

CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2018

PRESENT:- Councillors David Renard (Chair), Oliver Donachie, Brian Ford, Dale Heenan, Russell Holland, Cathy Martyn, Maureen Penny, Gary Sumner and Keith Williams

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mary Martin

Councillors Jim Grant and Jane Milner-Barry attended the meeting in respect of Minute Nos. 48 and 52.

45. Declarations of Interest.

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

46. Minutes.

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th October 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

47. Public Question Time.

There were no public questions.

48. Budget Update

Councillor Russell Holland, the Cabinet Member for Finance, and the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), submitted a joint report providing Cabinet with an update on the position in relation to the 2018/19 forecast outturn and the work underway to address the financial challenge in the period to March 2020.

It was noted that the report also met the requirement of paragraph 2(a) of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules (Part 4 of the Council's Constitution) for the Council to publish initial proposals for the Budgetary and Policy Framework at least two months before the Framework must be adopted.

Councillor Holland introduced the report, placing it in the context of the Cabinet's commitment to again delivering a balanced budget at year end. He advised the meeting that information regarding the Local Government Financial Settlement had been expected before the end of this week but that this advice would not be available until after the pending Brexit vote.

Councillor Holland highlighted some of the major aspects of the report, including the continued commitment to aiding lower income households by maintaining the Council Tax Local Support scheme, and continuing and making greater use of the "empty premium" allowing the Council to apply a Council Tax charge on domestic properties that are empty and unfurnished for more than 2 years.

Councillor Holland referred to the current projected overspend in 2018/19 of £2.3m and advised that significant mitigating actions were being taken to address this. He also advised of provision within the draft budget proposals for major additional investment within Children's Services.

Following his introduction of the report, Councillor Holland, supported by the Leader of the Council and Councillors Keith Williams, the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Customer Services, and Councillor Oliver Donachie, the Cabinet Member for Economic Prosperity, responded to questions put by Councillors Jim Grant, Dale Heenan and Jane Milner-Barry on the following matters:

- The impact of austerity on the Council's level of financial resource and the particular impact of austerity on service provision for the least well-off in the community.
- Budget proposals in respect of Forward Swindon Limited
- The relevance of technological advancement on the viability of the LED street lighting business case and the replacement of LED street lights as part of the Council's ongoing street column replacement programme
- The positive impact of changed borrowing arrangements on the viability of the LED street lighting business case.
- The changes proposed in relation to passenger transport, particularly the re-tendering of transport contracts, and the specific financial implications of these proposals for Dial-a-Ride.
- The original cost of installing the splash park at Coate Water.
- The Green Flag status of Coate Water in 2018.
- Service proposals in relation to Arts and Heritage provision.
- The review of the Wyvern Theatre contract to achieve subsidy reduction and the implications of this and other proposals for art groups, including the outreach work these groups do within the education system.
- The economic benefit to Swindon of the proposed "Snowdome" development and actions to mitigate potential environmental impacts, particularly in relation to highway and traffic management issues.

Resolved – (1) That the in-year forecast outturn position for 2018/19 be noted and that responding management actions continue to be employed to eliminate the projected year-end overspend.

(2) That, with regard to the 2019/20 budget, the following be noted:

- a) That the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2019/20 has yet to be published and therefore the funding assumptions in this report contain levels of uncertainty.
- b) That there is currently a gap between the assumed funding levels for 2019/20 and the current proposed cost of services as set out in Table 3, and that work is continuing to identify further options to close this gap for consideration by Members once actual funding levels are confirmed and before the final budget is recommended to Council.
- c) That the council tax base for 2019/20 will be 74,532.0.

(3) That the following be agreed:

- a) The virements set out in Appendix 2.
- b) That those new budget proposals that do not directly affect front-line services can be implemented by officers at the earliest opportunity, including undertaking consultation with staff where appropriate.
- c) That consultation commences for budget proposals affecting front-line

services with the outcome of that consultation being reported to Cabinet in February 2019 prior to considering the final budget to be recommended to Council.

- d) That budgets for fees and charges that are set by the Council should be uplifted by 5% or a rounded price close to 5% except where alternative proposals are recommended.
 - e) That the Local Council Tax Support (reduction) scheme in 2019/20 be unchanged from that for 2018/19, apart from the annual increases in allowances, applicable amounts and non-dependant deductions, which will be increased in line with the national scheme.
 - f) That the Council Tax on unfurnished and unoccupied properties in excess of two years be increased from 150% to 200% with effect from 1st April 2019, in accordance with the Rating and Council Tax Act 2018, to encourage their owners to bring them back into use.
 - g) That the Council's share of the estimated surplus on the council tax element of the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2019 is £1.393m.
- (4) That written answers be provided to Councillor Jane Milner-Barry in respect of her questions to the meeting regarding:
- a) The changes proposed in relation to passenger transport, particularly the retendering of contracts, and the specific financial implications of the proposals for Dial-a-Ride.
 - b) The original cost of installing the splash park at Coate Water.
 - c) The Green Flag status of Coate Water in 2018.
 - d) The implications of the review of the Wyvern Theatre contract on the outreach work within the education system of other theatre groups.

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

49. Capital Monitoring Quarter 2 2018-19

Councillor Russell Holland, the Cabinet Member for Finance, and the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), submitted joint report presenting to Cabinet the second quarter's monitoring position for the Council's capital programme and some proposed changes to the programme.

Resolved – (1) That the forecast capital expenditure, set out in Tables 1 & 2 in the report, and Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

(2) That the changes to the programme, detailed at section 3.3 of the report, be approved.

(3) That the issues identified and detailed at section 3.4 of the report, be noted.

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

50. Mid-Year Treasury Performance 2018/19

Councillor Russell Holland, the Cabinet Member for Finance, and the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), submitted a joint report setting out the mid-year Treasury Management performance for 2018/19.

Resolved – That the mid-year Treasury Management performance for 2018/19 be

noted.

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

51. References from Other Council Bodies - Corporate Parenting Advisory Board and Health and Wellbeing Board

Councillor Mary Martin, the Cabinet Member for Children and School Attainment, Councillor Brian Ford, the Cabinet Member for Adults, and Councillor Oliver Donachie, the Cabinet Member for Economic Prosperity, and the Corporate Director Children's Services and Corporate Director Social Services and Health, submitted a joint report regarding (i) recommendations of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Board, at its meeting on 24th September 2018, that Cabinet adopt (a) the draft Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy and Operational Plan "Making Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy a Reality 2018-2020" Strategy, and (b) the Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2020, and (ii) a recommendation of the Health and Wellbeing Board, at its meeting on 10th October 2018, that Cabinet adopt the Supported Employment Strategy 2018-2022.

Resolved – That the recommendations of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Board, at its meeting on 24th September 2018, that (a) the draft Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy and Operational Plan "Making Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy a Reality 2018-2020" Strategy, and (b) the Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2020, be adopted, and (ii) a recommendation of the Health and Wellbeing Board, at its meeting on 10th October 2018, that the Supported Employment Strategy 2018-2022 be adopted, be agreed.

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

52. Draft Waste Strategy 2019 - 2029

Councillor Maureen Penny, the Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment, and the Interim Head of Streetsmart, submitted a joint report presenting to Cabinet the Councils ten year Waste Strategy – 'Sustainable Swindon: Waste Less, Recycle More' for approval.

It was noted that a clear strategy was necessary to plan and deliver effective and efficient waste collections that reduce both the environmental and financial impact of the waste generated in Swindon as well as enabling the Council to achieve its statutory obligations with regard to waste collections and disposal.

Councillor Penny introduced the report and, supported by the Leader of the Council and Councillors Dale Heenan, the Cabinet Member for the Town Centre, and Oliver Donachie, the Cabinet member for Economic Prosperity, responded to questions put by Councillors Jim Grant and Jane Milner-Barry regarding:

- Proposals for plastic recycling collections and the further consideration of the collection method and treatment of plastics recycling following the publication by the Government of its Recycling strategy, anticipated in Spring 2019.
- The processing of all general household rubbish collected through the

Councils unique Solid Recovered Fuel (SRF) Plant and the availability of the plant to take plastic and to turn it into a fuel for industry.

- Charges for replacement recycling boxes.

Resolved – (1) That the Waste Strategy and implementation of the associated year one action plan to achieve a Council recycling rate of 60% by 2029, be approved.

(2) That a twenty year extension (until December 2045) of the disposal contract with Public Power Solutions be agreed.

(3) That the Council support innovation and investment in new and emerging technologies, for example pelletisation, thermal cracking and back-end sort technology, in order to deliver as flexible approach to future changes in waste management as possible. By doing so, the aim is to make Waterside Depot an environmental hub pioneering technical innovation in waste management solutions.

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