budget. He referred to the Council's operational changes and commented on the myriad ways the Council was continuing to support the community. He added that Swindon's council tax was lower than the unitary average and that due to the increase in demand, an increase in the council tax was being proposed. Councillor Holland explained that whilst this increase was not welcomed by all, it was necessary to ensure continued help and support to those in need.

With regards to business tax, Councillor Holland confirmed that the Council helped distribute grants received from Central Government in support of local businesses and referred to the Council's inability to amend business rates as these were set by Central Government.

Due to the lack of participants at the meeting, the Chair closed the meeting. It was noted that no responses or submissions had been received to date. It was agreed that any

comments or submissions that were received from the business community prior to the Cabinet meeting on 3rd February 2021 would be reported at that meeting.