



Committee and Date

Cabinet

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2019

In the Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

1.30 pm – 2.16 pm

Responsible Officer: Amanda Holyoak

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Present

Councillor Peter Nutting (Chairman)

Councillors Steve Charmley (Deputy Leader), Dean Carroll, Lee Chapman, Steve Davenport, Robert Macey, David Minnery and Ed Potter

17 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Gwilym Butler and Councillor Lezley Picton.

18 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None were declared.

19 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18 November 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

20 Public Question Time

The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Services and Climate Change responded to a question from Mr Mark Fermor in relation to the Council's actions in relation to Climate Change. A copy of the question and response is attached to the signed minutes and available on the web page for the meeting.

21 Member Question Time

There were no Member questions.

22 Scrutiny Items

There were no scrutiny items.

23 Post 19 Travel Assistance Policy

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services presented the report explaining the background to and the need to adopt a policy to meet the requirements of Section 508F of the Education Act 1996 following an Ombudsman determination. Having considered the views gained during a six week consultation, a Post 19 Travel Assistance Policy was recommended for approval.

RESOLVED:

- A. To approve the draft Post 19 Travel Assistance policy in Appendix A
- B. To delegate to the Executive Director of Children's Services authority to undertake the necessary steps to implement the new policy and to take any further action as appropriate.

24 Regional Permanency Arrangement Development (Phase One)

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services presented the report which set out progress made in the formation of the Together4Children Regional Adoption agency between Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Shropshire Council and Telford and Wrekin Council and plans for the next stages.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- A. Delegates authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services to negotiate and agree the terms of the Permanency Partnership Agreement.
- B. Delegates authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services to make further decisions in relation to the formation of the Together4Children Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services.
- C. Approves that the Together4Children Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) Regional Financial Formula for 2020/21 and 2021/22 is set on the basis that each Partner contributes 100% of "in scope" budgets (Adoption Services), as disaggregated from the 2019/20 budget. Therefore, Shropshire Council's contribution to Adoption Services will continue to be £487,660.
- D. Delegates to the Executive Director of Children's Services to further progress the proposal for the Permanency Partnership to go beyond adoption and to develop a regional model of wider permanence which includes Fostering, Connected Persons and Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) and notes that further recommendations will be made to Cabinet in due course with a view to bringing these wider functions formally within the scope of the Permanency Partnership.

25 Setting the Council Tax Taxbase for 2020/21

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Support presented a report on the setting of the Council Tax Taxbase 2020/21.

RESOLVED:

To agree and recommend to full Council for approval:

- A. In accordance with the Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 to approve the revised discretionary power to levy a Council Tax premium in relation to dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than five years i.e. increasing the premium to 200% in relation to dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than five years and the resulting inclusion of an additional 382.22 Band D equivalents in the taxbase.
- B. To approve 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.
- C. To approve, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Shropshire Council as it's Council Tax taxbase for the year 2020/21, as detailed in Appendix A, totalling 113,557.43 Band D equivalents.
- D. To note the changes to the Council's localised Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme in 2020/21. The scheme is attached at Appendix B.
- E. To note the Council Tax Support Scheme amendments detailed in Section 6 have no impact on the taxbase determination.
- F. To note the exclusion of 8,801.98 Band D equivalents from the taxbase as a result of localised Council Tax Support.
- G. To note continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy of 0% 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 705.45 Band D equivalents in the Council Tax taxbase as a result of this discount policy.
- H. To note continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy to not award a discount in respect of vacant dwellings undergoing major repair, i.e. former Class A exempt properties.
- I. To note continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy in respect of vacant dwellings, i.e. former Class C exempt properties, of 100% for one month i.e. effectively reinstating the exemption and the resulting exclusion of 266.55 band D equivalents from the taxbase.

- J. To note continuation of the “six week rule” in respect of vacant dwellings, i.e. former Class C exempt properties.
- K. To note continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy to levy a Council Tax premium of 100% in relation to dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than two years (but less than five years) and the resulting inclusion of an additional 288.55 Band D equivalents in the taxbase.
- L. To approve a collection rate for the year 2020/21 of 98.3%.

26 Financial Strategy 2020/21 - 2022/23

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Support presented a report on the Council’s Financial Strategy 2020/21 to 2024/25.

In referring to the impact of the growth in Social Care, the Leader reported on actions proposed in the new year including arranging with MPs to raise the profile of Shropshire’s circumstances with Ministers. It was hoped that the Comprehensive Spending Review would take place sooner rather than later. Although there remained £129m in the cash balances, it was intended to avoid using these wherever possible and for the Council to pay its way on a day to day basis.

In response to criticism from a Group Leader regarding the management of a sustainable budget, the Leader referred to the good services provided by Shropshire, with Adult Social Care and Children’s Services both performing well in inspections and being regarded positively by Central Government. He did accept the criticism in relation to highways and reiterated that action was being taken to address this situation.

RESOLVED:

- A. To approve the savings proposals which will contribute towards delivery of a balanced budget in 2020/21 as outlined in Appendix 4, enabling the Leader of the Council to take his proposed budget to consultation before taking to Council on 27 February 2019.
- B. To note the revised funding gap for the years 2021/22 to 2024/25.

27 Treasury Management Update Quarter 2 2019/20

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Support set out the report highlighting the treasury management activities of the Council in the last quarter. He was pleased to report a return of 0.94% on the council’s cash balances during quarter 2, outperforming the benchmark by 0.38%. This amounted to additional income of £130,860 during the quarter and he congratulated the team involved in achieving this position.

RESOLVED:

To accept the position as set out in the report.

28 Bridgnorth Innage Lane - Re provision and Development of Adult Social Care Services and Re provision of Youth Services

It was confirmed that although this item was featured as exempt on the agenda that the report could now be considered in the public part of the meeting. The Assistant Director Commercial Services explained the opportunity for existing youth, early help and day care services to be co-located at one location in a purpose-built new facility at the existing youth Centre Site.

RESOLVED:

- A. To Declare the Youth Centre site at Innage Lane surplus to the Council's requirements in its current form and delegate authority to the Assistant Director – Commercial Services in conjunction with the Executive Directors of Adult Services and Children's Services to explore and develop an appropriate disposal strategy to facilitate a redevelopment of the site to cater for future Youth Services, Adult Services and other complementary service uses.
- B. To bring back a recommendation to seek further approval from Cabinet, once plans have been finalised to dispose of the two sites, the Youth Centre site and 2 Innage Lane, subject to making satisfactory provision for current day service uses in alternative accommodation both as a decanting arrangement and as future newly developed provision.

29 Exclusion of Press and Public

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 Rules, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item.

30 Exempt Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record by the Leader.

31 Ludlow Assembly Rooms

RESOLVED:

To approve the four recommendations set out in the report.

32 Oxon Link Road and Shrewsbury North West Relief Road - Project Combination

RESOLVED:

To approve the two recommendations set out the in report.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: