

Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 11 December 2017

Additional Information

Agenda Item 5 – Consideration of Cabinet Decisions

Draft Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 6th December 2017

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NOTICE OF DRAFT DECISIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 6TH DECEMBER 2017

61. 2017-18 Budget Update and Budget Strategy 2018-2020

Councillor Russell Holland, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Commercialisation, and the Corporate Director of Resources and Growth, submitted a joint report providing an update on the position in relation to the 2017/18 forecast outturn and the work underway to address the financial challenge in the period to March 2020 through a two-year budget strategy. It was noted that the submission of the report met the requirement to publish initial proposals for the Budgetary and Policy Framework at least two months before the Framework must be adopted (paragraph 2 (a), Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, part 4 of the Council's Constitution refers).

Councillor Holland introduced the report, providing a summary of the recognised pressures on the 2017/18 budget, including the worsened projected outturn forecast, primarily due to continued demand pressures on looked after children placements, progress to date with the various key elements of the Swindon Programme, and the Council's changed approach to managing its financial challenges. It was noted that, for purposes of financial planning, an increase in basic council tax of 1.99% had been assumed and that, for the financial period 2019/20, the adult social care precept would be an assumed 3% (4.99% in total).

Following his presentation of the report, Councillor Holland, with the Leader of the Council, responded to questions put by Councillor Jim Grant, the Leader of the Labour Group, seeking clarification regarding opportunities for consultation on the detail of the budget, in advance of its consideration at the Council meeting in February 2018, and enquiring why the savings of £13.8m attributed to savings within the Organisational excellence workstream of the Swindon Programme, had not been realised earlier.

Resolved – (1) That the in-year forecast outturn position for 2017/18 be noted and that it be also noted that responding management actions are being developed to eliminate the projected year-end overspend.

(2) That it be noted that:

- a) The budget strategy will be focussed on the delivery of a two year plan covering both 2018/19 and 2019/20;
- b) The Local Government Finance Settlement for 2018/19 has yet to be published and therefore the funding assumptions in this report contain levels of uncertainty;
- c) The tax base for 2018/19 will be 72,898.6;
- d) The potential funding pressures of meeting the demand for increased school places in future years.

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

(4) That it be agreed that:

- a) 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 as part of the commercialisation workstream of the Swindon

Programme;

- b) the Local Council Tax Support (reduction) scheme in 2018/19 be unchanged from that for 2017/18, apart from the annual increases in allowances, applicable amounts and non-dependant deductions, which will be increased in line with the national scheme;
- c) the basis for allocating Council Tax Support Grant to Parish Councils remains unchanged from that for 2017/18;
- d) the Council's share of the estimated surplus on the council tax element of the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2018 is £626k.

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

62. Capital Monitoring Quarter 2 2017-18

Councillor Russell Holland, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Commercialisation, and the Corporate Director of Resources and Growth, submitted a joint report advising on the second quarter's monitoring position for the Council's capital programme and advising of several proposed changes to the programme.

Councillor Dale Heenan asked a series of questions relating to the recommendation in the report that Cabinet note the particular change to the capital programme, that the A419 sound barrier be removed from the programme.

In response to Councillor Heenan's questions, the Leader proposed, and it was agreed, that paragraph 3.3.11 of the report, be amended to confirm that the scheme will be removed from the 2017/18 Capital Programme. It was also agreed that the related issues raised by Councillor Heenan in his questions, and not answered at the meeting, would be the subject of a written response.

The Leader of the Council, with Councillor Holland, also responded to questions put by Councillors Jane-Milner Barry, about the impact of the removal of the A419 sound barrier on the Council's ability to deliver against its Pledge 2 of the Council's Vision, and by Councillor Chris Watts, about the lack of officer consultation with Councillors about capital programme and other issues affecting their ward areas.

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

(2) That the changes to the programme, set out in section 3.3 of the report, be approved, subject to the following amendment:

That it be noted that the A419 Sound Barrier will be removed from the 2017/18 Capital Programme.

(3) That the contents of Tables 3 – 6 in the report, regarding the 2016-17 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), be noted and that these be approved to be published on the Council's website.

(4) That the annual retention of 5% of the total annual CIL receipts to cover administration costs, as set out in paragraph 3.7 of the report, be approved.

(4) That the distribution of the non-parished CIL Neighbourhood Proportion to the new parishes as if they had existed at the date of the receipt be approved.

(5) That the intention for CIL receipts to support capital programme proposals for

2017/18, that will be taken to Cabinet in February 2018 as part of the annual capital budget setting process, be noted.

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

63. Mid-Year Treasury Performance 2017/18

Councillor Russell Holland, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Commercialisation, and the Corporate Director of Resources and Growth, submitted a joint report setting out the mid-year Treasury Management performance for 2017/18.

Resolved - That the mid-year Treasury Management performance be noted.

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

64. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Capital Investment Strategy

Councillor Fionuala Foley, the Cabinet Member for Children Service's and School Attainment, the Corporate Director, Children's Services, and the Head of Education, submitted a joint report setting out the strategy for the allocation of capital funding specifically for provision that serves children with Special Educational Needs and Disability in Swindon. It was noted that the report was necessary to set out the draft investment strategy and propose consultation in order to comply with the Department for Education requirements to access the first tranche of funding on the 1st April 2018.

Resolved – (1) That the draft Special Educational Needs and Disability Capital Investment Strategy, attached at Appendix One to the report, be approved as the basis for further consultation with stakeholders.

(2) That the Head of Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and School Attainment, be authorised to conduct a consultation with local providers, parents and stakeholders on the draft strategy attached at Appendix 1 to the report and to report to Cabinet in February 2018 on the outcome.

(3) That the Head of Education, in consultation with the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), be authorised to retain £40,000 of the investment strategy as an access fund for the Local Authority to commission low level adjustments to schools, as set out in paragraph 3.10 of the report.

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

65. Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Councillor Oliver Donachie, the Cabinet Member for the Economy and Skills, and Councillor Garry Perkins, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, and the Corporate Director Resources and Growth, submitted a joint report setting out the recommended draft Town Centre Car Parking Strategy for consideration and seeking Cabinet's agreement to the commencement of consultation on the Strategy,

to include consultation on the level of parking charges. The report also recommended some immediate measures aimed at addressing anti-social behaviour affecting the usage of town centre car parks.

It was noted that the Town Centre Car Parking Strategy was last reviewed in 2011 and, with regeneration projects within the town centre progressing, it was considered timely that it be updated.

Following his introduction of the report, Councillor Donachie, with Councillor Garry Perkins, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, responded to questions put by Councillors Steve Allsopp, Jane Milner-Barry and Bob Wright regarding:

- The proposed closure of the Granville Street car park and the need to ensure the retention of a range of car parking facilities in that area to support local commerce.
- The status of proposals for the future development of the Granville Street car park.
- The anticipated effect of increased car parking charges on footfall in the town centre.
- The outcome of consultation with InSwindon and the Brunel Centre on proposed car parking increases.
- Car parking capacity and proposals to ensure there will be sufficient car parking provision for increased residential development in the Town Centre.
- The definitions of “sufficient” and “adequate”, as used in the car parking strategy.
- The strategy objective of minimising the impact of town centre car parking on surrounding residential areas and the opportunity to revisit the strategy in the event of there being unintended consequences on wards adjacent to the town centre.

Resolved – (1) That the draft Town Centre Car Parking Strategy, as summarised in section 3.5 and set out in full at Appendix One to the report, be approved for consultation purposes.

(2) That the Corporate Director Resources and Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Economy and Skills, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, and the Head of StreetSmart, be authorised to implement the following measures:

- a) To commence consultation on increasing the parking charges.
- b) Dependent on the outcome of the consultation, to adopt a new schedule of charges for 2018/19.
- c) To make provision within the Council’s budget for 2017/18 for up to £160,000 to immediately implement the measures outlined in paragraph 3.7.3 of the report and Action Plan measure S1, with the aim of enhancing the quality of the Council’s town centre parking stock including the provision of extra cleaning staff.
- d) To allocate a budget of £160,000 per annum for 2018/19, funded from increased parking charges, to support the enhanced quality of the Council’s town centre parking stock as outlined in paragraph 3.7.3 of the report and Action Plan measure S1.

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

66. Reference from the Health and Wellbeing Board - Adoption of the Swindon Affordable Warmth Strategy

Councillor Brian Ford, the Cabinet Member for Adults' Health and Social Care, and the Director of Law and Democratic Services, submitted a joint report regarding a recommendation of the Health and Wellbeing Board that the Council adopt the Swindon Affordable Warmth Strategy for 2017-19.

Councillor Ford, with Councillor Cathy Martyn, the Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety, responded to questions put by Councillor Steve Allsopp regarding (a) the need for the Council to be imaginative in its mechanisms to contact hard to reach groups on issues of increased energy efficiency and energy cost reductions, (b) the need to also consider how best to overcome barriers of language and obstructive landlords in furtherance of strategy objectives, and (c) the ability of the Council to set its own criteria for the determination of incidences of fuel poverty.

Resolved - That the Swindon Affordable Warmth Strategy for 2017-19, approved by the health and Wellbeing Board at its meeting on 25th October 2017, be adopted.

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

67. Delivery of Town Centre Regeneration

Further to Minute 111(3), 2016/17, Councillor Garry Perkins, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, and the Corporate Director, Resources and Growth, submitted a joint report advising on the outcomes of the independent review of the Swindon Town Centre Regeneration Delivery model, attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Councillor Perkins responded to questions put by Councillors Jane Milner-Barry and Chris Watts regarding the Cabinet Member's view that the proposed operational and funding mechanisms and governance arrangements are the best option for the successful delivery of future town centre regeneration and also whether the report had taken into account recently effected staff changes at FSL.

Resolved – (1) That the contents of the independent Review of Swindon Town Centre Regeneration Delivery Model, as set out in Appendix One to the report, be noted.

(2) That Forward Swindon Ltd (FSL) remain as the delivery vehicle, with a reviewed Board membership and with a strong client function fulfilled by the Corporate Director, Resources and Growth, in line with Council's priorities.

(3) That the Corporate Director, Resources and Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Director of Law and Democratic Services, be authorised to take such steps as are required to review the current Board membership.

(4) That the Corporate Director, Resources and Growth, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Cabinet Members for Finance and Commercialisation and for Regeneration, be authorised to develop a budget proposal for 2018/19 to fund FSL and work towards FSL being self-funding.

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

Further to Minute 37, Councillor Garry Perkins, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, and the Corporate Director, Resources and Growth, submitted a joint report setting out options for the future delivery of the Kimmerfields development. In particular, the report sought Cabinet's approval to progress with the proposed new Bus Exchange and a strategy for delivering a viable Masterplan for Kimmerfields.

Councillor Perkins responded to questions put by Councillors Jim Grant, Jane Milner-Barry and Chris Watts regarding the timescales for the commencement of development and the receipt of a financial return, other scheme specifics and the involvement of opposition groups in any future refresh of the Masterplan.

Resolved – (1) That, subject to the termination of the Kimmerfields Development Agreement (DA):

- a) The concept design for the Bus Exchange and Fleming Way, included as Appendix Two to the report, be noted.
- b) The Corporate Director, Resources and Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, be authorised to develop the Bus Exchange design, based on the funding available once the outcome of the bids described in paragraphs 3.21 and 3.22 are known, in conjunction with the outcome of the town centre movement strategy review.

(3) That the position in respect of the commercial advice on how the Council and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) might take forward development on the Kimmerfields site be noted.

(4) That the Corporate Director, Resources and Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, be authorised to develop proposals for the preferred scheme for Kimmerfields, as detailed in the main body of the report (to include phasing, cost and cashflow implications) and report back to the Cabinet in July 2018.

(5) That funding be approved, up to the amount identified in the report (to be allocated from the balance of the Phase 1 Kimmerfields DA development account), to progress with the next steps of the project, as identified in paragraphs 3.25 to 3.28 of the report, in order to support the Cabinet paper in July 2018 and produce a viable Masterplan.

(6) That the Corporate Director for Resources and Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, be authorised to spend a budget up to the amount identified in the report, funded from Local Growth Fund grant, to progress design and consultation work on the Bus Exchange and Fleming Way scheme and to enable associated preparatory works such as utility diversions to be commenced.

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

Date of Publication of Draft Decisions: 7th December 2017

Issued to Members of the Scrutiny Committee: 8th December 2017