

# Cabinet Minutes

Date: 5 February 2018

Time: 7.00 - 8.25 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 Digital Development & Customer Services   |

## By Invitation

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Cllr M Appleyard   | - Chairman of Audit Committee   |
| Cllr A Collingwood | - Vice Chairman of Budget Task & Finish Group                         |
| Cllr R Gaffney     | - Chairman of the Improvement & Review Commission                     |
| Cllr G Hall        | - Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment                               |
| Cllr D Knights     | - Deputy Cabinet Member for Digital Development and Customer Services |
| Cllr R Raja        | - Leader of the Labour Group  |
| Cllr S K Raja      | - Deputy Cabinet Member for Community                                 |
| Cllr S Saddique    | - Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources                     |
| Cllr A Turner      | - Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning                                  |
| Cllr R Wilson      | - Chairman of Budget Task & Finish Group                              |

## **Also present:**

Cllrs Mrs L Clarke OBE, M Clarke, T Green & P Turner

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ms S Adoh, Z Ahmed, M Harris & M Knight.

## **61 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18 December 2017 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. However in relation to Minute 59

Ashwells a note be inserted in the text to clarify that the allocation being recommended would only be required should planning consent be obtained.

## **62 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **63 REVENUE BUDGET, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2018/19**

Cabinet were asked to consider and formally recommend the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2018/19 to enable the Council to set the Council Tax for the forthcoming year.

It was to be noted that the figure quoted in paragraph 25 of the report that of the Council Tax requirement for the year should be £9.327m, as correctly quoted in recommendation (a).

The draft revenue budget presented to December Cabinet had featured a funding gap of £0.130m. Subsequently further work had been carried out to identify savings to balance this funding gap. The Report before Cabinet set out the revenue budget and capital programme proposals for 2018/19 following this extensive work carried out by Budget Holders and Cabinet Members.

The Report outlined details of the main changes to the 2018/19 provisional Local Government Finance Settlement from Central Government and importantly the Revenue Support Grant and Baseline Funding (the guaranteed element of Business Rates) contained therein.

Members referred to the 2018/19 Budget Requirement table contained within the Report which outlined Funding Sources and Budgetary Requirements and the movements incorporated therein.

Importantly within the funding sources contained within this table was the Council Tax budget requirement of £9.327m which resulted in Wycombe District Council's share of the Council Tax for a Band D property increasing by £5 to £136.99 for 2018/19. This being calculated on the approved tax base of 68,084 based on a collection rate of 98.2% which had resulted in a net increase of 945 to the base (1.4%) on the equivalent band D properties figure of 67,139.

High Wycombe Town Committee members present received clarification from the Cabinet Member for Finance in respect of the amendment to the Special Expenses budgets for the town of High Wycombe as featured in recommendation (e). This amendment being affected as a result of the decision to propose a council tax increase in this year's budget subsequent to the draft budget item of 18 December 2017, which had not contained such. The Leader of the Council assured Town Committee members of the Cabinet's assurance that they would openly consider a

virement if the resultant £8K reduction in contribution to Special Expenses reserves proved problematic to service delivery during the coming financial year.

In response to a question from Cllr Rafiq Raja, the Lead Member commented he would provide a written answer relating to the net movement of earmarked reserves.

The Cabinet Member for Planning also explained the £15m aspirational budget for 2019/20 and thereafter for land assembly by the Council for housing development whereby the mark up on land values as a result of planning permission would be utilised for infrastructure installation as per Central Government guidance.

The Vice Chairman of the Budget Task and Finish Group reported verbally on the most recent meeting of the Group subsequent to the publication of the Cabinet Budget Report being discussed, acknowledging the risks if the Council tax was not increased along with the still considerable risks even if increased.

Members also noted and agreed the responses prepared by officers in consultation with Portfolio holders in respect of the previously received recommendations of the Budget Task and Finish Group as appended (appendix J).

Cabinet expressed their thanks to Officers and the Budget Task and Finish Group for all their hard work.

The following recommendations were made to enable budgets to be set for 2018/19, at Council on 22 February 2018. Ensuring compliance with the statutory requirement to set a balanced budget and approval of revenue estimates and capital programme in accordance with the Council's approved policies.

### **Recommendations to Council:**

#### **Revenue Budget**

- (a) To set the Council Tax requirement for the Council of £9.327m for 2018/19;
- (b) To approve the base estimates for 2018/19 as shown in paragraph 31 with further details in Appendix A;
- (c) To approve the repairs and renewals fund programme totalling £0.526m for 2018/19 (Appendix B);
- (d) To approve the Higginson Park Trust budget for 2018/19 as set out in Appendix C;
- (e) To approve the Special Expenses budgets for High Wycombe Town Committee for 2018/19 totalling £0.376m (Appendix D);

- (f) To approve the Special Expenses estimate for West Wycombe closed churchyard for 2018/19 totalling £3,200, set out at Appendix E,
- (g) To note the Fees and Charges schedule for 2018/19 as set out in Appendix F;
- (h) To note that this budget paper, when approved by Council will form part of the Medium Term Financial Plan and
- (i) To approve the statement by the Chief Finance Officer regarding the robustness of the budget estimates and level of reserves as set out in Appendix G.

### **Council Tax**

- (j) To increase the Council Tax for a Band D property by £5 to £136.99 for 2018/19. All the seven options for Council Tax as detailed in paragraph 53 were considered before making the decision.
- (k) To approve that the Council pays to each Parish Council and Special Expenses a share of the Council Tax Support grant necessary to mitigate the projected impact of the reduction to their respective Council Tax Base following the introduction of Council Tax Support. In 2018/19 at a total cost of £94k.

### **Capital Programme**

- (l) To approve the 2018/19 Capital Programme of **£45.358m** as detailed in Appendix H;
- (m) To note the expected capital receipt schedule as detailed in Appendix I; and
- (n) To note future capital programme from 2018/19 to 2022/23 totalling **£135.289m**. This being to recognise the actions already taken and support further actions to ensure that the programme is affordable and is adequately resourced to deliver.

### **Budget Task and Finish Group**

- (o) To note the recommendations from the Budget Task and Finish group and proposed responses as set out at Appendix J.

## **64 REFERRAL FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE ON THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Under the Local Government Act 2003 the Council was required to set out a statement of its treasury management for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy. The report before Cabinet set out the Council's proposed Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) and Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) for the forthcoming financial year 2018/19 as referred to Cabinet by the Council's Audit Committee.

The two main functions of the treasury management service were noted; that of operating with a balanced budget and setting out the funding of the Council's capital plans.

Compliance with CIPFA's (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) Code of Practice on Treasury Management was noted along with the requirement and putting into practice of the required training for Members responsible for treasury management. The Council's use of Link Assets Services as external treasury management advisors was noted along with the protection of the Council as investors under the 'Markets in Financial Instruments Directive' (MiFID II).

The Three main areas of the Strategy of:

- Capital Strategy; including capital spending and funding plans, capital financing requirements and affordability;
- Borrowing; including limits, interest rate prospects and policy on borrowing in advance of need; and
- Treasury Management; including current cash position, core funds and expected cash flow.

were outlined in detail.

The following recommendation was made in order that the Council complied with the Local Government Act 2003 and to ensure that the Council's investment plans were prudent, affordable, and sustainable and complied with statutory requirements.

### **Recommendation to Council**

To approve:

- The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) and Prudential Indicators for 2018/19;
- The Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) for 2018/19 at Appendix A; and
- The Minimum Revenue provision Policy Statement for 2018/19 at Appendix B.

## 65 QUARTER 3 BUDGET

Members considered the report before them in respect of Budget Monitoring for the third quarter of the current financial year as at 31 December 2017.

The Report contained a general fund revenue forecast indicating favourable variance of £0.253m as at the said 31 December 2017. The Report also outlined progress in achieving savings against the 2017/18 Efficiency Plan along with an update on the Repairs and Renewals Fund (including recommended use of £0.025m for cooling system / boiler works at the Wycombe Swan Theatre).

Programmed and actual spend in respect of the Major Projects Programme was also noted.

Members noted and agreed the proposed transfer from revenue to the Development fund in respect of improved amenities for people with disabilities and access to Totteridge recreation ground, of £0.065m to compliment the works there that were already being funded from Section 106 Developer Contribution monies.

The following decisions were made in order that the Cabinet remains updated on the current forecast position and performance against both the Medium Term Financial Plan and current financial year's budget.

**RESOLVED** That (i) the forecast outturn position for the financial year 2017/18 as at end of December 2017 be noted;

(ii) the £0.025m additional use of the Wycombe Swan Repairs & Renewals fund for the Cooling System/Boiler works at the Wycombe Swan Theatre (£0.100m is already included in the Repairs & Renewals programme) be approved; and

(iii) the transfer from revenue to the Development fund of £0.065m for works to be undertaken at Totteridge recreation ground to improve access to the park and amenities for people with disabilities be approved to compliment the works there that were being funded from s106 monies already allocated.

## 66 CORPORATE PLAN

Before Cabinet was a comprehensive report outlining the refreshed Wycombe District Corporate Plan for 2015-2020.

The refresh had been an iterative process with involvement and input from members throughout which had helped define the ambitions (we want) and objectives (we will) contained within the Plan.

Though primarily an internal working document, the Corporate Plan was a key reference point for the public and stakeholders. Progress made against the Plan was to be reported as part of the Council's Annual Report.

Members noted the useful summary 'plan on a page' contained within appendix A along with the inclusion in the Plan of data and intelligence which had been drawn together to help inform the development of the joint Modernising Local Government Business Case in January 2017.

Members acknowledged the considerable work put into the refresh document by the Head of Democratic, Legal and Policy along with her Policy team. The next key stage was the communication of the document with residents and the public.

The following recommendation was made in order that the Council's priorities and work programme could be put in place for the current administration period and ensure that the Council's Corporate Plan forms part of the overarching policy framework of the Council set in accordance with the Budget & Policy Framework Procedure Rules.

### **Recommendation to Council**

Approval of the refreshed Corporate Plan including the headline performance management framework to track delivery as set out in **Appendix A** for inclusion as part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework as set out within the Constitution.

## **67 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

'Wycombe – A Welcome home for Business' the proposed Economic Development Strategy (as **appended A**) was discussed. The Strategy complemented the Bucks Growth Strategy which had been published recently by the Buckinghamshire & Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership along with the key areas set out by the Government in its recently published Industrial Strategy.

The various strategic objectives dealing with issues including:

- Growth and Internationalisation;
- Business accommodation;
- The business birth rate;
- Tourism and visitor economy;
- Skills and talent;
- New housing;
- Research and innovation;
- Urban design and place making;
- Support services for business; and
- Transport and ICT connections.

were noted.

The consultation of the Improvement & Review Commission and Members in general via the recent successful seminar was referenced along with planned consultation of local businesses and key stakeholders. Business engagement meetings were planned to be undertaken in early 2018 with a view to the work programme being agreed prior to the start of the 2018/19 financial year.

The below recommendation to Council was made as the future economic prosperity of the District was of vital importance to the Council. The health of the local economy was critical to the continuing success of the District as an attractive location for businesses and source of employment opportunities for local people.

### **Recommendation to Council**

Approval of the Economic Development Strategy 'Wycombe – A Welcome Home for Business' as a framework for the Council's work with its partners to support the growth of the District's economy over the next decade.

## **68 CENTRAL AREA GROWTH BOARD - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Report before Cabinet represented the arrangements by which the appropriate local authorities (amongst which was Wycombe District Council) could discuss and agree future investment in Strategic Infrastructure for the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor, by means of the Central Area Growth Board.

Though not actually located in the Growth Area; Wycombe needed to be involved to ensure input to this major initiative, the Cabinet Member for Planning referring to the Board's ambition to make the Cambridge – Milton Keynes - Oxford corridor the UK's 'silicon valley'.

Members noted that an expenditure of £5K as a contribution to administration costs had recently been effected.

The Terms of Reference of the Board as appended were noted. The decision featured below being made in order that a single Growth Board was established as the principal conduit for strategic discussion and communications with Government. Individual Councils and Local Enterprise Partnerships for the concerned area having been asked to endorse this proposal and agree the terms of reference.

**RESOLVED** That support be given to the proposed formation of a Central Growth as the principal means of governance for strategic decisions about transport, infrastructure and housing investment proposals in the central area of the Cambridge–Milton Keynes-Oxford corridor and to note in principle the broad themes in the terms of reference for the Central Area Growth Board as set out in appendix to this report. If the Terms of



Reference (TOR) were subject to change a further update was to be provided to Cabinet.

**69 FILE ON ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY**

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

|                             |                                       |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Community                   | C/40/17 – C/41/17 & C/01/18 – C/06/18 |
| HR, ICT & Customer Services | HITCS 01/18                           |
| Leader                      | L/01/18                               |
| Planning & Sustainability   | PS/62/17 & PS/01/18 – PS/02/18        |

**70 FILE ON ACTION TAKEN UNDER EXEMPT DELEGATED POWERS**

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

Community Sheet Nos: C/10/17 – C/05/18

Economic Development & Regeneration Sheet Nos: EDR/59/17 - EDR/09/18

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Chairman

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

|                  |                                |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| David Skinner    | - Head of Finance & Commercial |
| Karen Satterford | - Chief Executive              |
| Ian Hunt         | - Democratic Services Manager  |
| Peter Druce      | - Democratic Services          |