

CABINET

Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 9th January, 2014 at 5.00 p.m. at the AFC Telford Learning Centre, Haybridge Road, Wellington, Telford

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 15th JANUARY, 2014

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 20TH JANUARY, 2014)

PRESENT: Councillors K.S. Sahota (Leader and Chair), E.A. Clare, S. Davies, A.R.H. England, W.A.M. McClements, R.A. Overton, H. Rhodes, C.F. Smith and P.R. Watling

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors A.J. Eade (Conservative Group Leader) and G.M. Green (Liberal Democrat/Independent Deputy Group Leader)

CB-73 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CB-74 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor W.L. Tomlinson (Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Leader)

CB-75 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CB-76 SERVICE & FINANCIAL PLANNING 2014/15 – 2015/16

Key Decision identified as **Service & Financial Planning 2014/15 – 2015/16** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 6 December 2013.

Council decision – not subject to Call-in

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the report of the Managing Director and the Chief Financial Officer, which set out the proposed service and financial planning strategy for the period 2014/15 to 2015/16 with specific budget proposals for 2014/15, and the proposed engagement and consultation activities with the community. He thanked the Chief Financial Officer and his team for all their hard work in preparing the draft budget, particularly given the late announcement by central Government of the grant settlement.

The Cabinet Member set out the background and context to the budget round, particularly in relation to the unprecedented cuts in Government grant funding

whilst at the same time demand for many services, such as safeguarding children against harm and neglect and community care for older people, had been increasing. By 2015/16 the cuts would total £75m pa - equivalent to more than £1,000 for every household in the Borough. Despite the severe financial challenges the Council faced, the clear priority of the Administration was to attract new jobs and investment and promote growth in the Borough, whilst seeking to protect, as far as possible, front line services – with a commitment to work co-operatively with residents and partners to deliver these priorities. There was already evidence that the Council's business winning agenda was leading to higher than average economic growth in the Borough. The provisional grant settlement announced on 18th December 2013 was broadly in line with the Council's financial planning assumptions. The Council was lobbying the Government for a "Growth Deal" to ensure that more of the proceeds of the sale of Government land in the Borough were invested back in the Borough, and that the Council be allowed to retain more business rate income to help to deliver growth. Further discussions were also taking place with the local Clinical Commissioning Group regarding the transfer of an estimated £8.5m of costs for Continuing Healthcare (CHC) cases from the NHS to the Council as a result of the below average funding of CHC. This situation was unjustifiable in the Council's view, and the Council was demanding that the CCG correct the imbalance.

In order to facilitate the integration of health and social care services and the transfer of public health functions to the Council, it would be necessary for the Council to enter into agreements with various NHS bodies.

In terms of the base budget position, the Council was facing a funding gap of £11.428m for 2014/15. The report set out the proposals to bridge the gap, including savings proposals and a revised approach to calculation of Minimum Revenue Provision. The proposals had been developed in the light of extensive consultation with the community, and included:

- Freezing Council Tax for the next two years – as agreed as part of its Strategy by Cabinet on 14 November 2013;
- Winning and supporting jobs and investment ;
- Protecting front line services as far as possible, although it was becoming increasingly difficult to make savings which would not have direct service impacts;
- Investing in Safeguarding Children including the creation of an additional budget of £1.2m to be drawn down as required to meet demand;
- Investing in communities – some one-off investments of £8m capital funding and £1.6m revenue funding over two years could be proposed as a result of the planned early delivery of ongoing savings and effective treasury management. Further details were contained in a separate report on the agenda, but they would fund environmental and infrastructure improvements and help to ensure that the Borough was an attractive place for people that wanted to come to live and locate businesses.
- Investing in roads and facilities for disabled people – this would help maintain the road network and help people to remain living

- independent lives in their own homes rather than moving into residential care;
- Tackling youth unemployment - £1.3m of revenue funding over two years was being proposed to deliver a range of pledges and actions to tackle youth unemployment. Further details were contained in a separate report on the agenda;
 - Destination Telford – an investment of £0.1m was proposed to promote Telford as a place to visit, live, work and invest in.

Attached to the report were a number of appendices, including savings proposals, a Safeguarding and Early Help Cost Improvement Plan, Impact Assessments of the savings proposals, the Capital Investment Programme, and details of Reserves and Balances. A programme of community engagement and consultation on the budget proposals would be undertaken over the next few weeks. Views would be sought on specific proposals in the 2014/15 budget, the proposed investment package and on whether the Council should accept the Council Tax freeze grant or raise Council Tax by 1.9% in line with the 2013/14 budget strategy. Details of the communication and engagement plan were appended to the report. Final proposals would be considered by the Cabinet on 20 February 2014 for recommendation to full Council on 27 February 2014.

During the ensuing debate, Councillor G. Green (Lib Dem/Independent Group Deputy Leader) welcomed the inclusion of a care leaver's grant for Looked After Children as well as the proposed contingency for safeguarding children. Councillor A. Eade (Conservative Group Leader) stated that his Group would be submitting an alternative budget for consideration. The most significant concern was the reduction in adult social care budgets, which would put vulnerable people at risk and impact on carers. Savings could be found in other areas rather than cut social care budgets by this degree, and the Administration was making a clear choice to take money out of social care. Councillor A.R.H. England, Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care, reminded Members that the current Government had imposed massive cuts on local government expenditure that made reductions in care budgets unavoidable. However, a senior team of Officers and Members was looking at how resources could be managed in such a way (including working with partners) as to minimise the impact on service users. This included re-commissioning and negotiating down provider costs, and re-designing services.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the service and financial planning strategy as set out in the report be approved for consultation with the community;**
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Family, Cohesion & Commissioning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care, to enter into appropriate Section 256 and Section 75 Agreements under the NHS Act 2006 with various NHS bodies;**

- (c) that the Assistant Director: Law Democracy & People Services be authorised to execute all necessary contract documentation in accordance with the Constitution, including the affixing of the common seal of the Council as appropriate to enable the Council to enter into appropriate Section 256 and Section 75 Agreements under the NHS Act 2006.

CB-77 'EVERYDAY TELFORD – PRIDE IN YOUR COMMUNITY' – INVESTING IN OUR INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Key Decision identified as **Pride of Place Telford – Investing in Our Infrastructure and Communities** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 14 November 2013.

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills, presented the report of the Managing Director, which outlined a proposed resident focussed investment programme to be delivered across the Borough over two years to complement the Council's business and housing growth agenda.

The 'Pride in Your Community' scheme would deliver a joined-up programme of social and physical improvements, ensuring that a residents had an opportunity to benefit in terms of improved training and employment opportunities, improvements in their local area, and support to help them take positive action to help to improve their neighbourhood. It was proposed to create an Infrastructure Investment Fund with £8m capital funding over 2 years, together with £1.5m revenue. As part of the programme of investment in District Centres, it was proposed to allocate £1m capital funding towards improving the District Centre in Hollinswood. A further £1m would go towards a 'community enabling fund' to use as match funding towards the capital costs of improving buildings or facilities of significance to the community. It was also proposed, following positive feedback from Ward members, Parish Councils and the community, that the Ward Co-operative Fund for the next two years be enhanced by increasing the amount of investment available to each ward member from £1,000 to £2,000 per annum. The additional funding would need to be spent on environmental themed projects.

Appended to the report was a document showing the pledges that the Council would deliver through the 'Pride in Your Community' programme. Further reports on the delivery of the programme would be brought back to Cabinet for approval.

Members welcomed the proposed investment in local communities, and the benefits that flowed from such work through involving the community and getting their input into improvements for their local area. A safe, clean and well maintained Borough would make a difference to residents and employers as well as helping to attract further investment. It was noted that the proposed revenue investment would be funded from the anticipated early delivery of savings in 2014/15. .

RESOLVED –

- (a) that, subject to approval by full Council as part of the Service and Financial Planning Strategy for 2014/15 – 2015/16, £8m capital and £1.5m revenue be allocated over two years to support the delivery of the ‘Everyday Telford – Pride in Your Community’ programme and the Infrastructure Investment Fund to enable the delivery of community focussed environment and infrastructure improvements and enhance training and employment opportunities for residents across the Borough;
- (b) that the £8m capital investment be allocated as follows:
- £6m to implement the programme across the Borough with Sutton Hill assigned as the Pilot for the full programme roll out;
 - £1m to improve Hollinswood District Centre;
 - £1m to establish a ‘community enabling fund to provide match funding to local capital projects of community significance.
- (c) that the Ward Co-operative Fund continues to be delivered within its existing format, and that the funding available is increased to £108k from £54k, allowing funding to be allocated to each ward on the basis of £2,000 per ward member – with the additional £1,000 per ward member allocated for spending on environmental improvements that support the delivery of the ‘Pride in Your Community’ programme. Any funding not committed by the end of the financial year will be re-allocated to support community based projects that support the delivery of Council priorities.

CB-78 TACKLING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT – OUR COMMITMENT

Key Decision identified as **Tackling Youth Unemployment – an Integrated Approach** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 10 December 2013.

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills, presented the report of the Managing Director, which set out a comprehensive and integrated strategy to tackle youth unemployment and at the same time ensure the labour market was fit for purpose and met employers’ needs.

According to official data, youth unemployment (16-24 year olds) in the Borough was currently at 32.1%, above both the regional and national rates. Long term unemployment for 18-24 year olds was also an issue in the Borough, and there were a number of negative social implications arising from this. There was already work underway by the Council and partners to address youth unemployment, including an increase in the number of apprentices employed by the Council from 28 in 2008 to over 100 currently. But it was recognised more needed to be done, and considerable work had been undertaken to develop a better understanding of the data and the barriers to employment and training for young people. It was proposed that, in its capacity as employer, service provider and facilitator & broker, the Council would be leading the way in tackling youth unemployment. Appended to the

report were a series of pledges which would establish a framework for action, along with a detailed action plan that would underpin the pledges. To be successful, the strategy would be led by the Council but with the key involvement of partners, agencies, training providers and the business community.

In order to deliver the pledges and action plan, additional funding of £1.3m was required over the next two years. It was proposed that this would be funded from the early delivery of savings in 2014/15. The Cabinet Member added that he had written to Government Ministers to ask for funding from central government to match the Council's investment.

Members welcomed the report and the measures being proposed to reduce youth unemployment in the Borough.

RESOLVED -

- (a) that the proposed pledges and actions to tackle youth unemployment, as outlined in the report, be approved;**
- (b) that the additional funding to deliver pledges and actions as set out in section 4.8 of the report be approved, subject to final approval by full Council as part of the Service and Financial Planning Strategy for 2014/15 – 2015/16;**
- (c) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills, to award any contracts necessary to deliver the actions set out in the report.**

The meeting ended at 6.12 pm.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

**Jonathan Eatough
Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection
Date: 15 January 2014**

Signed:

Date: