

CABINET

Meeting - 6 February 2019

Present: N Naylor, J Read, B Gibbs, P Hogan, D Smith and L Sullivan

187. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 12 December, 9 January and 25 January 2019 were approved and signed by the Cabinet Leader as a correct record.

188. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

189. FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Cabinet received a copy of the 28 day Notice and Forward Plan prepared in accordance with Regulation 9 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 setting out the key (and non-key) decisions the Cabinet was intending to make at public and private meetings. There were two items that had been added to the 28 day notice which were the Joint Business Plan Refresh and the Performance Indicator Review.

The Cabinet also received a copy of the 28 day Notice setting out the key (and non-key) decisions the Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Committee were intending to make at public and private meetings.

RESOLVED that the 28 Day Notices and Forward Plan be noted.

190. REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2019/20

Cabinet received a report which provided information affecting the Council's revenue budget for 2019/20 in order for the Cabinet to make recommendations to Council on 27 February 2019 regarding the Council's budget and council tax for 2019/20.

The Director of Resources went through the report in detail as follows:-

- The announcement of the decision to create a unitary authority in Buckinghamshire from 2020/21 did not affect the requirement on the Council to set a legal and prudent budget for 2019/20 that addressed the Council's aims and objectives. However, it would be necessary at a corporate level to make provisions within reserves for the transition costs to the new unitary authority.

- The 19/20 Government funding figures were better than expected at the time of setting the 2018/19 budget as the Government had decided to cancel the 'negative RSG' of £414k planned for 2019/20.
- South Bucks District Council had been confirmed, alongside Bucks Authorities as part of the business rates pilot scheme. Bucks Authorities had formed a pool in order to retain more of the growth and for 2019/20 the pool would be expanded to also include Wycombe under the Government's 75% Business Rates retention pilot scheme.
- Since the December Cabinet there had been two amendments to the draft budget relating to the reduction in the Housing Benefit Administration grant of £20k and the additional car parking income of £30k. Car parking charges were still to be discussed at the Environment Policy Advisory Group in March.
- The overall effect of these changes would mean a budget requirement of £7,642k which would result in a council tax increase of £5 (3.2%) which was the maximum permitted for the Council by Government. This would equate to a District element of Council tax of £163 for a Band D property.
- The revised fees and charges were noted.
- In respect of the Planning and Economic Development fees and charges, pre-planning charges had been reviewed and benchmarked against other local authorities and a report looking at this in further detail would be brought to a future meeting. At this time, the charges would remain at their present level.
- The proposed 2019/20 budget did not require any use of the General Reserves to fund general expenditure which was an improvement on the position reported to Cabinet in December. However, consideration needed to be given to earmarking some of the reserves to fund the implementation costs of the new unitary authority. The original proposal for South Bucks District's share was £1.552 m.
- Earmarked reserves would be utilised for the Local Development Document reserve, Economic Development reserve and the National Infrastructure reserve.
- A number of projects were being progressed to implement further savings as a result of the reduction in Government funding such as the Planning Shared Service implementation and the Customer Experience Strategy.
- Section E of the report set out the advice from the Director of Resources identifying the main financial risks to the Council in the forthcoming year, such as a shortfall on income targets, cost of major planning inquiries and enforcement action, cost of temporary accommodation and letting income from Capswood offices. However, the Council was in a sound financial position with a prudent level of reserves.

Cabinet expressed their thanks to the Director of Resources and his team for their work on the budget.

RECOMMEND to Full Council that

1. the Revenue budget for 2019/20 as summarised in the table in paragraph 4.11 be approved.
2. the following use of earmarked reserves for 2019/20 be agreed.

- Local Development Plan	£315k
- Economic Development Reserve	£45k
- National Infrastructure Reserve	£5k
3. the contribution of £300k to the Local Development Plan Reserve from the General Fund to support expenditure on the Plan in 2020/21 be agreed.
4. the creation of a new earmarked reserve of £1,552k for unitary implementation costs be agreed. Part of this reserve will be drawn down in 2019/20 after approval by the Shadow Authority.
5. a budget requirement of £7,642k, which will result in a District council tax of £163.00 for a Band D property be approved.
6. the level of fees and charges for 2019/20 as set out in Appendix C be confirmed.
7. the advice of the Director of Resources as set out in Appendix A be noted.
8. the comments in the report on the Council's financial position in respect of the years following 2019/20 and the updated medium term financial position be noted.

And **RESOLVED** that this report be made available to all Members of the Council in advance of the Council Tax setting meeting on 27th February, and a final report be produced for the Council meeting incorporating the information from preceptors, and the final decisions of the Cabinet on the budget.

191. **CAPITAL STRATEGY AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2019/20 TO 2023/24**

The Cabinet considered a report on the Capital Strategy and proposed Capital Programme for 2019/20-2023/24.

The Director of Resources highlighted the following issues:-

- A budget of £1.5million had been allocated in 2021/22 for waste vehicles, as the current waste contract was due to end in October 2021.
- To address capacity issues construction of a Multi Storey Car Park in Gerrards Cross has been agreed and there was a budget of £13,051k over the course of the next two years.
- A budget of £61k in 2019/20 and £10k pa thereafter had been allocated for car park enhancements.
- The Taplow Moorings along the river edge need improvement and health and safety works in order to stop the river undercutting the current bank. This was a legal obligation on the Council as the riparian owner and a consultant would need to be engaged and the initial estimate of the works was £100k.
- Reference was made to the extension to Parkland Woodland Burial Site and Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens which should help bring in increased income to the Council and help meet demand.
- In addition to the main capital programme SBDC would be looking to undertake investments in Consilio.

After indicating their support for the Capital Strategy and proposed Capital Programme as set out in Appendix A, the Cabinet

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that the Capital Strategy including the Capital Programme for 2019/20 - 2023/24 as set out in Appendix A be approved.

192. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2019/20**

The Cabinet received a report on the Treasury Management Strategy for 2019/20 and related policies and were asked to consider whether to recommend to Council that the Strategy and associated policies be adopted.

The Director of Resources reported that the Council was required to formally review its treasury management policies each year as part of determining what level of returns would be achieved from investment. The expected return for 2019/20 from the proposed strategy was £100,000. Borrowing would be required in order to deliver the Council's Capital Strategy and its related Capital Programme. This would be from the Public Works Loan Board. Although borrowing would not be undertaken in advance of need, there would be some short term timing differences where funds would be borrowed and not yet required for payment of suppliers as part of projects in the approved Capital Programme.

Members noted that as with any budget based on forecasts of future interest rates there was a risk of variance due to factors outside the Council's control.

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that the Treasury Management Strategy 2019/20 and associated policies as listed below, be approved

- Appendix 1A – Annual Investment Strategy Policies
- Appendix 1B – Prudential Indicators including the borrowing limits
- Appendix 1C – the MRP method to be used in 2019/20

193. **FARNHAM PARK CHARITY BUDGET 2019/20**

Cabinet considered the draft budgets for the Charitable Trusts activities for 2019/20, including the proposed fees & charges in the confidential appendix. The budget for the operation of the Charity was divided into two areas; the golf and the playing fields.

The golf course was a significant income generator. The main deficit was as a result of the costs of operating the Playing Fields which was a major challenge facing the Charity which was added to by the fact that all the buildings on the site were approaching the end of their useful life. In the short term there were no options to reduce the deficit, but consideration was being given to options for the playing fields to improve usage and reduce the net cost. Any increases in golf green fees proposed were made in reference to other local golf courses, as usage was price sensitive.

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that the overall operating budget shown in para 3.9. and the fees and charges in confidential Appendix A of the report be approved.

194. **PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 2018/19**

Cabinet received a report which outlined the annual performance of Council services against pre-agreed performance indicators and service objectives for Quarter 2 of 2018-19.

Members received a report which outlined the annual performance of Council services against pre-agreed performance indicators and service objectives for quarter 2 of 2018-19. Members noted that the percentage of food hygiene inspections of category A-D food businesses achieved against the inspection due by quarter was under target as a member of staff had left at the end of February and another member of staff had to be deployed away from food inspections to undertake nuisance work. An agency contractor had also left. In addition the average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation for all households was above target of 22 at 28 weeks because of one lengthy stay where the applicant had been subject to several reviews and legal appeal claims.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment expressed her thanks to staff with regard to their work on improving performance for addressing missed assisted collections also commenting on the good feedback from residents, particularly with regard to the adverse weather recently experienced. The Portfolio for Planning and Economic

Development reported that the planning service were on target for the current month but due to previous months' targets being missed, the cumulative total was slightly under target with the checking of planning applications. He thanked the Team for their hard work in improving performance. The Portfolio Holder for Customer and Business Support reported that despite a dip in performance in the Autumn there had been an improvement in performance for the vWorkspace desktop environment in Quarter 3.

RESOLVED that Cabinet note the performance reports.

195. **EXEMPTION TO CONTRACTS PROCEDURE RULES - INSTRUCTING VIABILITY CONSULTANTS**

Cabinet were asked to note that Management Team had agreed an Exemption to the Contract Procedure Rules. An outline planning permission had been submitted to the Council for the redevelopment of the Wilton Park site and it was important that the applicant's financial viability appraisal was expertly reviewed in order for this matter to be fully considered by the Planning Committee.

RESOLVED that it be noted that Management Team has agreed an Exemption to the Contracts Procedure Rules, to permit JLL to be instructed to advise the Council on the viability assessment submitted by the applicant relating to the proposed redevelopment at Wilton Park, Beaconsfield, HP9 2RL.

196. **CAR PARKING STRATEGY**

Cabinet considered a proposed five year car parking strategy for the District of South Bucks and agreed to commence public consultation and to authorise the Head of Environment in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to agree the final strategy having regard to any comments received during the consultation.

The Strategy included information on supply and demand, car park maintenance, parking charges and parking for specialist groups. There was no mandatory requirement for local authorities to produce a strategy although it was good practice to have one in place. SBDC published a car parking annual report which had detailed information on parking provision.

In 2017 Members had been consulted on a draft Strategy but this Strategy had been delayed due to discussions around the option of a joint strategy with Chiltern District Council. Following approval to proceed, agreement was being sought from Cabinet to introduce the car park strategy.

At a previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members had asked that the Strategy should recognise that some commuters were residents of the District. It was suggested that the Strategy should be amended to reflect that customers could be viewed as a number of groups such as residents, business and

commuters and should not be treated as a single group. A slight amendment was also made to the recommendations in the report by the Portfolio Holder. Cabinet welcomed the Strategy which aimed to manage and optimise the use of the District's car parks in a professional manner.

RESOLVED

1. That adoption of the proposed five year car park strategy appended to the report setting out the Council's aim and objectives, along with associated parking operations for the District be supported subject to undertaking public consultation.
2. That the Head of Environment be authorised to commence public consultation.
3. That the Head of Environment in consultation with the Portfolio Holder be authorised to agree the final strategy after considering the comments received from the consultation including making any modifications as considered appropriate.

197. REVIEW OF REMAINING RECYCLING CENTRES

Cabinet considered the future provision of recycling centres (bring sites), which the authorities provide. This report was considered by the Environment PAG on 20 November 2018 and the Portfolio Holder, having considered the advice of the PAG, agreed to recommend that the remaining eight recycling centres (bring sites) in the South Bucks District be closed with notice to the public in advance.

The removal of the eight recycling centres was recommended for a number of reasons which were outlined in the report which included areas such as the mis-use of the centres by businesses and residents resulting in contamination and poor quality material. In addition the benefits delivered by the recycling centres in terms of useful recycling and convenience for residents were now not proportionate to the costs of collection and sorting of material.

Cabinet welcomed the report and referred to the re-use of the space for areas such as enhanced parking. In response to a question the Portfolio Holder for Environment reported that there was already an extensive collection from households, for example, for clothing, batteries and small items.

RESOLVED

That the remaining eight recycling centres be closed and the future direction of service be agreed.

198. **CHARGING FOR REFUSE AND RECYCLING CONTAINERS IN THE SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT**

Cabinet considered the introduction of charges for refuse and recycling containers to residents in certain specified circumstances to align South Bucks District Council's policy with services delivered in the Chiltern and Wycombe Districts. The Portfolio Holder agreed to recommend the following recommendations to Cabinet having discussed this with the PAG on 20 November 2018. The introduction of charging was recommended to reduce the pressure on budgetary expenditure, but also to encourage residents to take greater responsibility for their containers. The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economic Development emphasised that this decision did not impact on damaged or broken containers which would be replaced for free when damaged by the collection crews.

RESOLVED

- 1 That charges to residents for waste containers be introduced where they . are lost, stolen, damaged by a resident or not present when a resident moves into a property.
- 2 That the charges levied are in line with those already set for residents in the Chiltern and Wycombe Districts.

199. **POLICY ADVISORY GROUP MINUTES (AVAILABLE IN SUPPLEMENT PACK)**

The Policy Advisory Group Minutes were noted.

200. **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

201. **FARNHAM PARK CHARITABLE TRUST - FEES AND CHARGES**

The exempt appendix was noted and clarification was sought on the pricing for the green fees for casual users.

The meeting ended at 6.46 pm