

MINUTES of a meeting of the CABINET held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2019

Present: Councillor R Blunt (Chairman)

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

In Attendance: Councillors

Officers: Mr J Arnold, Mrs T Bingham, Mrs B Smith, Miss E Warhurst and Mrs C Hammond

57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor T Gillard.

58. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no interests declared.

59. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

60. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2019.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2019 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Reason for decision: To comply with the Constitution.

61. GENERAL FUND AND SPECIAL EXPENSES REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2020/21

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

He advised that the report asked Cabinet to agree the 2020/21 budget proposals for statutory and public consultation on the council's website and that the draft General Fund Budget for next year projected a balanced budget with a £847k surplus. He noted that it was better than had been anticipated due to the deferral of the local government funding reforms to April 2021.

He highlighted that the report included a range of budget proposals including savings, cost pressures, staffing increases and developments to service areas and that the key features for the next year included:

- A new £1m Climate Change Reserve set aside to cover the additional costs to the General Fund on becoming carbon neutral.
- Incorporation of budgetary provision for tree maintenance and for maximising external funding, as a result of consultation with the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 7 November;

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- Inclusion of £570k Journey to Self Sufficiency savings target, following a redesign of the programme; and
- Details around proposed charge variations for next year – a new approach for the next year in line with the Corporate Charging Policy.

He informed that there was no proposed increase in Council Tax and that Business Rates growth for the next year had been assessed as significant largely due to growth in the north of the district.

He advised that funding estimates would be refined following approval of the council tax and business rates bases in January and receipt of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement which had been delayed until after the General Election. He noted that adequate reserves remained in place with the forecast self-sufficiency reserve balance of £5.3m at 31 March 2021, subject to the council using the reserve to generate revenue as part of the Journey to Self-Sufficiency Programme and a further £1.5m agreed minimum operating balance.

He stated that the draft budget for Special Expenses included proposed increases in the precept for next financial year to fund planned maintenance, the phasing out of the Localisation of Council Tax Support Grant and maintain a balanced position, and that the final position for special expenses was likely to change as a result of the work to set the council tax base for next year.

He outlined that the consultation would be undertaken throughout December and early January, with responses reported to Cabinet and Council as part of the approval process for the final budget.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The 2020/21 General Fund and Special Expenses budget proposals be agreed for statutory consultation; and
2. The assurance statement by the S151 Officer be noted.

Reason for decision: Required to complete 2020/21 budget process.

62. DRAFT HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET FOR 2020/21

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

He advised that the report before them asked Cabinet to agree the 2020/21 budget proposals for statutory consultation, including the 2.7% rent increase in line with the Governments national rent increase policy.

He highlighted that the draft HRA Budget for the next year showed a projected balanced budget, with a £2.5m surplus and included in the report was a range of budget proposals including savings, cost pressures, staffing increases and developments to service areas.

He noted the following key features:

- A contribution of £250k of revenue to the HRA Capital Programme to fund a new pilot project to regenerate an existing council housing estate; and

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- Inclusion of a £225k Journey to Self Sufficiency savings target.
- A Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay will be made again next year to boost new council housing supply within the HRA Capital Programme.

He outlined that consultation with council tenants would be undertaken throughout the remainder of December, with responses reported to Cabinet and Council as part of the approval process for the final budget. He added that the HRA continued to have adequate reserves and continued to maintain the £13m set aside for the redemption of self-financing loans due for payment in 2022.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The assurance statement by the S151 Officer be noted; and
2. The draft HRA budget proposal, including the 2.7% rent increase, as detailed in the report and associated appendices be approved for consultation

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to set a balanced Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2020/21.

63. 2020/21-2024/25 DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMMES

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

He advised Members of an error on page 51 under financial implications HRA budget which should have stated £10.8m and not £12.7m and that the report presented an ambitious and fully funded Council capital spending plan of £24m for the next year and a further £61m between 2021 and 2025.

He informed Members that the plans included the creation or enhancement of a number assets as per the Council's Planned Preventative Maintenance Schedule, Asset Management Strategies and Council Delivery Plan, and that the plans for the General Fund for next year total £12.7m and included:

- £9.7m on building the new leisure facility,
- £610k to redevelop Appleby Magna Caravan Site,
- £75k for the demolition of the market hall site following relocation of the market in 2020,
- £25k for the installation of a new inclusive toilet at Coalville Cemetery.

He noted that there were no items included on the draft Special Expenses Capital Programme.

In relation to the draft Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme, which was £10.8m, it included

- £3.9m expenditure as part of the council's continued Home Improvement Programme,
- £4.5m on Council New Housing Supply programme
- a new £250k provision for regenerating an existing council housing estate.

He highlighted a specific change recommended by Scrutiny had also been included on the HRA – which was to speed up the off-street parking programme, over 3 years as opposed to 4.

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He stated that the consultation would be undertaken throughout December and early January, with responses reported to Cabinet and Council as part of the approval process for the final budget.

He asked the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader to be more ambitious with the off-street parking.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The estimated General Fund and HRA capital outturn for 2019/20 and planned financing be noted at appendices A and B
2. The draft Capital Programmes in 2020/21 be approved for consultation detailed in:
 - Appendix A – General Fund Capitals Schemes
 - Appendix B – HRA Capital Schemes
 And in 2021/22, these schemes only:
 - £755,000 for the vehicle replacements as detailed in Paragraphs 3.8
3. The proposed procurement routes in respect of vehicles, equipment and plant be noted and authority to award these contracts and any associated agreements furtherance of the project be delegated to the Strategic Director of Place in consultation with the portfolio holder, subject to final approval of the Capital programmes in February 2020.

Reason for decision: To enable projects to be included in the Programmes for consultation.

64. 2020-2025 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

He advised Cabinet that the report provided a summary of the revisions to the Councils Medium Term Financial Plans and that it also provided an update on the Journey to Self-Sufficiency Programme and the new approach that has been designed by the Corporate Leadership Team in establishing new savings targets for all council services.

In relation to the General Fund he noted that the outlook over the forthcoming five year period was a £1.2m deficit but pointed out that the position included Journey to Self-Sufficiency savings of £5.1m meaning that if they were not delivered the deficit would be significantly higher at £6.3m.

He advised that the impact of the deferred local government funding reviews had been incorporated into the plan and that officers continued to assume a full business rates baseline reset, and that historic New Homes Bonus payments for a further 2 years would be received before the scheme was phased out.

He informed Members that additional growth in business rates was now been incorporated into the plan specifically in relation to the recent planning decision at Junction 11 of the M42 and, that, the revisions on the General Fund had resulted in a favourable movement in the 5 year savings target, bringing it down by £4.5m, from £5.7m over the period to £1.2m.

In relation to the Housing Revenue Account, he highlighted that the 5 year projections remained positive with a surplus of £4.7m projected. £2.6m of the forecast was a result of the targeted Journey to Self-Sufficiency savings.

He added that a number of long-ranging assumptions have been reviewed and updated and as a result a previously reported likely funding shortfall of £26.4m in 2041/42 is now not forecast to occur, meaning the HRA would be able to repay the original Self-Financing loans when they fall due.

In response to a question from Councillor N J Rushton, the Chief Executive advised Members that officers were working on plans for the Journey to Self-Sufficiency and was comfortable that they could be met.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The revised Medium Term Financial Plans be noted
2. The progress of the Journey to Self Sufficiency be noted

Reason for decision: To keep members up to date in respect of the council's five-year financial projections.

65. 2019 AIR QUALITY ANNUAL STATUS

The Community Services Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

He advised that all councils had a statutory responsibility to assess the present and future air quality of their area in relation to the requirements of the National Air Quality Strategy and identify the main sources of the pollutants affecting air quality. The main types of pollutant affecting the air quality in North West Leicestershire are particulates and nitrogen dioxide. He highlighted that to meet these responsibilities the Council had a published Air Quality Strategy and as a result of assessing the pollutants there were currently 5 declared AQMAs for the exceedance of NO₂.

He stated that each year the Council was required to publish an annual status report (ASR) to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the template Local Authorities were expected to follow for the report was provided in a Government technical guidance, with the overall aim of the document to report on progress in achieving reductions in concentrations of emissions relating to relevant pollutants below air quality objective levels. He added that the information contained in the ASR was based on last year's monitoring and modelling data.

He informed Members that since changes were required to two of the AQMA's Cabinet was asked to approve the annual status report for submission to DEFRA and to agree to amend the Coalville air quality management area and revoke the M1 air quality management area.

He outlined that apart from the statutory work, the council also worked closely with Public Health at Leicestershire County Council, in particular, officers attend a steering group and workshops to support the work of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) within its air quality chapter with the purpose of improving air quality and its impact on health. An Action Plan for the JSNA was due to go to LCC Committee in June 2020.

He advised that the council also worked with internal teams to assist with the implementation and development of the health and well-being strategy action plan and the

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carbon neutral agenda. He noted the all member workshop and briefing on 20 January with Etude which would set out the short, medium and long term actions.

He hoped to provide Cabinet with an update on the wider and non-statutory air quality work and that an update report on the wider air quality work would be presented to Community Scrutiny in 3 months and then Cabinet.

Councillor R Blunt stated that it was an issue that was getting higher on priority lists and that the Council needed to be seen as being on the front foot.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The annual status report for submission to DEFRA be approved
2. The amendment to the Coalville Air Quality Management Area be agreed
3. The revocation of the M1 Air Quality Management Area be approved
4. The Community Scrutiny recommendations be noted and a review and further report to Cabinet on the need for additional capacity for air quality functions in the district be agreed

Reason for decision: Compliance with Part VI of the Environmental Protection Act 1995

66. MINUTES OF THE COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY

The Community Services Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

He thanked members and officers for the great work that they continued to do within the Coalville Special Expense area and noted that there were a number of items that he wished to cover from the most recent meeting.

He noted the success of the events programme and particularly liked the feedback received regarding Picnic in the Park. He also highlighted the planned events for 2020/21 which not only included those regularly delivered through the Working Party, but also included potential additions such as Cinema in the Park and Inflatable Days, as well as linking in to the Coalville Project and the wider events programme. He welcomed the addition of the Community Grant applications that had been considered and how they were helping community groups and added that it was fantastic to see the enthusiasm being shown by the Friends of Coalville Park group in their endeavours to improve the area for the community.

He acknowledged that he was disappointed to see the ongoing anti-social behaviour being experienced in a number of areas and recognised the work officers were doing to mitigate it. He informed Members that such vandalism had led to the irreparable damage of Cropston Drive changing pavilion roof which needed replacing. He advised that whilst it was being pursued through an insurance claim, he asked Cabinet members to support the recommendation of the Working Party, on grounds of health and safety, to allocate up to £10,000 from asset protection budgets to cover either the insurance excess or the full cost of repairing the roof, adding that a sum of £2,000 had been secured towards the project from the Bardon Community fund.

He noted the work that was being undertaken to understand the financial implications and responsibilities the Working Party had in managing assets within the special expense

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area. He informed Cabinet that the Working Party had once again requested to use over £15,000 of external funding targeting improvements to parks and open spaces for improvements at The Oval play area in Bardon. He reminded them that as previously, that whilst old, the equipment should last up to another 6 years, and that there were other play areas within the Coalville Special Expense area with equipment that did not have the same lifespan. He asked Cabinet to reject the recommendation and ask that members of the Working Party look to allocate the funding to improving play equipment at play areas that were a higher priority due to the equipment being closer to the end of its life.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The recommendations made by the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party as detailed within the minutes be noted and the recommendations as summarised at 3.0, be approved with the exception of 3.2.1 which be rejected.

Reason for decision: To consider the recommendations made by the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party.

67. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED THAT:

In pursuance of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the business to be transacted involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Reason for decision: To enable the consideration of exempt information.

68. NEWMARKET - AWARD OF CONTRACT

The Community Services Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

Councillor R Blunt commended the work that had been carried out on the project so far.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The contract at the value as detailed in the report for the renovation of Newmarket and the works required to create a new traditional shop front be awarded to the company as detailed in the report.

Reason for decision: When the delegated authority to award the contract was given in July 2018 for the internal renovations works only, was as detailed in the report. With the subsequent addition of the Grant to improve the shop front the award total has increased, which requires renewed Cabinet approval. The funding for both elements is in place.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 5.40 pm

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