

CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 11 JULY 2018

PRESENT:- Councillors David Renard (Chair), Oliver Donachie, Fionuala Foley, Brian Ford, Russell Holland, Cathy Martyn, Garry Perkins, Gary Sumner and Keith Williams

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mary Martin

14. Declarations of Interest.

The Chair reminded members of the need to declare known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting.

15. Minutes.

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th June 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

16. Public Question Time.

There were no public questions.

17. Exempt Items - Exclusion of Press and Public.

Resolved – That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in the item listed below, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

| Item No. | Paragraph No. | Minute No. |
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18. Budget Management 2018/19

Councillor Russell Holland, the Cabinet Member for Finance, and the Interim Chief Executive, submitted a joint report presenting the 2018/19 revenue budget forecast out-turn.

Resolved – (1) That the 2018/19 revenue budget forecast out-turn for each service area, set out in Table 1 and Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

(2) That it be noted that the Corporate Management Team will develop plans to mitigate the current forecast overspend.

(3) That the virements set out in Appendix 2 to the report be approved.

(4) That an addition to the capital programme for the replacement of HR and Finance system, as set out in section 3 of the report, be approved.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

19. Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Plan

Councillor Cathy Martyn, the Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety, and the Corporate Director for Communities and Housing, submitted a report setting out the Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) over the next 30 years.

It was noted that, in response to comments by Councillor Emma Bushell, Councillor Martyn would write to the Minister for Housing requesting certainty over the mechanism for setting housing rents in the medium to long term so that this can inform our 30 year Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account.

Resolved – (1) That the Medium Term Financial Plan, set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be endorsed.

(2) That it be noted that the plan will be updated annually to take into account changing policies and updated survey information.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

20. Debt Management

In accordance with the requirement of the Council's Debt Management Policy, Councillor Russell Holland, the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, and the Director of Finance and the Head of Revenues & Benefits, submitted the annual report of debts written off in 2017/18.

Councillor Holland thanked the Head of Revenues and Benefits and his team for their continuing hard work in this area. He commented that although the number of referrals to the Magistrates Court had increased this was still significantly lower than in previous years. It was also recognised that whilst the Council Tax collection rate had dropped slightly, in percentage terms, the Council remained a very high performer in respect of Council Tax collection and that the total amount collected had increased.

Resolved – (1) That it be noted that collection rates for Business Rates and Business Improvement District charges improved in the financial year 2017/18. Collection rates for Council Tax and Housing Rents did reduce but note that work continues to maximise these. Most of the collection rates remain above the average compared to other Unitary Authorities (Appendix 1 to the report refers).

(2) That it be noted that the number of Car Parking Penalty Charge Notices being referred to Enforcement Agents (or Bailiffs) reduced in 2017/18. That it be also noted that, unfortunately, the number of Council Tax debts referred to Enforcement Agents did increase, although this is still significantly less than in the year 2014/15 and that work continues to maintain a reduction in referrals.

(3) That the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Head of

Revenues be authorised to carry out further research and other work as appropriate in order to continue to assist households in financial difficulty, within the Council's existing local welfare budgets.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

21. Temporary Winter Housing Provision

Councillor Cathy Martyn, the Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety, and the Corporate Director for Communities and Housing, submitted a report providing a review of the Temporary Winter Housing Provision (TWHP) and requesting Cabinet to consider whether a similar provision is set up this coming winter and subsequent winters.

It was noted that a Cabinet Member Decision Note in Oct 17 approved the setting up of the TWHP at Carfax Street, with a recommendation that the Head of Housing submit a report to the One Swindon Board and the Adults' Health, Adults Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the findings from this project. Subsequently a decision was made to review the findings at Cabinet.

Councillor Martyn referred to the delivery of the project through effective partnership working facilitated through HOSTS (Homeless Organisations Standing Together in Swindon) and she asked that her personal thanks be recorded for the support provided by those partner organisations and also by Council staff and volunteers.

Councillor Renard added his own thanks to the partnership organisations, staff and volunteers and expressed his hope that the proposed expanded offer, set out in the report, would ensure the project's future and its ability to help an even greater number of affected individuals.

Resolved – (1) That the setting up of a temporary winter housing provision to run for no more than 4 months over the winter period 2018/19 for an identified group of rough sleepers in Swindon, be approved.

(2) That the Head of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety and other interested parties, be authorised to set up the project.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

22. Council Communications Strategy and 2018-20 Campaign Plan

Councillor David Renard, the Leader of the Council, and Councillor Keith Williams, the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Customer Services, with the Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications and the Head of Communications, submitted a joint report seeking Cabinet's support to adopt the Council Communications Strategy and 2018-19 Campaign Plan in order to bring shared understanding and focus on how to prioritise professional communications resource to support the Council. The report also informed Cabinet of how the LGA Communications Peer Review findings have been used to shape the Strategy and Campaign Plan.

Resolved – (1) That the Council Communications Strategy be endorsed.

(2) That the recommendations of the LGA Communications Peer Review completed in January 2018 (Appendix 2 to the report) that have informed the Strategy, Campaign Plan and action plan (Appendix 3 to the report) be noted.

(3) That the Head of Communications, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate Services, be authorised to develop the 2018-20 Campaign Plan.

(4) That each Head of Service and Cabinet Member be authorised, as appropriate, to develop a detailed communications plan for each individual campaign/project.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

23. Membership of England's Economic Heartland Strategic Transport Forum

Councillor David Renard, the Leader of the Council, and the Interim Chief Executive, submitted a joint report seeking Cabinet's authority that the Leader of the Council be authorised to confirm that the Council's membership of England's Economic Heartland (EEH) Strategic Transport Forum (STF) should continue, with the intention of becoming a subnational transport body by 2021/22.

It was noted that, although Council had already given permission to the Leader to join EEH STF, and to meet the relevant annual subscription, Cabinet was asked to agree that the Council confirm its intention to participate in EEH through its progression into a subnational transport body. Members were advised that this would strengthen integration of strategic transport and infrastructure development and make the case for sustained levels of investment in infrastructure and services in response to pressures arising from economic success and to provide the capacity for economic growth.

Resolved – That the Leader of the Council be authorised to confirm in writing, as required by the Department for Transport, the Council's participation in the emergent statutory subnational transport body (STB), comprised of the member authorities of the EEH Strategic Transport Forum.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

24. Kimmerfields Update

Councillor Garry Perkins, the Cabinet Member for the Town Centre, and the Interim Chief Executive, submitted a joint report seeking Cabinet approval for the Fleming Way bus boulevard design concept that forms part of the town centre regeneration. In addition, the report sought approval for a collaboration agreement with the company identified in the report within the designated Kimmerfields area and to delegate authority to allow a timely decision to be made with an identified suitable occupier.

The report also sought authorisation for the production of a Town Centre Movement Strategy to evaluate traffic movement in and around the town centre, taking into account the implications of consented and planned new development providing

evidence to assist with the prudent and responsible management of the network.

It was noted that these recommendations were necessary to support improvements to the town centre and secure the funding provisionally allocated to the Council by the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Partnership to help bring forward the Kimmerfields development and that the proposed collaboration agreement was essential to progress Kimmerfields.

In response to comments by Councillor Cathy Martyn, the Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety, Cabinet agreed that the second and third sentences in paragraph 3.9 of the report be amended to read:

“The Town Centre CMAG has a broad remit concerning all traffic and movement related matters affecting the town centre extending to Rodbourne and Great Western Way, the Kimmerfields development, the impact of the proposed North Star Village, and measures to manage the traffic that comes with the success of the Designer Outlet Village. The Air Quality CMAG would also act as a consultative body to the production of a Town Centre Movement Strategy.”

Resolved – (1) That the preferred concept design for the bus boulevard, as shown in Appendix 1 to the report, which has evolved from the bus exchange design approved by Cabinet in December 2017 (Cabinet Minute 68(1)(b) 20117/2018 refers), be approved. That it be noted that the concept design follows further work on the draft masterplan which is subject to further testing.

(2) That the Interim Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment, be authorised to Stop Up or re-dedicate highway(s) to facilitate delivery of the bus boulevard scheme.

(3) That the allocation of funds be approved from the existing £3m Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) grant funding to develop a technical solution for a temporary bus facility on Princes St car park and on further detailed design work for the bus boulevard that will include provision for the taxi rank as indicated in the body of the report.

(4) That the Cabinet Member for the Town Centre, the Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment, and the Interim Chief Executive, be requested to bring a report to future Cabinet on the Town Centre Movement Strategy.

(5) That the Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment and the Cabinet Member for the Town Centre, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety, continue with an all-party Cabinet Member Advisory Group with the broad remit of advising them on air quality and traffic related matters, as set out in the body of the report.

(6) That the Interim Chief Executive, the Director of Law and Democratic Services and the Head of Property Assets, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Finance and the Town Centre, be authorised to complete a collaboration agreement with the company identified in the report.

(7) That the Interim Chief Executive, the Director of Law and Democratic Services and Head of Property Assets, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Finance and the Town Centre, be authorised to finalise terms and enter into an option agreement with an appropriate anchor occupier.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.