

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2018 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Lowe (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Dickins, Hogarth, Piper and Scholey

Cllrs. Clack, Edwards-Winser and Eyre were also present.

64. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 11 January 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

65. Declarations of interest

Cllr Dickins declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9 (Minute 68) being appointed to the High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee. There were no additional declarations of interest.

66. Questions from Members

There were no questions from Members.

67. Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee or Cabinet Advisory Committees

There were none.

CHANGE IN AGENDA ITEM ORDER

With Cabinet's agreement, the Chairman advised he would take agenda item 9 first (Minute 68).

68. Property Investment Strategy Update

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report which provided an update on the progress of the Property Investment Strategy to date and looked at the future direction of the strategy. The Property Investment Strategy had been a major tool in helping this council achieve financial self-sufficiency and continue to deliver a balanced 10-year budget.

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He stated that it was important to continue with the Property Investment Strategy to enable schemes such as the M&Co and Swanley sites to progress and therefore deliver further income streams.

The Finance Advisory Committee had considered and noted the same report.

The Chief Finance Officer informed Cabinet that £18m had been spent to date including two acquisitions in 2017 and the budgeted income from the strategy in 2017/18 was forecast to be exceeded.

Cllr Histed, Chairman of Shoreham Parish Council, addressed Cabinet on this item with the permission of the Chairman.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

69. Bank Account Signatories

The Principal Accountant (Capital and Treasury) presented the report which sought approval for a change to the list of officers authorised to sign cheques and sanction banking instruments on behalf of the Council.

As a result of changes in personnel in the Finance Department, Cabinet approval was required to amend the list of authorised bank signatories.

Two members of staff were being removed from the list and the new Head of Finance and the Assistant Accountant were being added.

It was explained that authorised signatories within the Finance Section had signing rights over all bank accounts except for the Legal Section's Imprest Account.

Resolved: That

- a) Jackie Weyman, Finance System Team Leader and Joanne Cheeseman, System Finance Officer no longer be authorised to sign cheques and sanction banking instruments on behalf of the Council; and
- b) pursuant to Financial Procedure Rules 4.73 and 4.74, Alan Mitchell, Head of Finance and Tsitsi Danga, Assistant Accountant (Technical) be authorised to sign cheques and sanction banking instruments on behalf of the Council.

70. Budget and Council Tax Setting 2018/19

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report which was the final stage in the budget process that had seen significant Member involvement. He stated that

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if approved the net expenditure budget for 2018/19 would be £14.687m. Subject to any further changes this would result in a Council Tax increase of 2.97% resulting in a Band D Council Tax being £208.80.

The Chief Finance Officer then presented the report which contained various appendices including budget amounts for all service within areas, growth and savings items recommended as well as pay costs and a risk analysis.

The report also contained the Chief Finance Officer's opinion, as the Statutory Finance Officer, on the robustness of the budget estimates and adequacy of reserves. Appendix I contained a review of reserves which included the recommendation to transfer £141,000 into the Corporate Project Support Reserve to help fund innovations such as the Customer Redesign Project.

Cllr. Piper [tabled](#) a document during discussion of this item setting out the number of building completions by ward.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that

- a) the Summary of Council Expenditure and Council Tax for 2018/19 set out in Appendix E to the report be approved;
- b) the 10-year budget 2018/19 to 2027/28 which is the guiding framework for the detailed approval of future years' budgets set out in Appendix B to the report be approved, including the growth and savings proposals set out in Appendix C-D to the report, and that where possible any variations during and between years be met from the Budget Stabilisation Reserve;
- c) the Capital Programme 2018/21 and funding method set out in Appendix H to the report, be approved; and
- d) the changes to reserves and provisions set out in Appendix I to the report, be approved.

71. Annual Discretionary Rate Relief

The Chief Finance Officer presented a report which set out the proposals for awarding discretionary rate relief for 2018/19. The Council required potential recipients of discretionary rate relief to submit a formal application every two years. However, in view of the changes brought about by business rate retention, the proposals for awarding relief were to be reported annually.

Members were advised of three amendments to Appendix B: Target Your Potential Ltd should have been listed as 'recommended; Badgers Mount Memorial Hall should be listed as Badgers Mount Parish not Shoreham; and Age Concern Sevenoaks & District Shop was not now recommended for relief.

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The Finance Advisory Committee had considered the same report and had agreed to recommend it for approval.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That the proposals for granting relief from business rates for 2018/2019 set out in Appendix B to the report, subject to the reported amendments above, be approved.

(Cllr. Eyre was not present during consideration of this item, due to a disclosable pecuniary interest.)

72. Local Discretionary Business Rates Relief Scheme

The Chief Finance Officer presented a report which set out the proposals for amending Sevenoaks' local discretionary business rates scheme for 2017/18 to 2020/21 to ensure that funds were allocated for the benefit of local ratepayers.

The Government had set aside £300m in funding over the period 2017/18 to 2020/21 to support those businesses most affected by the revaluation of Business Rates from 1 April 2017. The Government had confirmed that there was no provision for unallocated funds to be rolled over into the next financial year and that any underspend would be returned to MHCLG as part of the usual NDR process.

He advised that the Finance Advisory Committee had considered the same report and had agreed to recommend it for approval.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That the following proposals be approved:

- a) increase the maximum percentage relief available for 2017/18 to 2020/21 and allow this to be retrospectively applied to existing recipients;
- b) make automatic awards for 2017/18 (subject to a State Aid declaration) to potential recipients who have not yet claimed;
- c) apply relief automatically for 2018/19 to 2020/21 (subject to a State Aid declaration); and

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- d) give delegated authority to the S151 officer to amend the scheme in future years to ensure relief if properly targeted and fully utilised for the benefit of ratepayers.

73. Financial Results 2017/18 - to end of November 2017

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report which detailed the budget monitoring position as at the end of November 2017 and the forecast outturn position for the financial year, which Members considered.

The Principal Accountant explained that based on the information that was available at the end of November, Officers were forecasting a favourable outturn variance of £56,000. When last reported, the outturn position was a favourable outturn variance of £103,000

The Finance Advisory Committee had considered and noted the same report.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

74. Treasury Management Strategy 2018/19

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report which set out the Council's policies for borrowing and for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments.

The Council was required under the Local Government Act 2003 (the Act) and supporting regulations to 'have regard to' the Prudential Code and to set Prudential Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable; to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing; and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy (as required by investment guidance issued subsequent to the Act).

The Principal Accountant further advised that CIPFA had recently published a revised Prudential Code as well as a revised Treasury Management Code of Practice. The primary purpose was to ensure sound governance around "non-treasury" investments such as property acquisitions. The Codes were published too late to enable the full impact to be built in to the strategy statement, therefore changes would be brought before Members during 2018/19 as and when required.

The Finance Advisory Committee had considered the same report and had agreed to recommend it for approval.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that the Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/19, be approved.

75. Capital Programme and Asset Maintenance 2018/21

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report which set out the proposed Capital and Asset maintenance programme for 2018/21 together with proposed funding. The Chief Finance Officer set out the proposed capital programme for the next three years as well as the asset maintenance programme.

The following projects were proposed:

- Vehicle Replacements of £548,000 in 2018/19 funded by the Vehicle Replacement Reserve
- Disabled Facility Grants - £889,000 in 2018/19 funded by the Better Care Fund
- CCTV Equipment Replacement - £70,000
- Property Investment Strategy, 4th phase of £25,000,000.

The Finance Advisory Committee had considered the same report and had agreed to recommend it for approval.

Two members indicated that they were keen to ensure that asset sales did not prejudice the capability of the Council to provide affordable housing via any future affordable housing company.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That

- a) the Capital Programme 2018/21 and funding set out in Appendix B to the report, be approved; and
- b) the proposed Asset Maintenance budget of £561,000 be agreed for 2018/19.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.54 PM

CHAIRMAN

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IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 8 February 2018. The decisions contained in Minutes 70 and 74 are references to Council. The decisions contained in Minutes 68, 69, 71, 72, 73 and 75 take effect immediately.