

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 13th February 2019

**Present: Councillor Barnes (Chair)
Councillors Ashworth, Lamb, Oakes, Serridge and
Walmsley**

**In Attendance: Mr S Sugarman, Chief Executive
Ms C Burns, Director of Economic Development
Ms C Birtwistle, Monitoring Officer
Mr P Seddon, Head of Finance
Miss G Ashton, Committee and Member Services Officer**

**Also Present: Councillors Cheetham, James Eaton, Essex, Haworth,
Hughes, Roberts and Stansfield
1 member of the public**

The Leader of the Council apologised for the slight delay in the start of the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies were received from Ms S Plum, Director of Communities.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Leader of the Council thanked Councillor Lamb for Chairing the last meeting which allowed her to attend Westminster to present a strategic case for a rail structure in the borough.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28th November 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

3.1 There were no urgent items.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4.1 Councillor Walmsley declared an interest in minute 7 as he was the Director of a small business in Bacup.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

5.1 The Leader of the Council advised that no written questions had been submitted. Questions from members of the public were permitted at this point.

5.2 There were no questions relating to agenda items.

6. PROPOSED PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS

- 6.1 The Portfolio Holder for Operations outlined the report which sought authority to start the process of introducing a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for dog controls in the borough of Rossendale under Section 59 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. She stressed that the consultation was for an 8 week period, after which time it would be brought back to members for decision. Members, members of the public and other relevant stakeholders were asked to put forward their suggestions during the consultation period.
- 6.2 Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:
- It was suggested adding Halo, Sunnyside and Whitewell Bottom playing pitch to the list of land to be covered.
 - How had the maximum number of dogs to be walked at any one time been decided on.
 - Concerns were expressed regarding the requirement for dog walkers to carry a bag as a means of picking up after their dog had fouled, as it felt intrusive.
- 6.3 In response to comments made it was noted that:
- Advice had been obtained from animal charities and the procedures of other councils had been considered.
- 6.4 Elected members were invited to comment on the report:
- The maximum number of dogs to be walked at any one time should be reduced to 4.
 - Dog walkers not carrying bags should be fined.
 - It was suggested adding Worsley and Victoria Parks to the list of land to be covered.
 - Would signage in the parks change.
 - Clarification was sought on the areas covered by the order.
 - The definition of the fine range hadn't been included in the consultation and clarification was sought.
- 6.5 In response to comments made it was noted that:
- The suggested public areas to be included in the order would be passed on to the Public Protection Manager.
 - Signage would change to reflect changes in the law.
 - As soon a dog walker left their property, they would be covered by the order.
 - Clarification of the fine range would be obtained. *Subsequent to the meeting it was confirmed that the maximum fine for level 3 on the standard scale was £1,000.*

Resolved:

1. That members approved an 8 week consultation exercise on the proposal to make a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to introduce amended dog control orders across Rossendale.

Reason for Decision:

To allow a full and extensive consultation with residents and relevant stakeholders to make orders which are relevant, necessary and consistently enforced across the borough.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

7. DISCRETIONARY NNDR RELIEF (2019 BUDGET MEASURES)

7.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources outlined the report which asked members to approve the application of Business rate relief to retail premises with a rateable value of less than £51,000 and delegate authority for future discretionary schemes of relief to the Portfolio Holder for Resources in conjunction with the S151 Officer.

7.2 Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- The rate relief was good news for small retail businesses.
- It was suggested writing to the Minister commending the initiative but advising that changing the arrangements each year did not help the Council or retail businesses.

7.3 Elected members were invited to comment on the report:

- The arrangements were good for small businesses.

Resolved:

1. That members approved the application of Business rate relief to retail premises with a rateable value of less than £51,000 in line with the criteria outlined by Central Government. All cases in which relief awards would be fully funded by Government grant.
2. That members approved delegated authority for future discretionary schemes of relief to the Portfolio Holder for Resources in conjunction with the S151 Officer for cases in which Central Government both defined the parameters of relief schemes and fully funded awards made locally.

Reason for Decision:

The additional funding would enable reductions in NNDR to be made. Adopting the relief scheme as outlined by Government would mean that awards could be made at the earliest possible opportunity and that there would be no cost to local residents.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

8. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2018/19 – QUARTER 3

8.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources outlined the report which provided an update on the financial performance in the first three quarters of the financial year, compared to the original budget set in February 2018. A surplus of £270,000 was noted with a favourable variance of £152,000. Staff savings had been set at £150,000 and to

date there was still £13,000 to find. Cash balances were higher than expected. Officers were pursuing legal recovery of sundry debts.

8.2 Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- How was S106 money spent.

8.3 In response to the comment made it was noted that:

- A team of officers monitored areas for S106 monies to be spent.

8.4 Elected members were invited to comment on the report:

- The Head of Finance and his team were thanked for their hard work on the reports.
- There had been a turnaround in the budget during the year.
- The Portfolio Holder was thanked for maintaining the budget.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Finance Team and Portfolio Holder for their work on the reports.

Resolved:

1. That members noted the contents of the report.

Reason for Decision:

For the robust monitoring of the General Fund and MTFS.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

9. 2019/20 CORPORATE PRIORITIES, BUDGET, COUNCIL TAX AND THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

9.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources outlined the report which asked members to consider and recommend to Full Council the Revenue Budget and level of Council Tax for 2019/20, together with implications for the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The report stated the challenges faced by the Authority as less money was made available to district Councils. A 2.99% Council Tax increase was suggested in line with other Councils.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Head of Finance and Portfolio Holder for an excellent piece of work.

9.2 There were no comments from Cabinet members.

9.3 Elected members were invited to comment on the report:

- Feedback was provided on the report.
- It was suggested that the Leader of the Council and opposition Leader make representations to the Local Government Association to lobby the Secretary of State to look more favourably on district councils.
- It was also suggested asking Jake Berry MP to add his name to the letter.

The Leader of the Council expressed her thanks for the suggestions made.

Resolved:

1. That members recommended to Council a 2019/20 Council Tax rate for Band D of £274.12, being a 2.99% increase.
2. That members recommended to Council the use of £511k (*subject to any final Member decisions*) from the Transitional Reserve, £Nil from the Council Tax collection fund and £1.2m from the Business Rates Retention reserve to support the 2019/20 annual budget.
3. That members recommended to Council a net revenue budget for 2019/20 of £9,931,000 (*subject to any final approval of costs & savings*).
4. That members considered the Fees and Charges as noted in Appendix 1.
5. That the Head of Finance be instructed to prepare the technical resolutions necessary to give effect to these proposals.

Reason for Decision:

The Council must remain focused on identifying and delivering further efficiencies and income in order to ensure annual balanced budgets over the immediate and medium term. It must also ensure that all its budget resource allocations are directed to the core functions of the Council and that the use of its resources has clear links to the Council's Corporate Priorities.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

10. CAPITAL STRATEGY AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2019/20 TO 2021/22

- 10.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources outlined the report which provided members with a Capital Strategy for the coming three years, proposed a capital expenditure programme for 2019/20 and the medium term and advised members on the various sources of capital funding available to support the proposed expenditure and their impacts upon the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 10.2 Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:
 - The Capital Strategy was a useful document.
- 10.3 Elected members were invited to comment on the report:
 - The Council were moving from a cash based Capital Programme to a borrowed one.
- 10.4 In response to the comment made it was noted that:
 - A number of investment opportunities were being pursued.
 - The Council were borrowing externally with robust business cases in place.

Resolved:

1. That members considered the Capital Strategy for 2019/20 and the medium term, as set out in Appendix 1.

2. That members considered the affordable capital programme for 2019/20, as set out on page 9 of Appendix 1, and recommended the new capital expenditure projects totalling £1,273k to Full Council for approval.
3. That members agreed to delegate any minor amendments to the capital programme throughout the 2019/20 financial year as a result of new grant-funded community projects, to the Head of Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources. Amendments would then be reported to Cabinet through the regular Financial Monitoring Reports.

Reason for Decision:

With severe pressures on the Council's revenue resources throughout the Medium Term Financial Strategy it is more likely than ever that the Council will need to take out further external borrowing, leading to interest costs which will need to be included within the business case for each investment.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

11. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY & TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (UPDATES FOR 2019/20)

- 11.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources outlined the report which asked members to consider and recommend the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMS) and Treasury Management Policy and Practices (TMP) ahead of their approval at Full Council.
- 11.2 There were no comments from Cabinet members.
- 11.3 Elected members were invited to comment on the report:
 - There had been significant changes which were not been listed separately in the recommendations.
 - The responsibilities of the S151 officer had increased this year.
- 11.4 In response to comments made it was noted that:
 - The changes reflected what the Council needed to do to deliver its services.
 - Senior Directors and officers contributed to the reports and they were not completed in isolation.

Resolved:

1. That members considered the revised Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Treasury Management Policy and Practices and recommended their approval at Full Council.
2. That members delegated any further minor changes to the Head of Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources.

Reason for Decision:

To ensure continued compliance with the Code and continue to contain the Council's exposure to financial risk.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

The Leader of the Council advised that the date of the next meeting had changed from 6th March to 12th March 2019.

The meeting commenced at 6.33pm and concluded at 7.20pm

_____ CHAIR _____ DATE