

# Cabinet Minutes

Date: 18 December 2017

Time: 5.30 - 6.25 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillor Ms K S Wood (in the Chair)

Councillor Mrs J A Adey	- Cabinet Member for Environment
Councillor D H G Barnes	- Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Engagement and Strategy
Councillor S Broadbent	- Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration
Councillor D J Carroll	- Cabinet Member for Youth and External Partnerships
Councillor D A Johncock	- Cabinet Member for Planning
Councillor Mrs J D Langley	- Cabinet Member for Housing
Councillor G Peart	- Cabinet Member for Community
Councillor D M Watson	- Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources
Councillor L Wood	- Cabinet Member for HR, ICT and Customer Services

## By Invitation

Cllr Shade Adoh	- Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing
Cllr Zia Ahmed	- Deputy Cabinet Member for Strategy and Communications
Cllr Ron Gaffney	- Chairman of the Improvement & Review Commission
Cllr Gary Hall	- Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment
Cllr Mark Harris	- Deputy Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration
Cllr David Knights	- Deputy Cabinet Member for HR, ICT and Customer Services
Cllr Rafiq Raja	- Leader of the Labour Group
Cllr Sarfaraz Khan Raja	- Deputy Cabinet Member for Community
Cllr Saeed Saddique	- Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources
Cllr Alan Turner	- Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning

**Also present:** Cllr Richard Scott

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M Knight

## **49 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13 November 2017 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman with the following amendment noted in that resolution (i) under Minute 43 be amended to read 'to proceed with' rather than 'implement' the Modular New Build option in High Wycombe Town Centre.

This amendment emphasises that the development of this option was still very much subject to the required planning permission.

## **50 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Ms K Wood declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of minute 59 'Ashwells' and withdrew from the chamber during that item.

## **51 REFRESH OF CORPORATE PLAN**

From the report Members noted that this was the first 'refresh' of the Plan since publication in January 2016. The amendments effected to this high level document as a result of suggestions at the recent Members Seminar were noted.

The Corporate Plan, upon approval, would become the key strategic document for the Council driving action and future resource allocation and would be the framework against which the Council's progress and performance, as reported in the Annual Report would be judged by stakeholders.

Elsewhere in the agenda were items on Digital First: which set out the Council's vision and objectives in relation to digital transformation which was reflected in the proposed objectives of the Corporate Plan and, the Draft Budget for 2018-19 which was to go on to be considered by Cabinet on 5 February 2018 and if approved by Council on the 22 February 2018, both of which were linked to the Corporate Plan.

Members noted the focus within the plan on what was going to make the biggest difference and that could be delivered within current resources. Collaboration with other district councils in Buckinghamshire enhanced by the work carried out to develop and submit a business case to Government to modernise local government in Buckinghamshire was referenced along with the Local Plan and the scale and scope of housing development contained therein.

The following decisions were made in order to keep up to date the Council's priorities and work programme for the remainder of the four year administration period and to ensure that the Council's Corporate Plan forms part of the overarching policy framework of the Council set in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.

**RESOLVED:** That (i) the vision, priorities, ambitions (we want) and objectives (we will) described in the plan on a page which will form the basis of the Corporate Plan refresh (for the period 2017-2020) be approved as set out in **Appendix A**;

(ii) the summary feedback and views from members to inform the broad ambitions and objectives through the Member Seminar on the 12 October 2017 **Appendix B** be noted; and

(iii) the final version of the Corporate Plan be timetabled to be considered at the 5th February 2018 Cabinet meeting after consideration by the Improvement and Review Commission and if approved be recommended to Council for inclusion as part of the

Council's Budget and Policy Framework as set out within the Constitution.

## 52 DIGITAL FIRST

The report before Cabinet outlined that the implementation of 'Digital First' equated to the application of the culture, practices, processes and technologies of the internet era to respond to peoples raised expectations.

Digital First was seen as an overarching strategy and was about how Wycombe District Council as an organisation engaged, communicated and responded to people, how it designed and delivered services and how it used information to make decisions, inform policy and evaluate performance and outcomes. It was a joined up and consistent approach across the organization as to how we worked and the supporting technologies, applications and data that were held and utilised.

Members noted the three key areas that investment in 'Digital First' delivered:

- Better, faster customer services;
- Improved operational efficiency; and
- The building of new revenue streams.

The following decisions were made in that the "Pounds" priority of the Corporate Plan set the ambition for the Council to "Continue to innovate and transform our services to provide them in the most efficient and accessible way," to achieve, "more accessible services and improved self-service options, including access to information making it easy to see how we are performing as a Council."

Additionally, as part of the requirements of the Local Government Finance Settlement Offer, the Council was required to develop and submit an Efficiency Plan, with the plan submitted to CLG (Department for Communities and Local Government) in July following Cabinet approval.

One of the actions within that Efficiency Plan was to develop a:-

"Corporate business case for empowering customers through adoption of a "digital by default" and increased self-service Customer Strategy. The business case was to consider the potential scope, benefits and the overall case for moving towards empowering customers through the increased use of self service and increased use of technology in service delivery."

**RESOLVED:** That (i) the Digital First Strategy & Roadmap and the outline business case be approved;

(ii) the inclusion of the Transformation Budget of £0.8m featured in the draft budgets item, later on this agenda, be agreed; and

(iii) the reallocation of capital costs towards the delivery of Digital First be noted and approved.

## **53 COMMUNICATIONS VISION**

Members had read in detail the extensive report and appendix which as a vision document set out the direction of travel and outlined a proposal for a new model for delivering communications. Wycombe District Council's communications should improve the lives of people and communities in the District; they should support the effective operation of services and deliver responsible and informative communications.

If supported it was proposed that officers would carry out further work to identify the detailed proposal for the steps necessary to bring about the proposed changes. The vision outlined a number of recommendations including;

- The development of a repository for intelligence and insight to provide data on audience, channels, campaigns and learning;
- The Strategic management of Communications at senior level across elected members and officers of the authority at appropriate points in project and strategy development;
- A detailed strategy for Communications and Marketing to be developed aligned to the Corporate Plan; and
- Recommendations in relations to skills development, relationship building, resources and business delivery.

The following decision was made as the current Corporate Plan included a Pounds priority which set the ambition for the Council to 'continue to innovate and transform our services to provide them in the most efficient and accessible way'.

It was part of our role as a Council to inform and engage with our communities effectively to help them to understand where they can get help when they needed it, and to inform the public about the way that we will deal with any requests for service or carry out our role. Delivering communications effectively was therefore one of the important aims of efficient and accessible services.

**RESOLVED:** That the 'Vision for Communications and Marketing in the Digital Age' set out in Appendix A be approved.

## **54 COUNCIL TAX BASE SETTING 2018-2019 & COLLECTION FUND ESTIMATED SURPLUS**

Members noted, from the report before them, the Council tax base figure to be used in the Council Tax setting calculation for 2018-19 along with the forecast of the

Council Tax Collection Fund balance for the year ending 31 March 2018 which was an estimated surplus of £2.404m. Wycombe District Council's share of this was £0.261m.

The consideration of the following in setting this base was noted:

- The Valuation List;
- Current exemptions, reductions and discounts;
- Discretionary discounts;
- Anticipated developments that may occur during the year; and
- Expected long term collection rates.

The following decisions were made as the Council tax base and the Collection Fund Estimated surplus are required to be set each year as they form the basis for calculation of the council tax levy for all precepting bodies.

The Local Government Finance Act (as amended) requires the Council to determine the estimated surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund in respect of Council Tax by the 15<sup>th</sup> January; this will enable the precepting authorities to take account of their share of any surplus before finalising their precepts for 2018/19.

**RESOLVED** that (i) Cabinet note in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 the amount calculated by Wycombe District Council (a) as its Council Tax base for the whole of its area for the year 2018-2019 shall be 68,083.50 and (b) as the Council tax Base for each of the parts of its area for the year 2018-2019 shall be:-

Parish	2018-19
Bledlow-cum-Saunderton	1208.17
Bradenham	231.56
Chepping Wycombe	6415.93
Downley	1973.67
Ellesborough	440.98
Fawley (Parish Meeting)	144.84
Great & Little Hampden	164.28
Great & Little Kimble cum Marsh	492.92
Great Marlow	719.64
Hambleden	843.36
Hazlemere	4001.40
Hedsor (Parish Meeting)	81.56
High Wycombe Town	22669.83
Hughenden	3993.46
Ibstone	145.96

Lacey Green	1249.37
Lane End	1423.53
Little Marlow	801.03
Longwick-cum-Ilmer	682.86
Marlow Bottom	1522.44
Marlow Town	6674.86
Medmenham	517.52
Piddington & Wheeler End	265.95
Princes Risborough	3546.12
Radnage	384.72
Stokenchurch	1955.49
Turville	217.99
West Wycombe	545.86
Wooburn and Bourne End	4768.20
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>68083.50</u></b>

(ii) Cabinet approves the calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2018/19 incorporating an estimated collection rate of 98.2%; and

(iii) Cabinet approve the estimated surplus for 2017/18 on the Council Tax element of the Collection Fund of £2.404M; this is to be shared between the District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, and the Police and crime commissioner for Thames Valley in proportion to their 2017/18 precepts on the Collection Fund.

## 55 DRAFT CAPITAL BUDGET 2018-19

From the report submitted Members noted the programme included therein which set out how the Council would spend **£36.967m** in 2018/19 and **£81.706m** across five years from 2018/19 to 2022/23 (including 2018/19).

It was noted that this budget proposed greater capital investment across areas such as economic Development & Regeneration, Planning and Sustainability, Housing supply and other externally funded projects.

The draft programme presented was developed for 2018/19 and the 5 year programme and represented the ongoing commitment of the existing and 2018/19 programme. The longer term capital programme aspirations featured were noted as significant. The Council would continue to develop the future programme of investment, deliver corporate priorities and ensure that all was affordable within the financial envelope.

Members noted that the capital strategy to deliver the Council's vision featured the following:

- **Regeneration and Infrastructure**, by investing in our assets in such a way that not only delivered regeneration and growth in a sustainable way, but also generated annual revenue to support our services to the public;
- **Cohesive Communities**, ensuring activity was prioritised accordingly, with robust delivery plans in place, enabling delivery on time and at value, for example use of community infrastructure Levy (CIL) to invest in the area to improve infrastructure and reflect the growing needs locally; and
- **Value for Money Services**, ensuring external funding was leveraged, especially for development, which would maximise the financial envelope available for major projects such as Accelerated Construction Fund for development (unlock housing and jobs growth).

The following decision was made in order that the Cabinet formally approved a budget each year to achieve the Council's priorities. It was noted that regular monitoring reports were submitted to Cabinet for review during the financial year, with management actions highlighted to ensure that Cabinet could assess whether any further action was required.

**RESOLVED** That Cabinet note the draft capital programme in December 2017 for 2018/19 to 2022/23 totalling **£100.815m**. Recognising the actions already taken and supporting further actions to ensure that the programme is affordable and is adequately resourced to deliver.

## **56 DRAFT BUDGET 2018-2019**

Members considered the extensive report before them in respect of the draft revenue budget for 2018/19, this being the latest update enabling cabinet to evaluate, develop and initiate budget proposals before Council finalised the budget and set the Council Tax for 2018/19 in February 2018.

This report represented the output following a comprehensive refresh of the Council's 2018/19 draft budget. Further work needing to be done to identify savings of £0.130m to balance the remaining funding gap. This represented a significant achievement in light of continuing cuts to government funding for local government, alongside a growing population driving an ever increasing demand for locally provided services.

Members noted that savings had been developed under two broad themes: Service Transformation and Maximising Income.

The Cabinet Member updated Members on the movement from the 2017/18 baseline to the 2018/19 budget requirement handily summarised in table form. Business rates and Revenue Support Grant, New Homes Bonus, pay inflation and price inflation were also explained along with new growth, cost pressures and new savings and income.

The input of the Council's scrutiny body; the Improvement & Review Commission and their Budget Task and Finish Group's recommendations arrived at after consideration of the 2017/18 forecast outturn position and the impact on 2018/19 budgets (Appendix B) was withdrawn, further work was to be effected in respect of the Cabinet responses. These were now to be included in the Budget item at February 2018's Cabinet meeting.

The following decisions were taken in order that the Council abided by its statutory requirement to set a balanced budget for 2018/19, this report forming a key part of the budget setting process by setting out the likely Revenue expenditure for that year.

**RESOLVED** That (i) the draft budget proposals for 2018/19 and financial planning assumptions set out in the report be noted;

(ii) the draft budget for 2018/19 will be refined and updated for the Cabinet in February 2018, to recommended for approval at Full Council meeting in February 2018 to set the Budget and Council Tax for 2018/19 be noted; and

(iii) the 5 year Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2018/19 to 2022/23 will be presented to the Cabinet for review in February 2018, be noted; and

## **57 INFORMATION SHEETS**

Cabinet received the following Information Sheet issued since the last meeting:

- 4/2017 Connected Counties Superfast Broadband Programme: Update 1– issued 7/12/17.

## **58 FILE ON ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY**

Cabinet received the following files on actions taken under delegated powers:

Community	C - 29-39/17
Finance	F - 24-25/17
Planning & Sustainability	PS - 60-61/17

## **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** That pursuant to Regulation 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Appendix A to Minute 55 and Minute Nos 59 & 60 because of their reference to



matters which contain exempt information as defined as follows:

**Appendix A to Minute 55 – Draft Capital Budget 2018-2019**

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (Paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972)

(The need to maintain the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure, because disclosure could prejudice the Council's position in any future tender process or negotiations).

**Minute 59 – Ashwells**

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (Paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972)

(The need to maintain the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure, because disclosure could prejudice the Council's position in any future tender process or negotiations).

**Minute 60 - File on Action taken under Exempt Delegated Powers**

**Community C - 9/17  
Economic Development and Regeneration EDR - 54-58/17**

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (Paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972)

(The need to maintain the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure, because disclosure could prejudice the Council's position in any future tender process or negotiations).

**COUNCILLOR D BARNES TOOK THE CHAIR**

Councillor Ms K Wood withdrew from the chamber in respect of her declared interest regards item 59 Ashwells; Councillor D Barnes (Deputy Leader) took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

**59 ASHWELLS**

The report before members outlined the options in respect of Ashwells a Council-owned released Reserve Site.

Members noted that Ashwells reserve site was referred to in the Medium Term Financial Plan as a 'Pipeline Scheme'. A previous Cabinet report in November

2016 had approved a budget for expenditure on the feasibility testing, concept masterplan and planning application stages.

Of the three options featured in the report, members were recommended to approve funding of infrastructure works with a view to selling the site as serviced building plots, realising potentially greater value than a single site disposal.

Members read and considered the background notes included in the report and all the options featured in the Options Appraisal, along with the risks and mitigation featured.

The following decisions were made in order to commit to fund the servicing of the site with new access, spine road and utilities, to enable it to be sold as serviced plots, from the Council's Capital Programme. Because of the emerging uncertainty in the housing market (and the timescale for getting works on site), the construction contract would only go ahead if an independent external assessment of the market in 6 months' time indicated that demand and values were holding up.

**RESOLVED** That (i) progression of the Ashwells site as proposed in Option 3 of the Options Appraisal, to obtain and implement planning consent so as to provide infrastructure necessary to enable disposal of serviced sites is approved;

(ii) the funding of infrastructure works for the Ashwells housing site, in accordance with paragraph 20 of the report is approved; and

(iii) delegated authority to enter into such contracts as are required with the purpose of providing infrastructure to the Ashwells site, as described in the report, be given to the Corporate Director in consultation with the Head of Finance and Commercial, the District Solicitor, the Major Projects Executive, and the Leader and Cabinet Members for Finance and Commercial Services and Economic Development & Regeneration.

### **Recommendation to Council**

(i) To make an allocation in the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 Capital Programme to fund the delivery of the infrastructure works, as detailed in Paragraph 20 of the report; and

(ii) so far as is necessary, to delegate authority to enter into such contracts as are required to provide infrastructure to the Ashwells site, as described in the report, to the Corporate Director, in consultation with the Head of Finance and Commercial, District Solicitor, the Major Projects Executive and the Leader and Cabinet Members for Finance and Commercial Services and Economic Development & Regeneration.

Cabinet received the following files on exempt actions taken under delegated powers:

Community  
Economic Development and Regeneration

C - 9/17  
EDR - 54-58/17

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Chairman

**The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:**

Ian Hunt - Democratic Services Manager  
Peter Druce - Democratic Services  
Dave Anderson - Interim Corporate Director