

**Committee and Date**

Cabinet

18 January 2020

CABINET**Minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2020****VIRTUAL MEETING**

1.00 pm - 3.05 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, Lezley Picton and Ed Potter

175 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Gwilym Butler.

176 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

177 Minutes

The Leader reported that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2020 would be presented at the meeting on 18 January 2021.

178 Public Question Time

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services read out questions submitted by the following members of the public.

Chris Tyler, on behalf of Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan Refresh Group – in relation to the Local Plan Review.

Mike Bastow – in relation to reduction of emissions.

From Joanna De Rycke, John Brownlie and Bernard Wills in relation to Swimming provision in Shrewsbury.

Rob Wilson in relation to School Streets, Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

The full questions and answers provided to them are attached to the signed minutes and available from the web page for the meeting: <https://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=130&Mid=4146&Ver=4>

179 Member Question Time

The Leader invited Councillor Ruth Houghton to ask her questions which were in relation to covid and employment opportunities for young people; economic recovery from covid and assistance available from Shropshire Council to those unable to pay rent or mortgage due to covid. The full questions and responses provided to them are attached to the signed minutes and the web page for the meeting <https://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=130&MId=4146&Ver=4>

In response to a supplementary question regarding the involvement of local communities in recovery particularly in remote areas, the Leader encouraged her to suggest those who she felt should be involved in this work.

180 Scrutiny Items

There were no scrutiny items.

181 Swimming Provision in Shrewsbury

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Waste and Communications was pleased to introduce the report and outlined the work undertaken previously to reach this stage. She outlined what the recommended Option 4 would include over the existing Quarry site and at the Sports Village. This option would result in a better quality swimming offer which was more accessible to more people. In responding to comments and questions the Leader and Portfolio Holder reiterated that both the Quarry and Sports Village sites would go forward as one project.

RESOLVED:

1. To note and acknowledge progress and actions undertaken to meet the recommendations of the Cabinet report in February 2020.
2. To agree that the new Option 4, as recommended by the Member Working Group, is the emerging preferred option for the reasons set out within this report.
3. To delegate to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Waste and Communications, the ability to progress due diligence on the emerging preferred option, to include:
 - I. Design development to RIBA stage 2
 - II. Soft market testing and economic impact assessment
 - III. Whole-life financial appraisal: capital and revenue modelling
 - IV. Management Option(s)
 - V. Development of a delivery and procurement strategy
 - VI. Development of programme and risk management plans
4. To agree that following the due diligence exercise, officers will report back to Cabinet for a decision on a final preferred option in June 2021 which will then be subject to a public and stakeholder consultation before a final recommendation is made by Cabinet to Council.

182 Draft Climate Strategy and Action Plan

The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Services and Climate Change introduced the report and recommendations. He explained the three pronged power up, power down and offsetting approach for achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030 and emphasised that the Strategy and its supporting documents were intended to be simple, ambitious and flexible living documents. In responding to comments and questions, the Portfolio Holder expressed full confidence that the Strategy would lead to 2030 Carbon neutrality.

RESOLVED:

To recommend that Council approves the Corporate Climate Emergency Strategy, Action Plan and Project Pipeline 2020 (Appendices 1 and 2);

183 Quarter 2 Corporate Performance Report

The Portfolio Holder for Organisational Transformation and digital Infrastructure introduced the report highlighting the link to the online portal. He referred to the significant impact of the covid19 pandemic on many areas of performance which reflected the priority the Council had given to supporting communities during this time.

RESOLVED:

To consider the emerging issues in this report

To review the performance portal and identify any performance areas to consider in greater detail or refer to the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee.

184 Financial Monitoring 2020/21 Quarter 2

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Support introduced the report and recommendations within it. The projected overspend had grown from that identified at the end of the first quarter and was now at £2.7 m, action was underway to address this. He also referred to the particular pressures in Children's Services and pressures and loss of income related to covid 19. In answering questions he reported that more detail on management action to address the projected overspend would be shared at the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

To note that at the end of Quarter 2 (30 September 2020), the full year revenue forecast is a potential overspend of £2.771m;

To consider the impact of this on the Council's General Fund balance.

To approve that Shropshire Council acts as Accountable Body for the Pocket Parks programme.

185 Treasury Management Update Quarter 2 2020/21

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Support was pleased to report that once again the Treasury Management Team had exceeded the benchmark which had resulted in additional income of £204,000 during Quarter 2.

RESOLVED:

To accept the position as set out in the report

186 Setting the Council Tax Taxbase for 2021/22

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Support presented the report drawing particular attention to the recommended change in premium to 300% for dwellings which had been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than ten years, in order to discourage long term disuse.

RESOLVED:

to agree and recommend to full Council for approval:

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 ten years i.e. increasing the premium to 300% in relation to dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than ten years and the resulting inclusion of an additional 197.00 Band D equivalents in the taxbase.

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.

On the assumption that the changes to the discount policy in relation to vacant dwellings detailed in Sections 2.1 and 8.3 of this report have been approved, Cabinet members are asked to agree and recommend to full Council:

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 2021/22, as detailed in Appendix A, totalling 113,688.99 Band D equivalents.

To note continuation of the Council's localised Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme in 2021/22. The scheme is attached at Appendix B.

To note the exclusion of 8,917.40 Band D equivalents from the taxbase as a result of localised Council Tax Support.

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 715.06 Band D equivalents in the Council Tax taxbase as a result of this discount policy.

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.

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 172.56 band D equivalents from the taxbase.

To note continuation of the “six week rule” in respect of vacant dwellings, i.e. former Class C exempt properties.

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 320.56 Band D equivalents in the taxbase.

To note continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy to levy a Council Tax premium of 200% in relation to dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than five years (but less than ten years) and the resulting inclusion of an additional 212.00 Band D equivalents in the taxbase.

To approve a collection rate for the year 2021/22 of 97.7%.

187 Financial Strategy 2021/22 - 2025/26

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Support said until the extent of government support for the next financial year was finalised, and more was known about the ongoing situation with regard to the pandemic, that the report had to be based on assumptions. In response to questions the Leader said he believed that one off income previously received would continue. It was disappointing that work on fairer funding had been delayed, once this was finalised he believed Shropshire Council would be significantly better off.

RESOLVED:

To approve the savings proposals as outlined in Appendix A which will contribute towards delivery of a balanced budget in 2021/22 and the removal of £1.651m of previously approved savings now unachievable, enabling the Leader of the Council to take his proposed budget to consultation

To note the revised funding gap for the years 2022/23 to 2025/26.

188 Treasury Strategy 2020/21 Mid year Review

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Support congratulated the Treasury Management Team for its achievement in outperforming targets.

RESOLVED:

To accept the position as set out in the report.

To note that any changes required to the Treasury Strategy including the Annual Investment Strategy or prudential and treasury indicators as a result of decisions made by the Capital Investment Board will be reported to Council for approval.

189 Land at Shrewsbury Flaxmill Compulsory Purchase Order - WITHDRAWN

The Leader reported that Historic England had asked that this item be deferred.

190 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 during the consideration of the following items.

191 Business Park Programme

RESOLVED:

That all recommendations made in the report be approved.

192 Preferred Providers for Free Schools In Shrewsbury

RESOLVED:

That the recommendation in the report be approved.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: