

MINUTES of a meeting of the CABINET held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2020

Present: Councillor R Blunt (Chairman)

Councillors R Ashman, R D Bayliss, T Gillard and A C Woodman

In Attendance: Councillors J Clarke, D Everitt, J Legrys, C A Sewell and S Sheahan

Officers: Mr J Arnold, Mrs T Bingham, Mr A Barton, Mrs B Smith, Miss E Warhurst, Miss A Wright, Mr T Delaney, Mrs R Wallace and M D'Oyly-Watkins

77. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N J Rushton.

78. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no interests declared.

79. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

80. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2020.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Reason for decision: To comply with the Constitution

81. 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 continued great work undertaken in the Coalville Special Expense area. He was pleased to see that the Friends of Coalville Park had attended the previous meeting and was enthusiastic about the work that had been done and the inspirations for the future. He also acknowledged the work undertaken on 'Coalville in Bloom' and supported the request for further funding.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The recommendations made by the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party be noted and the recommendations as summarised at paragraph 3.0 be approved.

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

Chairman's initials

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

The Head of Finance presented the report to Members.

She advised Members of the Section 151 assurances and the recommendations to Council to amend the General Fund fees and charges, the General Fund and Special Expenses Revenue budgets for the next financial year, the freeze of the District's share of council tax and the transfer of budgeted surplus to the self-sufficiency fund. Members were informed that the public consultation on the budget proposals had concluded earlier that day and any comments received since the report had been published were included in the additional papers.

The Head of Finance made Members aware of a report being considered by Council in February in relation to the Independent Remuneration Panel's recent recommendations to amend Members Allowances. This would have a financial impact on both the HRA and General Fund, and would be factored into the final budget report to Council.

To conclude, the Head of Finance highlighted the changes to the precept increases for the Special Expenses area following the confirmation of the council tax base in January.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Assurance Statement by the Section 151 Officer be noted.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL THAT:

2. The amendment to the General Fund fees and charges as detailed at Appendix B be approved.
3. The General Fund Revenue Budget for 2020/21 as summarised at Appendix C be approved.
4. The Special Expenses Revenue Budget for 2019/20 as summarised at Appendix D be approved.
5. The District Council's share of Council Tax be frozen in 2020/21.
6. The budgeted surplus income over the expenditure in 2020/21 be transferred to the Self-Sufficiency Reserve.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to set a balanced budget for 2020/21 as required by statute.

83. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2020/21

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

He advised Members of the Section 151 assurances and the recommendations to Council to approve the proposed rents and charges and the HRA budget for the next financial year. Members were once again reminded of the conclusion of the public consultation on the budget proposals and that any comments received since the report had been published were included in the additional papers. It was noted that 72 percent of responders were accepting of the rent increases and 62 percent were accepting of the changes to the service charges.

Chairman's initials

It was acknowledged that there was an increase in surplus from the draft budget position. The surplus would be contributed to the Debt Repayment Reserve but there would be flexibility to utilise it in future years when opportunities arose.

Members were once again reminded of the financial impact of the changes to Members allowances which would be factored into the final budget report to Council in February.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Assurance Statement by the Section 151 Officer be noted.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL THAT:

2. The following changes to rents and charges for 2020/21 be approved:
 - a. Increase council house rents by up to 2.7% as detailed at paragraph 4.1
 - b. Decrease charges by an average of 0.96% as set out at Appendix C.
 - c. Increase service charges by an average of 0.44% as set out in Appendix D.
3. The Housing Revenue Account budget for 2020/21 as summarised at Appendix A be approved.

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

84. 2020/21- 2024/25 CAPITAL PROGRAMMES AND 2020/21 CAPITAL STRATEGY

The Head of Finance presented the report to Members.

It was noted that plans for the General Fund for the next financial year totalled 12.9 million pounds and included building the new leisure facility, redevelopment of Appleby Magna Caravan Site, demolition of hall site following the relocation of the market in 2020 and installation of new inclusive toilets at Coalville Cemetery. The Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme was 10.2 million pounds and included the continued Home Improvement Programme, a reduced Council New Housing Supply Programme and provision for regenerating an existing council housing estate.

It was acknowledged that the HRA programme included an additional 50 thousand pounds for off-street parking as a result of comments from the Head of Finance and the Corporate Scrutiny Committee in January.

Members were once again reminded of the conclusion of the public consultation on the budget proposals and that any comments received since the report had been published were included in the additional papers.

It was concluded that the Capital Strategy set out the Council's priorities and approach to capital investment and it's financing over a five year period in line with statutory requirements.

As the Ward Member, Councillor R Blunt was pleased that progress was being made on the Appleby Magna Caravan Site. He also felt strongly about the new fund for council estate improvements as he believed it was important for tenure neutrality.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The estimated General Fund and HRA Capital Outturn for 2019/20 and financing at Appendices B and C be noted.
2. The proposed procurement routes in respect of vehicles, equipment and plant be noted, and authority to award these contacts and any associated agreements be delegated to the Strategic Director in Consultation with the Portfolio Holder, subject to final approval of the Capital Programmes in February 2020.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL THAT:

3. The 2020/21 Capital Strategy included in Appendix A be approved in line with the prudential code.
4. That the Capital Programmes 2020/21 as detailed at Appendix B – General Fund Capital Schemes and Appendix C – HRA Capital Schemes be approved.

Reason for decision: To enable projects to be included in the programmes for approval at Council.

85. 2020-2025 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Head of Finance presented the report to Members.

Members noted the summary of the revisions to the Council's Medium Term Financial Plans which aligned with the final budgets presented to Cabinet. The position included Journey to Self-Sufficiency savings of 5.1million pounds and if they were not delivered the deficit would be significantly higher.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

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

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

86. INVESTMENT STRATEGY - SERVICE AND COMMERCIAL 2020/21

The Head of Finance presented the report to Members.

Members were advised that the strategy set out how the Council would support local public services by lending to them or buying shares in them, and how it would earn an investment income. The approved limits had been set to limit the amount the Council would lend and invest. It was noted that the strategy also set out the Council's current commercial property investments.

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

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL THAT:

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The Investment Strategy – Service and Commercial 2020/21 at its meeting on 25 February 2020 be approved.

Reason for decision: To ensure the Council meet the requirements of the statutory guidance issued by the government in January 2018 under Section 15(1)a of the Local Government Act 2003.

87. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2020/21 AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2020/21-2022/23

The Head of Finance presented the report to Members.

She advised that the strategy was related to how the Council invested its surplus cash which was available as a result of day to day activities, and it complied with statutory, regulatory and professional requirements. The strategy retained the flexibility for the Council to invest in a range of asset classes and the covering report set out the ways to diversify further into different asset classes to achieve a higher yield. This was one of the ways that savings would be delivered under the Journey to Self-Sufficiency Programme.

Members were referred to the table at paragraph 10.1 of the report which projected the Council's treasury position to 2025, aligned with the Council's budgets and Medium Term Financial Plan.

Councillor R Blunt thanked the Head of Finance and her team for the work undertaken on the budget proposals and financial planning.

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

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL THAT:

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2020/21, the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators – Revised 2019/20 and 2020/21 – 2022/23, and the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision be approved.

Reason for decision: To meet the requirement of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's 'Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice' 2017 Edition (the CIPFCA Code).

88. PROPOSED ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION - KEGWORTH HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

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

He advised that Councillors B Harrison-Rushton and C Sewell, along with Kegworth Parish Council had expressed concerns regarding the high concentration of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) in the village, and the negative impact they were having on its character, well-being and housing profile. Therefore, it has been requested that the District Council consider issuing an Article 4 Direction to manage the creation of new small HMOs which could be set up without planning permission. The Article 4 Direction would remove certain permitted development rights, which would mean that a small HMO would require planning permission.

It was noted that officers had not been able to identify any demonstrable evidence to link amenity issues directly to HMOs but it was clear that there was a clear concentration of such properties in the village, representing approximately 10 percent of all properties in the village. This largely, although not exclusively, seemed to relate to students who

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attended the nearby Nottingham University Campus at Sutton Bonnington. As the university intended to increase the student numbers, the concern was that the demand would also increase the need for HMOs and would take properties out of the family housing market.

He explained that there were two types of Direction; an immediate Direction, which would come into place immediately or a non-immediate Direction, which would come into place between 12 and 24 months. He referred Members to section eight of the report which highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of both. The Portfolio Holder recommended that a non-immediate Direction be used to come into force after 12 months. He felt it would reinforce the intention of the Council to protect the mix of housing in Kegworth.

It was noted that Councillor C Sewell had originally submitted a question on the matter to Cabinet but as the item was being considered at the meeting, it had been withdrawn.

Councillor R Blunt acknowledged that the current amount of HMOs had changed the social composition of Kegworth with an increasing transient population.

Councillor A Woodman raised the concerns from the Chairman of Kegworth Parish Council that HMO properties would not be required to pay the Parish Council Tax precept. He believed this was a matter currently being looked at on a national level.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The making of a Non-Immediate Article 4 Direction to be applied to the village of Kegworth to remove permitted development rights for the change of use of a dwelling house (C3 use) to small Houses in Multiple Occupation (C4 use) be approved.
2. The Non-Immediate Article 4 Direction to be brought into force after 12 months.
3. Notice of the Non-Immediate Article Direction be publicised for a period of at least six weeks to allow members of the public to submit comments on the proposals.
4. At the end of the representation period, a further report be brought to Cabinet to consider any comments received and to decide whether to confirm the Non-Immediate Article 4 Direction.

Reason for decision: In accordance with the Council's Constitution, making an Article 4 Direction fall within the remit of Cabinet.

89. CORPORATE PEER REVIEW

The Chief Executive presented the report to Members.

She advised that the review process was a positive experience for both Members, staff and stakeholders, and the outcome would help shape the Council's journey of improvement. The core components of the review was made up of five key questions, these were detailed at paragraph 2.2 of the report. The Peer Review Team recognised the positive feel to the Council, as well as the enthusiastic staff and committed Councillors who were striving to do their best for their communities. The key recommendations were detailed at paragraph 3.4 and draft action plan was attached at Appendix A.

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The journey to improve the scrutiny function was also recognised, as well as a need to support Members in understanding their role and maximising the benefits that effective scrutiny could bring to the Council. Therefore, it was recommended that a cross party working group be established to oversee actions and improvements to the scrutiny function.

Councillor R Blunt was pleased with the Council's change of ambition and the outcome of the peer review. He also felt positively about the cross party working group.

In response to a question from Councillor R D Bayliss, the Chief Executive explained that 'ward walkabouts' would involve both ward members and officers. Councillor R Blunt fully supported the proposed Ward Walkabout Programme as it would help Ward Members to understand what was happening in their wards and how issues could be addressed. He added that focus would be on the new members initially. Councillor T Gillard echoed the comments.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Corporate Peer Team's feedback and recommendations be noted and accepted.
2. The action plan at Appendix A be approved.

Reason for decision: To allow the Council to progress the proposed action plan in response to the corporate peer review feedback report.

90. CORPORATE ACCOMMODATION UPDATE

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

It was noted that the Council's corporate accommodation on Whitwick Road had not benefited from substantial refurbishment for a significant period of time and in many cases it featured the original finishes. A full condition survey was carried out which outlined the scale and estimated costs of remedial and preventative maintenance required to keep the building operational in its current state.

Members were reminded that in 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency, making a commitment to become carbon neutral. The Council's accommodation in its present state was not energy efficient, with uninsulated cavities, single glazing and traditional sources of space heating and power.

Members were referred to the alternative options and opportunities detailed a section 5.0 of the report.

Councillor R Blunt felt that it was important to look at the carbon impacts of the corporate accommodation and that the proposed cross party working group was essential to assist with the project. He added that the public expected us to be a green Council and it was important to lead by example.

Councillor R Ashman reiterated comments made by Councillor R Blunt and stressed the importance of involving the community so that it felt like a building for all not just the Council. He also commented on the necessity for proper maintenance.

Councillor A Woodman commented on the unanimous Council decision to support the climate change emergency motion and he believed it was essential to look at the corporate accommodation.

It was moved by Councillor R D Bayliss, seconded by Councillor R Bluntand

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The report be noted.
2. An informal proportional cross party working group, chaired by the Housing and Customer Services Portfolio Holder and supported by the Strategic Director of Place and officers of his delegation, be established.

Reason for decision: The Council has had a full condition survey completed which details several million pounds of work required.

91. 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.

92. AUTHORITY TO AWARD HOUSING CONTRACTS

Councillor R D Bayliss presented the report to Members.

It was moved by Councillor R D Bayliss, seconded by Councillor R Bluntand

RESOLVED THAT:

Subject to final approval of the HRA Revenue Budget and Capital Programme by Council, the authority to award housing contracts as detailed within the report be delegated to the Strategic Director (Housing and Customer Services) in conjunction with the Housing and Customer Services Portfolio Holder and Section 151 Officer, specifically:

1. Award of contract for mobility scooter storage facilities in sheltered housing schemes.
2. Award of contract for structural repairs as detailed within the report.
3. Award of contract for drainage services.
4. Award of contract for the replacement of the hardwired link to central control response for sheltered schemes

Reason for decision: The level of expenditure on proposed contracts exceeds the authority threshold in the scheme of delegation.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 5.50 pm

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