

CABINET

Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 15 November 2018 at 5.00pm in Meeting Rooms G3-G4, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2018

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2018)

Present: Councillors S Davies (Leader and Chair), R A Overton (Deputy Leader and Vice Chair), L D Carter, A R H England, R C Evans, J C Minor, S A W Reynolds and H Rhodes.

Also Present: Councillors A J Eade (Conservative Group Leader) and W L Tomlinson (Liberal Democrat / Independent Group Leader)

CB-026 **Apologies for Absence**

None.

CB-027 **Declarations of Interest**

None.

CB-028 **Minutes**

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CB-029 **Overnight Closure of A&E at Princess Royal Hospital**

The Leader provided an update on the Council's work to safeguard overnight A&E services at Princess Royal Hospital. 3000 people attended the recent march in protest of the closure and council leaders from across the West Midlands had supported the Council in opposing the closure. The Leader stated that the Trust entering Special Measures had negatively affected recruitment at SaTH and urged the Government to intervene rather than monitor. He called for the Future Fit Process to be halted and supported a national approach to support the Trust.

The Cabinet Members thanked the members of the public who had attended the march and signed the petition. Members supported the innovative approaches for encouraging recruitment at SaTH, such as the free accommodation for Doctors.

The Conservative Group Leader and Liberal Democrat / Independent Group Leader also expressed their concerns about the proposals and supported a cross-party approach. The Conservative Group Leader and Liberal Democrat / Independent Group Leader called for a renewed effort for members of the public to sign the Council's online petition.

CB-030 **2018/19 Financial Management Report**

Key Decision identified as **Financial Management Report 2018/19 Update** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 15 August 2018.

Reserved for Council

Councillor L D Carter, Cabinet Member: Finance, Commercial Services & Economic Development, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Finance & Human Resources and Chief Financial Officer.

It was reported that the net projected outturn position for 2018/19 was estimated to be within budget. This was a positive position despite £7.6m savings being required to balance the 2017/18 budget, which currently left £4.8m uncommitted balance in the central contingency. Senior Managers would aim to sustain this position if possible, so that the one-off contingency benefit was available to support the medium term budget strategy. However, it was noted that potentially the Council could face significant financial pressures if, for example, the winter was particularly hard or if the NHS faced significant winter pressures.

Children's Safeguarding and Early Help & Support continued to be key areas of focus and both had cost improvement plans in place to reduce costs and deliver savings. These plans were monitored on a regular basis both by senior managers and Cabinet Members.

A number of variations from the approved budget were reported, including some beneficial variances. The key areas highlighted were:

- A benefit of £2.2m relating to Treasury Management activities - the majority of which related to benefits from low interest rates for short term borrowing.
- A benefit of £0.6m relating to the Property Investment Portfolio and delivery of benefits ahead of schedule from the Council's £50m Growth Fund Investments.
- Children's Safeguarding was a key pressure with an anticipated requirement for £2.9m additional investment necessary in the current year. This mainly related to the cost of placements for Looked after Children and the cost of social workers. A four year model was in place, designed to deliver efficiencies over the remainder of the year and medium term.
- Education & Corporate Parenting – the service was currently projecting that an overspend of £0.4m in the current year mainly relating to the cost of providing school transport and an increase in the number of children with high needs.

It was noted that the capital programme totalled £74.6m which included all approvals since the budget was set. At the time of compiling the report projected spend was 98% of the budget allocation. Some new allocations and slippage had been identified which would go to Full Council in January for formal approval.

Sales Ledger and Business Rates collection were slightly behind the targets set. The level of outstanding Council Tax debt was slightly behind the target set for the year.

RESOLVED that –

- (a) it be noted that 2018/19 revenue spending is currently projected to be within budget and work will continue with SMT to sustain this position, and approve the transfer to reserves as detailed in section 4.3 and Appendix 2 of the report, and the use of contingency detailed in section 5 with authority granted to the Director: Customer, Neighbourhood and Wellbeing Services after consultation with the Cabinet Member: Council Finance, Commercial Services and Economic Development;
- (b) the position in relation to capital spend be noted and **TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** that the new allocations and slippage detailed in Appendix 3 of the report be approved; and
- (c) the collection rates for NNDR, council tax and sales ledger be noted;

CB-031 Declaration of Lightmoor Local Nature Reserve

Key Decision identified as **Lightmoor Local Nature Reserve** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 17 October 2018.

Councillor J C Minor, Cabinet Member: Leisure, Green Spaces & Parks, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Business, Development & Employment.

The Council had made a commitment to the retention of locally important green spaces which had value to local communities. This already included the protection afforded to the Green Network through policies in the adopted Local Plan, through the existing 200 Green Guarantee Sites and 13 Local Nature Reserves. The report sets out proposals to designate a new Local Nature Reserve at Lightmoor. Through this commitment the area of LNR protected would increase by 24.4 hectares to a total of 477.4 hectares of approved LNR. The extent of LNR provision was nearly triple the minimum recommended standard and meant that 89% of households were within 300m of greenspace. Maps showing the proposed LNRs were attached to the report at Appendix 1 and 2.

These proposals had been developed by the 'Lightmoor LNR Steering Group' in liaison with the local community including the local Parish Councils and would involve local friends groups and volunteers carrying out small scale conservation tasks as part of the management of the sites. The designation of additional LNRs further reflected the Council's commitment to promoting health and wellbeing.

The selection, declaration and management of Local Nature Reserves was a function of local authorities. The proposed sites were all within Council ownership, with land to the north east of the proposed LNR within the Council's ownership and leased under a 999 year agreement to the Lightmoor New Community.

Following the approval, the sites would progress through a formal process with Natural England prior to final legal declaration.

Members welcomed the report and supported the protection of green spaces in the Borough.

RESOLVED that –

- (a) the declaration of Lightmoor Local Nature Reserve be approved in principle; and**
- (b) authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Business, Development & Employment to complete the declaration process.**

The meeting ended at 17.46.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Jonathan Eatough
Assistant Director: Governance, Procurement & Commissioning
Date: 21 November 2018

Signed:
Date: