

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the RESOURCES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE (CDC) held on 23 JANUARY 2018

PRESENT: Councillor N Rose - Chairman
" C Jones - Vice Chairman

Councillors: A Bacon
C Ford
A Garth
J MacBean
V Martin
D Phillips
D Varley
J Waters
C Wertheim

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors J Gladwin, M Harrold and M Shaw

21 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2017 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

23 28 DAY NOTICE

The Committee was advised that the 'King George V House Car Parking' item had been removed from the Cabinet 28 day notice due to the planning application having been deferred at the Planning Committee held on 11 January 2018.

RESOLVED

That the 28 day notice for Cabinet and the Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Committee be noted.

24 SERVICE PLAN SUMMARIES 2018/19

The Committee received the report and appendices which could be seen on pages 23-140 of the reports pack. The report provided the service plan summaries for each service area within the Councils and the Performance and Policy Officer provided a verbal update to the Committee highlighting the key issues for each service area.

Whilst acknowledged by the Committee that detail was required for internal management purposes and also for the publication of the summaries on the Council's internet site, the Committee believed that the Service Plan Summaries contained excessive information for what was required to be presented to Members. The Committee requested that in the future these be presented in a much more concise manner that highlighted the key actions proposed for the coming year and any significant service changes from the previous year. They should also be written using clearer language which could be understood by all.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

Note 1: Cllr A Garth entered the meeting at 6.40 p.m.

25 PERFORMANCE REPORT Q2 2017/18

The Committee received the report and appendices which could be seen on pages 141 – 156 of the reports pack. The report outlined the annual performance of Council services against pre-agreed performance indicators and service objectives for quarter 2 of 2017-18 and the Performance and Policy Officer provided a verbal update to the Committee. Key points raised by the officer included the details of the five off target performance indicators as seen on page 142 of the reports pack.

During discussion, the below points were raised:

- The long term sickness target had been higher than expected, it was understood that this figure included those employees who were on phased returns which was due to be looked at by HR and Occupational Health in terms of future recording statistics. Members asked whether the staff survey results would highlight any staff morale issues and were advised that the findings from the survey would be reported to members through the Committee cycle.
- It was stressed that the majority of long term absentees were genuine cases, whilst HR were looking at future courses of action on individual

cases where capability to return to work may be an issue and informing the Joint Staffing Committee on these.

- The CdEH2 figure which was under target had included businesses which were due for re-evaluation but had not opted in to be assessed. Members suggested that ways be explored to prompt these businesses advising it was of no cost to them.
- Key Performance Indicators for the Planning service were green and this was queried given the staff turnover and recruitment issues the service was facing. The performance indicators in the report covered quarter 2 and the Committee were advised that these were likely to have declined through quarters 3 and 4. The Committee were advised of a recent recruitment fayre for Planning staff held by the Council which had been productive in terms of applications received and interest shown.

RESOLVED

That the performance reports be noted.

26 BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX REPORT

The Committee received the report and appendices which could be seen on pages 157 – 204 of the reports pack. The Cabinet report provided information affecting the Council's revenue budget for 2018/19 in order for the Cabinet to make recommendations to Council on 28th February regarding the Council's budget and council tax for 2018/19.

During discussion, key points raised included:

- The Committee was advised that amendments to the figures presented to the Committee in December 2017 were outlined on page 160 of the reports pack. Amongst changes were the 2% pay offer put to staff as agreed by the Joint Staffing Committee as well as the Government's decision to increase planning fees by 20%. Overall all the changes resulted in a net saving of £34k.
- The budget had been planned on the basis of a 3% increase in the district element of the council tax.
- The medium term financial projections could be seen on page 163 of the reports pack and these factored in the consequences of the Council's tariff payments to Central Government from 2019/20. There was also an assumption made that the Council would face a net loss from Government's Fair Funding review from 2020/21 onwards.
- The Committee was advised that the distribution of future surplus from the Chiltern Crematorium was due to be discussed at the Chiltern Crematorium Joint Committee on 29 January 2018.

- Net additional income from the new Chilterns Pools had been included from 2020/21. It was anticipated that the planning application would be submitted after August 2018. The Committee made clear that the detailed business case needed to be presented to them in ample time ahead of any decision being taken to allow thorough review. The Committee expressed concern that it felt this had not been the case with the Amersham Multi Storey car park business case which had been presented in 2017, and more time for scrutiny should have been allowed. It was confirmed to the Committee that no funds would be drawn down until the Council had decided whether to sign off the business case. It was further confirmed that there would be no costs applied if the Council chose not to draw down funds.
- The question was asked whether the savings that the Council were required to make in future years would result in a reduced level of service to customers. The Committee was advised that all savings achieved to date had either maintained or improved service to residents, and this would be the intention in the future as far as possible.
- On point 4, page 169 of the Chief Financial Officer's report the Committee suggested the rewording of this sentence to include words of caution such as 'for the sake of residents'.
- The Support Services PAG had reviewed the level and distribution of the Council's reserves and the proposed changes to earmarked reserves could be seen on page 166 of the reports pack.
- The Committee was advised that new homes grants would continue to be received with no changes to its methodology anticipated this side of 2020/21.
- The Committee questioned whether £300k was enough to put aside for the earmarked pension fund reserve. The Committee were advised that regular payments to the pension fund deficit had been made in the past. Having this reserve gave the Council options when deciding how to respond to the next fund revaluation in 2020. .
- The Budget Sensitivity Analysis could be seen on page 177 of the reports pack. The Committee were advised that this looked at a number of the key budget risk areas and analysed the sensitivity of these to changes in certain circumstances.

RESOLVED

That the Committee was in agreement with the recommendations outlined in the report being put forward to Cabinet on 6 February 2018.

27 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018/19

The Committee received the report and appendices which could be seen on pages 205-234 of the report pack. The report advised the Portfolio Holder on

the Treasury Management Strategy and related policies that should be adopted by the Council for 2018/19.

During discussion, the Committee questioned the investments held with Close Brothers. These were explained as short term and whilst not always in the market, Close Brothers tended to be good payers and were A rated by the ratings agency used by the Council (S&P).

RESOLVED

That the Committee advise the Portfolio Holder on the Treasury Management Strategy to recommend to Cabinet and Council, including approving the report appendices to the Annual Investment Strategy.

28 CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND REPAIRS & RENEWALS PROGRAMME 2018/19 - 2021/22

The Committee received the Cabinet report and appendices which could be seen on pages 235-252 of the reports pack. The report presented the Capital Strategy; the proposed Capital Programme for 2018/19-2022/23; and the proposed Repairs and Renewals Programme for 2018/19-2022/23.

The Committee was advised that the decision on Chiltern Pools would have a major impact on the programme which was detailed on page 247 of the reports pack.

The Committee stressed the importance of ensuring adequate time was given when presenting the business case for Chiltern Pools and made clear that this would be one of the highest, if not the highest risk the Council had ever taken. The Committee were advised that initial estimated costs of the project had been provided by expert quantity surveyors who had looked at a number of similar designs. The Committee also expressed concern that detailed sensitivity analysis must take in to account the various income streams which may not be consistent over a 40 year period as the building ages and comes to the end of its useful life. Leisure facilities require a good maintenance programme to attract and retain users.

RESOLVED

That the Committee was in agreement with the recommendations outlined in the report being put forward to Cabinet on 6 February 2018.

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm