



Committee and Date

Cabinet

10 January 2018

CABINET

**Minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2017 in the Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND
10.00 am - 10.50 am**

Responsible Officer: Jane Palmer
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Present

Councillor Peter Nutting (Leader)
Councillors Steve Charmley (Deputy Leader), Lezley Picton, David Minnery,
Robert Macey, Nic Laurens, Nicholas Bardsley, Lee Chapman and Steve Davenport

103 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Barrow.

104 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None were declared.

105 Minutes

It was noted that the Minutes of the 6 December 2017 Cabinet meeting would be considered at the next calendared meeting in the New Year.

106 Public Question Time

There were no questions from members of the public.

107 Member Questions

No questions had been submitted by any member of the Council.

108 Scrutiny Items - Environmental Maintenance Grant Programme - proposals for changes to the design and delivery of the programme

The Chair of the Environmental Maintenance Grant [EMG] Task and Finish Group provided a detailed resume of the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group and the information that had been considered by the Group. She applauded the

exemplary quality of the information that had been provided by Officers to the Group during its single day of operation and recommended this way of working to be used more frequently in future.

Cabinet was wholly supportive of the Task and Finish Group's work and the Leader confirmed that its recommendations would be taken into consideration during the future budget deliberations. The Portfolio Holder for Health and Adult Social Care commented that the learning gleaned from the Task and Finish Group needed to be retained and opportunities to work in this way in future should be borne in mind.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations from the Environmental Maintenance Grant Programme Task and Finish Group be noted.

109 Setting the Council Tax Taxbase for 2018/2019

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report from the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance to determine the Council Tax taxbase for the area.

RESOLVED:

- i) In accordance with the Local Government Act 2012 the removal of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy awarded in respect of vacant properties undergoing major repair for the 2018/19 financial year, i.e. removing the discount of 50% for up to 12 months and, therefore, inclusion of an additional 114.37 Band D equivalents in the taxbase be approved.
- ii) In accordance with the Local Government Act 2012 the revised discretionary Council Tax discount policy be approved, awarded in respect of vacant properties i.e. former Class C exempt properties for the 2018/19 financial year i.e. continuation of 100% for one month, and the resulting exclusion of 257.66 band D equivalents from the taxbase, and the removal of the 25% discount for the remaining five months and the resulting inclusion of 268.00 Band D equivalents in the Council Tax taxbase.
- iii) That the publication of a notice regarding the new discretionary Council Tax discount policy awarded in respect of vacant properties within 21 days of the determination be approved.

On the assumption that the changes to the discount policy in relation to vacant dwellings detailed in Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 7.2 of this report have been approved and the changes to the Council's localised Council Tax Support scheme detailed in the Shropshire Council - Council Tax Support Scheme 2018-19 report is approved at Council, members are asked:

- iv) That, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Shropshire Council

as its Council Tax taxbase for the year 2018/19, as detailed in Appendix A, totalling 109,095.60 Band D equivalents be approved.

- v) That the changes to the Council's localised Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme in 2018/19 be noted. The scheme is attached at Appendix B.
- vi) That the exclusion of 9,353.67 Band D equivalents from the taxbase as a result of localised Council Tax Support be noted.
- vii) That continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy of 0% in respect of second homes be noted (other than those that retain a 50% discount through regulation as a result of job related protection) and note the inclusion of 670.95 Band D equivalents in the Council Tax taxbase as a result of this discount policy.
- viii) That continuation of the "six week rule" in respect of vacant dwellings, i.e. former Class C exempt properties be noted.
- ix) That continuation of the discretionary power to levy a Council Tax premium of 50% in relation to dwellings which have been empty for more than two years and the resulting inclusion of 245.89 Band D equivalents in the Council Tax taxbase be noted.
- x) That a collection rate for the year 2018/19 of 97.8% be approved.

110 Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21

It was noted that the Financial Strategy would be considered at the next scheduled Cabinet meeting in the New Year.

111 Shrewsbury North West Relief Road - Outline Business Case Refresh

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport presented a report from the Director of Place and Enterprise that provided an update on the work undertaken in preparation of an Outline Business Case [OBC] for submission under the Department for Transport's [DfT] Large Local Majors [LLM] funding programme. He added that Shrewsbury North West Relief Road [NWRR] had been in the public domain for many years and the funding application was being submitted via and supported by the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership [LEP]. He drew particular attention to paragraph 9 within the report that detailed the specific objectives of the scheme.

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, speaking in his capacity as a local Member, commented on the use of 'rat runs' through villages and lanes, the impact of which should not be underestimated. He stressed the environmental impact of no action would only exacerbate the situation in future. Another Member added that Government's support for this project was vital and he commented that traffic within the town of Shrewsbury itself was also an issue that would need to be considered in future.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport stated that Government's decision on the application should be known by Spring 2018. The Leader commented that debate on the detail was unnecessary until such time as the Government's decision was known after which extensive work and further consultation would be undertaken. Members noted that in principle the public were in favour of the scheme at a ratio of approximately 2:1. It was further understood that the scheme would assist those heading beyond Shrewsbury itself and would assist road users travelling to, from and via the town.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the submission of the completed OBC to DfT by 22nd December 2017 be approved.
- ii. That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Place & Enterprise, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport to submit the finalised OBC.
- iii. That a further report be brought back to Cabinet and Council as appropriate, dependent on the award of any further project funding through DfT, as part of the Spring Statement announcements 2018.

112 Shirehall Redevelopment and Refurbishment Scheme

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support presented a report from the Director of Place and Enterprise seeking approval to further develop proposals for the refurbishment of the Shirehall, Shrewsbury. He added that the Shirehall provided an excellent administrative base in terms of function and location but the building was in need of significant improvement if it was to remain as Shropshire Council's long term administrative base.

In supporting the proposals, a Member commented on the need to 'invest to save' and bring back staff into the building. He urged that works undertaken to improve the building and its facilities should be offered as far as possible to local companies and stated that he was excited to see the future plans and costings to make the building fit for the future. Another Member supported this view but expressed surprise at the proposals to remain in the Shirehall given the views of a previous Administration that had sought to move out of the Shirehall. The Chief Executive commented that this may have been an 'opinion' voiced in the past but no consultants had ever been employed to explore that particular option.

RESOLVED:

- i. That in principle agreement to move forward the option of refurbishing the entire building and progressing the necessary due diligence and feasibility work to inform the decision making as outlined in the report be approved.
- ii. That following the completion of further work and due diligence a report is brought back to Cabinet and then Council with final recommendations, including final

detailed costings.

- iii. That authority be delegated to the Director of Place and Enterprise in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support to progress all works in accordance with recommendations i) and ii) above.

113 Exclusion of the Public and Press

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and Paragraph 10.4 (3) of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, the public and press be excluded from this meeting during consideration of the following item/s.

114 Treasury Strategy 2017/18 - Mid Year Review

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report from the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance providing a mid-year review of the Treasury Strategy 2017/18. He added that confidential detail relating to Shrewsbury Town Centre was included in the report; hence the need to consider the item following the exclusion of the public and press on this occasion.

RESOLVED:

That the three recommendations detailed in the exempt report be approved.

115 Exempt Minutes

It was noted that the exempt Minutes would be considered at the next scheduled Cabinet meeting in the New Year.

Signed (Leader)

Date: