

MINUTES of a meeting of the CABINET held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 18 JUNE 2019

Present: Councillor R Blunt (Chairman)

Councillors R Ashman, R D Bayliss, N J Rushton and A C Woodman

In Attendance: Councillors D Everitt, B Harrison-Rushton, J Legrys, C A Sewell and S Sheahan

Officers: Mr J Arnold, Mrs T Bingham, Mr G Jones, Mrs B Smith and Mrs C Hammond

5. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor T Gillard.

6. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no interests declared.

7. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

8. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 9 April 2019.

It was moved by Councillor R Blunt, seconded by Councillor R D Bayliss and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 April 2019 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Reason for decision:- To comply with the Constitution.

9. PROVISIONAL FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2018/19

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

He advised that the report summarised the main elements of the financial performance for 2018/19 and sought approval of the impact on reserves. He noted that the results were 'provisional' as they were still subject to external audit and could change. He highlighted that the final audited accounts would be presented to the Audit & Governance Committee on 24 July 2019 for approval.

He informed members that the financial performance across the council had continued to improve and he thanked the Finance team for their hard work in delivering the annual accounts. He advised that the team had been dealing with some legacy issues and despite that, they had delivered a quality outcome against a tight deadline.

In relation to the General Fund he highlighted the following:-

- The expected final position on the General Fund was £1.525m surplus against a budget of £299k.

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- The majority of variances had been known about and reported throughout the year.
- All major variances were included in Table 2 of the report.
- The most significant variance had been a favourable movement in business rates, with an additional £480k retained by the council compared to the budgeted level. Differences between budget and actual business rate income were not unusual due to the complex nature of forecasting business rates.
- It is proposed that £1.42m of the surplus was contributed to the self-sufficiency reserve.
- Of the remaining £100k surplus it was proposed to allocate:
 - £20k to fund an options appraisal for Moira Furnace and surrounding land. The Council had committed to do this in the Council Delivery Plan but had unfortunately not been unsuccessful in obtaining Resilient Heritage funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.
 - £20k to support administration of EMEG Access to Work and Skills and the Shop Frontages Improvement Scheme, Enterprise Grant Scheme
 - £30.5k to commission a Carbon Footprint report which would provide assess the organisation and develop an action plan to move the district to a carbon neutral position by 2050 or before. The Council was also considering signing up to the UK100 Pledge, a group of Local Government bodies who were actively committed to shifting to 100% clean energy by 2050.
 - £30k to undertake a food waste recycling pilot.

In relation to the HRA he noted the following:-

- The outturn on the HRA was an expected surplus of £4.9m against a budget of £2.95m with the major variances being a lower than budgeted depreciation charge for the year, under spends on employee costs and on painting programmes.
- The In House Repairs team also generated a surplus of £385k that was recycled back into the HRA. In 2017/18, the amount was £272k and the increase for the past year demonstrates the effectiveness of bringing more repairs work and capital improvements back in house and the position should continue to improve in the current year.

He thanked the repairs team for the continuing good work.

In relation to Capital and Reserves he highlighted the following:-

- In total, the Council spent just under £12m on assets. The General Fund underspent by £400k and the HRA carried forward the majority of its £4.2m under-spend into future years for completion.
- The council's reserves remained healthy with agreed minimum levels maintained on both the General Fund and the HRA.

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- The General Fund Self-Sufficiency reserve was now £4.19m and well ahead of forecasts. That meant that there was now a healthy reserve available to manage the future deficit years predicted to arise from 2021 on the General Fund medium term financial plan that totalled £5.2m to 2024.
- The HRA Loan Redemption reserve had now the full £13m of funds in place to repay maturity loans due for redemption in 2022, well ahead of the anticipated 2020 target date. Again, it was a credit to the team.
- There were £7.28m of earmarked reserves across all revenue accounts set aside for various projects. The amount included £0.9 unallocated reserves and it was proposed that:
 - £200k of the amount was committed to a new Local Centres Frontage Improvement scheme for commercial properties in Castle Donington, Kegworth, Ibstock and Measham;
 - £30k was committed to fund improvements that the Council needed to make on health and safety improvements.

Councillor R D Bayliss was pleased with the surplus from the HRA and therefore the Council was on track to repay the loan ahead of schedule. He added his thanks to the Finance team as they had not let the Council down and felt that there were ample options before them for the future.

Councillor A Woodman welcomed the allocated funds towards the commissioning of a Carbon footprint report and the £30k to undertake a food waste pilot that would help in reducing what went to landfill.

Councillor R Ashman welcomed the earmarked reserve towards the shopfronts and he was pleased that the surplus was not just being made but there were good proposals to use the funds.

Councillor R Blunt felt that the Council was in a very sound position, hitting its targets and developing new schemes to bring forward.

It was moved by N J Rushton, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT:

The Financial Performance for 2018/19, including the impact in reserves and balances as at 31 March 2019 be approved.

Reason for decision:- Requirement of Financial Procedure Rule

10. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STEWARDSHIP REPORT FOR 2018/19

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

He advised that the report provided a summary update of the Treasury Management activity during 2018/19 and that regular, quarterly reports would be received by the Audit and Governance Committee. He informed Members that the summary set out how the Council had complied with its Prudential Indicators and the policies and requirements within the authority's Treasury Management Strategy.

He stated that there had been two breaches of investment limits in the year and these were reported to the Audit and Governance committee on 20 March 2019, the details of Chairman's initials

which were set out in paragraph 6.12 of the report. He advised that both were unavoidable and there were no penalties or consequences because of the breaches.

He highlighted that the council had not undertaken any new long-term or temporary borrowing in the year and no opportunities in respect of rescheduling existing debt arose. He added that cash was invested in highly rated financial institutions, money market funds or the Government in line with the Council's investment priorities of security and liquidity, and optimum yield achievable within these.

He was pleased to advise that the Council had achieved a higher average rate of return in 2018/19 of 0.71% compared to 0.49% in 2017/18. That was a 40% increase, and that the treasury position at the end of the 2018/19 year reflected a reduction in net debt of £5.6m due to £1.1m repayment of HRA loans and an increase of £4.5m of council funds held in investments, partly as a result of increased income and asset sales.

The Head of Finance outlined the detail of the breaches and that they had been reported to Full Council as part of the Treasury Management Strategy.

It was moved by N J Rushton, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT:

The report be noted.

Reason for decision: These are statutory requirements.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH - FOOD SAFETY SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2019/2020

The Community Services Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

He noted that the key successes in 2018/19 were:-

- 96.4% of establishments that have received a hygiene rating have achieved a rating of three (Generally satisfactory) or higher (Good, Very Good).
- The number of establishments requiring urgent improvement (rated 0) fell from three to one during 2018/19.
- The number of establishments demonstrating very good hygiene standards (rated 5) increased from 520 to 541 during 2018/19.
- 100% of planned inspections to high and medium risk (category A, B, C, D) food establishments were delivered.

He advised that during 2019/20 priority would be given to establishments within risk category A, B, unrated and non-broadly compliant C and D. It was estimated that 30% of establishments would receive one or more revisits. In addition to the above programme, all new food establishments will receive an initial inspection and that each would receive advice from both the Environmental Health and Business Focus teams. He highlighted that the service would continue to use social media to communicate food hygiene ratings. He congratulated the team on its hard work.

It was moved by A Woodman, seconded by Councillor R Ashman and

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Environmental Health Food Safety Service Delivery Plan 2019/20 appended to the report be approved
2. The performance and achievements in 2018/19 be noted.

Chairman's initials

Reason for decision:- To approve the content of the Food Safety Service Delivery Plan 2019/20 as required by the Food Standards Agency.

12. BUSINESS RATE PILOT PROJECTS - FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

He reminded Members that in 2018 the Council was successful in its bid along with all other Local Authorities across Leicestershire to take part in the 2019/20 75% Business Rate Retention Pilot. He advised that at the time of developing the 2019/20 budget, the total additional amount to be retained in Leicestershire was estimated to be £13.8m. The revised estimate is now £14.6m after setting business rates bases for the year and that the allocation principles between the County, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, City and all Districts were agreed prior to submission of the bid and NWLDC Cabinet considered that at its meeting in September 2018.

He informed Cabinet that the Council included an assumption of £550k additional funding and corresponding expenditure in the 2019/20 Budget and in line with the bid, the funds must be spent on 'infrastructure' and/or 'financial sustainability' projects.

He asked Members to approve the expenditure of the confirmed £597k of funding on four projects set out in section 2 of the report and that any additional funding confirmed would be reported in forthcoming quarterly performance reports. The projects were:

- £517k or the remaining balance on Marlborough Square to support delivery of the planned improvements
- £50k to fund a Green Transport feasibility study, looking at greener, non-car alternatives
- £15k towards Digital Customer Services to aid a more efficient digitalised service
- £15k to fund 2 homeless prevention bed spaces to accommodate single people requiring accommodation. The Council currently utilises bed and breakfast for temporary homeless accommodation that was unsuitable and costly. The proposal would provide a more supportive environment and also reduce costs.

Councillor A Woodman welcomed the Green transport study and hoped that some of the funds could be used re-open the Ivanhoe line.

Councillor R D Bayliss noted the amount allocated to fund 2 homeless prevention bed spaces adding that it was a small amount but much needed.

It was moved by Councillor N J Rushton, seconded by Councillor A Woodman and

RESOLVED THAT:

The allocation of the forecast £597,000 Business Rates Funding to projects as set out in the report be approved.

Reason for decision:- Cabinet approval of allocation of funds is required.

13. SHOP FRONTS AND ADVERTISEMENTS SPD: ADOPTION

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The Planning and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

He advised that during Spring 2018 a number of people and organisations had been given the opportunity to respond to a consultation on the draft document, which had received general support. He advised that where comments had been made, the wording had been changed, where possible, and that more images had been used. He felt that the document was very easy to read and noted that it would replace a more formal document that had been in place since 2007. He stated that the document would support the design and building of future shops in the area to ensure that they fitted in to their surroundings.

Councillor R Blunt was pleased to have the document before Cabinet members , as it would make it easier to say no to applications that came forward should they not meet the design requirements.

Councillor R D Bayliss agreed that it was easy to read and a good document. He was pleased to see that Ashby was included.

It was moved by Councillor R Ashman, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT:

The revised SPD be adopted.

Reason for decision:- Adoption of the revised SPD would support the aims of the Council Delivery Plan relating to sustainable development and growth and people feeling proud of their homes and communities.

14. UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORM FOR TELEPHONY AND CONTACT CENTRE

The Housing, Property and Customer Services presented the report to Members.

He advised that the current system required modernising in order to continue the ongoing improvements to the customer experience. He noted that the recommendation should read "In consultation with the Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holder".

Councillor R Ashman agreed that it was a positive move in enabling the Council to better support its customers.

It was moved by Councillor R D Bayliss, seconded by Councillor N J Rushton and

RESOLVED THAT:

Authority be delegated to the Strategic Director of Housing and Customer Services in consultation with the Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holder to procure and award a replacement telephony and contact centre platform over 5 years.

Reason for decision:- To approve the procurement of a replacement Telephony and Contact Centre platform which is anticipated to be above £250,000 over the 5 year contract term.

15. DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY - CONFIRMATION OF URGENT ACTION

The Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

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He advised Members that under exceptional circumstances allowed for in the HRA Disposals Policy the Leader and Chief Executive had agreed to sell the property at 26 The Pinfold, Newton Burgoland. This property required a significant amount of work and the capital sum realised from its sale would be invested in the Council's new build and acquisitions programme. He advised that two houses in Ashby were shortly to be purchased for a combined price that was less than sale price of this one property. The report before them requested Cabinet to confirm that they were in agreement with the offer that had been accepted.

It was moved by Councillor R D Bayliss, seconded by Councillor N J Rushton and

RESOLVED THAT:

The decision of the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council to accept an offer of £210,000 for the freehold sale of 26 The Pinfold, Newtown Burgoland be confirmed

Reason for decision:- The decision to dispose of the property was made by Cabinet on 9 April 2019, in accordance with the HRA Disposal Policy (approved by Cabinet on 3 March 2015) to generate a capital receipt to meet the needs of the HRA Business Plan and associated budget for 2019/20.

16. LEICESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP REVENUES AND BENEFITS JOINT COMMITTEE - APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS

The Leader presented the report to Members.

He advised that in line with the Constitution of the Revenue and Benefits Joint Committee, each member authority was required to appoint two Cabinet members to it. He recommended Councillors R Ashman and R D Bayliss.

It was moved by Councillor R Blunt, seconded by Councillor N J Rushton and

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillors R Ashman and R D Bayliss be appointed to serve on the Joint Committee

Reason for decision:- To comply with the Constitution of the Leicestershire Partnership Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee.

17. MINUTES OF THE COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY

The Community Services Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

He was pleased to report back on the work that the working party had carried out. He noted the positive responses on the many events that had been organised and that the Coalville May Fair had been extended over two weekends. He also highlighted the responses to the Christmas in Coalville questionnaire, which suggested that the vast majority were happy with the event.

He stated that he was pleased to support the request to allocate £1200.00 for the graffiti art project, towards the progression of the Coalville Park Green Flag Award and the allocation of the £6206.00 for additional flowers around the town centre, with the progression towards Coalville in Bloom 2020. He advised that he hoped to update Members on both the projects at future meetings.

He welcomed the use of the external funding to target parks that required improvement. He noted recommendation C at 3.2 but observed that the play equipment at The Oval play

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area would not reach the end of its life for at least 6 years and so urged Cabinet to focus the funding at recommendation C on play areas with greater need.

It was moved by Councillor A Woodman, seconded by Councillor R D Bayliss and

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The recommendations made by the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party as detailed within the minutes be noted
2. Recommendations A and B as summarised at 3.2 of the report be approved.
3. The allocation of £15,714 of external funding, mentioned at 3.2 C of the report, be approved for the improvement of play areas with equipment that will come to the end of its life within the next 5 years.

Reason for decision:- To progress Coalville Special Expenses projects and programmes.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 5.41 pm

Chairman's signature