

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 12th February 2020

**Present: Councillor Barnes (Chair)
Councillors Hughes, Lythgoe, Oakes, Serridge and
Walmsley**

**In Attendance: Mr N Shaw, Chief Executive
Mrs C Burns, Director of Economic Development
Ms C Birtwistle, Monitoring Officer
Mr P Morton, PPU Manager
Mr K Masser, Interim Chief Finance Officer
Mr A Ahmed, Acting Finance Manager
Miss G Ashton, Committee and Member Services Officer**

**Also Present: Councillors Cheetham, Morris, Neal and Steen
2 members of the public**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 There were no apologies for absence.

The Leader of the Council welcomed Neil Shaw, Chief Executive, to his first meeting of the Cabinet.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

3.1 There were no urgent items.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4.1 There were no declarations of interest.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

5.1 No written questions had been submitted.

5.2 In response to a question raised, Councillor Lythgoe agreed to make enquiries as to the outcome of a Management Protection Area meeting which was planned for 6th December 2019.

6. HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMO) STANDARDS

6.1 The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Customers outlined the report which asked members to note the content of the report and adopt the revised standards.

The PPU Manager added that training would be provided to rogue landlords from the funding available.

6.2 Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- The report was welcomed.

Resolved:

1. Members noted the content of the report and adopted the new standards.

Reason for Decision:

To approve and adopt the revised standards in relation to HMOs.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

7. EXTENSION OF ROSSENDALE WORKS AND FUTURES PROJECT

7.1 The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economic Development outlined the report which asked members to authorise the extension of the project to 31st March 2022. To award £60,000 match funding for the two years (April 2020 to March 2022) from the Employment and Transport Reserve which would bring in an estimated £80,000 in ESIF funding. To authorise the Legal Services Manager (Monitoring Officer) to sign grant funding agreements with external bodies to maximise the potential of the Rossendale Works and Futures project. To delegate minor amendments to this report to the Director of Economic Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

7.2 Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- It was a good scheme which had forged good relationships with local business.
- The scheme had been discussed at the Lancashire Leaders meeting and was suggested as good practice for other areas.
- The scheme made a real difference and was supported.
- The team were thanked for their hard work.

7.3 In response to questions raised it was noted that:

- Match funding had been received from Active Lancashire, the DWP and European funding.
- Specific issues should be fed back to the Economic Development Manager.
- Zero hours contracts were an issue and members were urged to lobby Government.
- Congratulations were expressed to the team for their hard work.

Resolved:

1. Members authorised the extension of the Rossendale Works and Futures Project to 31st March 2022 and award £60,000 match funding for the two years (April 2020 to March 2022) from the Employment and Transport Reserve.
2. Members authorised the Legal Services Manager (Monitoring Officer) to sign grant funding agreements with external bodies to maximise the potential of the Rossendale Works and Futures project.
3. Members delegated minor amendments to the report to the Director of Economic Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for Decision:

The Rossendale Works and Futures project is a proven success in increasing the supply of labour to growing and expanding businesses in the borough. It is also having a positive impact on disadvantaged residents and the communities that they live within. The recommendations in this report will ensure its continued delivery for the next 2 years.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

8. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2019/20 Q3

8.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources outlined the report which asked members to note the contents of the report and approve the application of surplus monies into the Transitional Reserve.

8.2 Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- The Finance Team were thanked for their hard work especially during a time of change within the department.
- Potential changes to the new homes bonus, fair funding review etc. would affect the financial position.
- It was hoped that in future a sustainable approach to the funding of Remembrance Parades would be agreed.

Resolved:

1. That members noted the contents of the report.
2. That members approved the application of surplus monies into the Transitional Reserve.

Reason for Decision:

For the robust monitoring of the General Fund and MTFS which is essential for controlling risks.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

9. CORPORATE PRIORITIES, BUDGET, COUNCIL TAX AND THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2020/21

9.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources outlined the report which asked members to consider and recommend to Full Council the Revenue Budget and level of Council Tax for 2020/21, together with implications for the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

9.2 Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- There were still issues with the Council's financial position despite the savings made.
- It was noted that contributions to the Police had been agreed. The recruitment of additional Police Officers was needed which affected the funding.

9.3 In response to questions raised it was noted that:

- Funding had been lost for local services and it was hoped this would be picked up in the fair funding review.
- It was confirmed that residents would not be charged for the collection of bulky waste following the recent floods.

Resolved:

1. That members recommended to Council a 2020/21 Council Tax rate for Band D of £279.57, being a 1.99% increase.
2. That members recommended to Council the use of £69k from the Council Tax collection fund and £686k from the Business Rates Retention reserve to support the 2020/21 annual budget.
3. That members recommend to Council a net revenue budget for 2020/21 of £9.006m.
4. Cabinet considered the Fees and Charges (Appendix 1).
5. In line with the previous year, members recommended that allowances would not increase in line with inflation going forward, until further notice and would be revisited as part of the next full review in 2022.
6. That members recommended that Council agrees the technical resolutions necessary to give effect to these proposals (Appendix 4).

Reason for Decision:

The Council must remain focused on identifying and delivering further efficiencies and income in order to ensure annual balanced budgets over the immediate and medium term. It must also ensure that all its budget resource allocations are directed to the core functions of the Council and that the use of its resources has clear links to the Council's Corporate Priorities.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

10. CAPITAL STRATEGY AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21 TO 2022/23

- 10.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources outlined the report which asked members to recommend to Council the approval of the affordable capital programme for 2020/21, as set out in Appendix 3 of the Budget Report, and recommend the new capital expenditure projects totalling £1,526k. Members recommend that Council agree to delegate any minor amendments to the capital programme throughout the 2020/21 financial year as a result of new grant-funded community projects, to the Head of Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Resolved:

1. That members considered the affordable capital programme for 2020/21, as set out in Appendix 3 of the Budget Report, and recommended the new capital expenditure projects totalling £1,526k to Full Council for approval.
2. Council be recommended to delegate any minor amendments to the capital programme throughout the 2020/21 financial year as a result of new grant-funded community projects, to the Head of Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources.

Reason for Decision:

The currently proposed capital programme for 2020/21 and up to 2022/23 represents an affordable plan, as indicated by the Prudential Borrowing performance indicators in Appendix 3 of the Budget Report.

The deficit between capital resources and requirements over the future years looks set to continue. With severe pressures on the Council's revenue resources throughout the Medium Term Financial Strategy it is more likely than ever that the Council will need to take out further external borrowing, leading to interest costs which will need to be included within the business case for each investment.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

11. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY & TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (UPDATES FOR 2020/21)

11.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources outlined the report which asked members to consider and approve the revised Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Treasury Management Policy and Practices. Members were asked to delegate any further minor changes to the Head of Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder. It was noted that Link Asset Management continued to support and advise the Council and were happy that the code of practice had been met.

11.2 Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- Thanks were expressed to the Finance Team for their work during the busiest time of the year.
- Link Asset Management supported the Council through the whole financial year and not just in the preparation of the reports.
- It was noted that the training provided by Asset Link Management on Treasury Management had been very interesting.

11.3 In response to questions raised it was noted that:

- All members received a copy of the Cabinet papers.

Resolved:

1. That members considered and approved the revised Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Treasury Management Policy and Practices.
2. Members delegated any further minor changes to the Head of Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources.

Reason for Decision:

To ensure continued compliance with the Code and continue to contain the Council's exposure to financial risk.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 7.10pm

_____ CHAIR _____ DATE