



Committee and Date

Cabinet

21 December 2016

CABINET

**Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2016 in the Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND
12.30 - 1.05 pm**

Responsible Officer: Jane Palmer
Email: jane.palmer@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257712

Present

Councillor Malcolm Pate (Leader)
Councillors Steve Charmley (Deputy Leader), Karen Calder, Lee Chapman, Simon Jones, David Minnery, Cecilia Motley, Malcolm Price, Stuart West and Michael Wood

81 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

82 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None were made.

83 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 9 November 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

84 Public Question Time

Mr Bernard Wills had submitted a question on behalf of the Quarry Swimming and Fitness Forum querying why the Facilities Planning Model run by Sport England had not been re-run given that less than half of those accessing the facilities in the centre of town travelled by car. The Director of Place and Enterprise provided a written response that had been circulated to Cabinet prior to the meeting that indicated that the Facilities Planning Model represented only one element of the overall needs assessment and stressed that its findings and conclusions needed to be considered in tandem with local intelligence and understanding of the local situation.

Alison McKittrick, in attendance at the meeting in place of Mr Wills, asked a supplementary question querying why a full structural survey had not been carried out in 2014. The Director of Place and Enterprise responded and stated that a visual

survey had been done at that time to establish outline costs for refurbishment and upgrade. He concluded that, during the 12-month period for submission of business cases by any interested parties, they may choose to undertake a full survey at their cost.

A hard copy of the question and the response provided is included with the formal record of the meeting.

85 Scrutiny Items - Report from the Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group

The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Financial Strategy, Budget and Business Plan presented a report from the Commissioning Support Manager that provided the observations and recommendations, confirmed by the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee, following the Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group's consideration of the feedback from Members and staff on the Corporate Plan, the redrafted Corporate Plan and the draft Strategic Action Plans for the coming 12 to 18 months. He paid tribute to the work of the Task and Finish Group in producing a sound report.

RESOLVED

That the recommendations from the Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group be supported as follows:

- i. Actions in the Strategic Action Plan must be underpinned by a clear view of what needs to be delivered, evidence of what works, appropriate measures of success, and an understanding of the current (baseline) position.
- ii. The Corporate Plan, through the Strategic Action Plans, must set out the Council's ambition for the coming years, especially in terms of developing the economy.

86 Financial Strategy 2017/18 to 2019/20

The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Financial Strategy, Budget and Business Plan presented a report from the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance [s151 Officer] that provided an update on the Council's base budget position. He drew attention to the future uncertainties before the Council including the Government's funding formula and Business rates, New Homes bonus and the Better Care Fund but stressed that the Council had a four-year plan in place.

A Member stated that he considered the Financial Strategy to be imprudent and unsustainable particularly given the continued use of one off reserves to bridge funding gaps. The Leader stated that the aim of the Strategy was to mitigate the situation through the prudent use of reserves and capital receipts and, in so doing, try to save as many services as possible. Another Member commented that the Strategy did nothing other than delay difficult decisions until after the forthcoming elections in May 2017. He accepted that there were no immediate cuts but

believed the measures would only put off the inevitable through the use of devices that could not be repeated.

In noting the comments made, the Leader accepted that there was a great deal of uncertainty post 2020 and stressed that fair funding for elderly care in rural areas would especially have to be addressed by the Government. Concluding, he stated that the primary aim of the Strategy was to maintain the best services possible for the people of Shropshire.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the revised projections for expenditure and resources be approved, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2, for the Financial Years 2017/18 and 2018/19
- ii. That the revised savings proposals be approved as set out in Appendices 4 and 5.
- iii. That the revised funding gap be noted and that the revised proposals be recommended to Council to deliver a balanced budget in 2017/18 and 2018/19 as set out in Appendix 3, including the release of earmarked reserves as set out in Appendix 6.
- iv. That the draft outline Revenue Budget be approved as set out in Appendix 7, and the draft outline Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 8, which together will form the basis for Budget Consultation for 6 weeks from 30 November 2016 to 11 January 2017.

87 Setting the Council Tax Taxbase for 2017/18

The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Financial Strategy, Budget and Business Plan presented a report from the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance [s151 Officer] setting the Council Tax taxbase for 2017/18. Members noted that this was a technical report needed to determine the appropriate Council Tax levels for Shropshire Council.

RESOLVED:

- i. 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 2017/18, be approved as detailed in Appendix A, totalling 106,565.90 Band D equivalents.
- ii. That continuation of the Council's current localised Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme in 2017/18 be noted. The scheme is attached at Appendix B.
- iii. That the exclusion of 10,419.63 Band D equivalents from the taxbase as a result of localised Council Tax Support be noted.
- iv. That continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy of 0% be noted in respect of second homes (other than those that retain a 50% discount through

regulation as a result of job related protection) and note the inclusion of 669.82 Band D equivalents in the Council Tax taxbase as a result of this discount policy.

- v. That continuation be noted of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy of 50% for up to 12 months in respect of vacant dwellings undergoing major repair, i.e. former Class A exempt properties, and the resulting exclusion of 133.94 Band D equivalents from the Council Tax taxbase.
- vi. That continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy be noted in respect of vacant dwellings, i.e. former Class C exempt properties, of 100% for one month, i.e. effectively reinstating the exemption, and then a 25% discount for the remaining five months and the resulting exclusion of 234.66 and 255.58 Band D equivalents respectively from the Council Tax taxbase.
- vii. That continuation of the “six week rule” be noted in respect of vacant dwellings, i.e. former Class C exempt properties.
- viii. That continuation be noted 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 235.38 Band D equivalents in the Council Tax taxbase.
- ix. That a collection rate for the year 2017/18 of 98.2% be approved.

88 Treasury Strategy 2015/16 - Mid Year Review

The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Financial Strategy, Budget and Business Plan presented a report from the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance [s151 Officer] providing details of the Council’s treasury management activities for the first six months of 2016/17. He congratulated the Council’s internal treasury management team who were getting excellent results. Another Member echoed these sentiments and added that the additional money made from prudent investments could be used to invest in services.

Responding to a Member’s comments, the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance [s151 Officer] advised that, in order to mitigate any risk, no funds were invested for more than 12 months. He drew attention to the investment list on p64 of the reports pack and stated that there was always cash available to draw on on a daily basis.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the position as detailed in the report be noted;
- ii) That it be noted that any capital schemes brought forward that would impact on the current Strategy would need Council approval.

89 **Quarter 2 Performance Report 2016/17**

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support presented a report from the Performance Manager detailing the Council's performance against its key outcomes for Quarter 2 of 2016/2017. Members noted the content of the report and the performance against the four key outcomes; Healthy People, Prosperous Economy, Resilient Communities and Your Council.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the key underlying and emerging issues in the reports and appendices be considered.
- ii) That the performance portal be reviewed and any performance areas to be considered in greater detail or referred to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee be identified.

90 **2015/16 Council Customer Feedback Report**

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support presented a report from the Commissioning Support Manager that provided an overview of the formal customer feedback received by the Council during 2015/16 that included complaints, compliments, comments and other types of enquiry. He commented that feedback received related largely to the service areas used predominantly by the public namely, Adult Social Care, Highways, Street Scene, Children's Services and Planning.

Responding to a comment from the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support agreed to circulate to Members information on Ombudsman complaints; out of 30 cases referred, 15 complaints had been upheld.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Annual Customer Feedback Report 2015/16 [Appendix 1] be approved for publication on the Council's website;
- ii) That the recommendations within the report [Appendix 1, pages 13 and 14] be agreed, highlighting key issues and areas for improvement.

91 **Market Drayton Youth Centre - Community Asset Transfer**

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People presented a report from the Director of Enterprise and Growth summarising the assessment of an application made by the Phoenix Centre Association in respect of Market Drayton Youth Centre to transfer by way of a 99-year lease in accordance with the Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy. He stated that this would allow a consortium of local organisations to run the facility in future.

RESOLVED:

That, in principle, Phoenix Centre Association (“the Organisation”) be granted a 99-year lease of the Market Drayton Youth Centre with delegated authority to the Head of Business Enterprise and Commercial Services to agree final terms of the lease and to complete the transaction.

92 Opening Hours Across Customer Service Points

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support presented a report from the Head of Human Resources and Development making recommendations for a reduction in the number of hours the service will be available in future in order to more closely reflect the new level of demand. The level of demand had been assessed to reflect the revised footfall together with the needs of partners.

In answer to the Portfolio Holder for Adults who sought reassurance of the Council’s continued commitment to face to face services, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support gave assurances that the revised opening hours across Customer Service Points would not be at the exclusion of face to face services.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the revised opening hours detailed in the report be approved;
- ii) That the implementation of the proposals be delegated to the Head of Human Resources and Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support.

93 Meole Brace Pitch and Putt

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support presented a report from the Director of Place and Enterprise seeking to agree the future position for the pitch and putt course that had seen a decline in use in recent years.

A Member commented that the level of consultation responses that may be received could be reduced because of the ongoing works at Meole Brace roundabout. The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transportation stated that there would be no roadworks in this location during the Christmas period and considered that they had little effect on the pitch and putt usage.

Another Member commented on the level of general public cynicism on Council ‘consultations’. The Leader stressed that the Council did listen to local opinion and took any comments received into consideration during its decision making processes.

RESOLVED:

That the commencement of a public consultation on the potential cessation of the pitch and putt golf course be approved with the intention of bringing forward a further paper to consider the outcome of the consultation and to agree the next steps.

Signed (Leader)

Date: