

THE CABINET
20TH SEPTEMBER 2012

Present: Councillors:

Ray Dawe	Leader
Roger Arthur	Deputy Leader and Efficiency & Resources
Andrew Baldwin	The Environment
Jonathan Chowen	Arts, Heritage & Leisure
Helena Croft	Communication, Special Projects & Horsham Town
Ian Howard	Living & Working Communities
Roger Paterson	The Local Economy

Apologies: Sue Rogers A Safer & Healthier District

Also present: Councillors: John Bailey, George Cockman, Leonard Crosbie, Malcolm Curnock, Frances Haigh, Christian Mitchell

EX75 **RECORD OF THE MEETINGS OF 19TH JULY AND 8TH AUGUST 2012**

The record of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 19th July and 8th August 2012 were approved as correct and signed by the Leader.

EX76 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

EX77 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

EX78 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

REPORT BY THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR EFFICIENCY & RESOURCES

EX79 **Report on and Performance Indicators for Quarter 1 2012/13; District Plan Priorities; and Tracked Project List Progress**

The Cabinet Member for Efficiency & Resources reported on the outcome of the quarterly review of the set of performance indicators for the first quarter of 2012/13 and the review of the Tracked Project List by the Scrutiny & Overview Committee's Finance & Performance Working Group.

It was noted that the priorities identified in the District Plan were reviewed on a monthly basis by the Corporate Management Team and quarterly by the Finance & Performance Working Group.

A review of the District Plan Priorities had been undertaken and a more focused

EX79 Report on and Performance Indicators for Quarter 1 2012/13; District Plan Priorities; and Tracked Project List Progress (cont.)

approach to monitoring the priorities developed, with the aim of highlighting the priorities that were most important for the Council for each year of the District Plan 2011/15.

The main areas of concern highlighted by the Finance & Performance Working Group in respect of the quarterly review of performance indicators related to:

- the time taken to come to a decision on planning applications;
- homelessness figures; and
- targets and profiles in respect of paid car park users.

The responses of the Heads of Service were noted. The Cabinet Member for Efficiency & Resources, the Cabinet Member for Living & Working Communities and the Chief Executive addressed these issues in response to Members' queries. Reference was also made to the need for further information in respect of planning appeal decisions.

It was noted that the Project Assurance Core Team (PACT), which had been set up to improve the way projects were managed and to act as a support mechanism for major projects, reported progress on twelve key projects to Corporate Management Team each month and a summary was provided for the Finance & Performance Working Group each quarter.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

REASON

Performance Management is part of the duty of Best Value to drive up service improvement.

EX80 Consultation on the Localisation of Council Tax Benefit

The Cabinet Member for Efficiency & Resources reported that there was currently a national Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme which supported residents on low incomes who needed help to pay their council tax. At present, the Government funded 100% of the total payment of CTB. However, as part of the Spending Review 2010, the Government had announced that it intended to localise CTB from 1st April 2013, with a 10% reduction in funding support for local authorities to meet the cost of Council Tax Benefit.

The proposed changes represented a significant potential cost to the Council of an estimated £80,000 per annum, with a potential additional increased cost each financial year as a consequence of the continuing increase in demand for Council Tax Benefit.

EX80 Consultation on the Localisation of Council Tax Benefit (cont.)

If the Council wished to change the local scheme from the arrangements currently in place, it needed to consult with local residents detailing a clear intention to reduce the financial impact, resulting directly from a reduction in Central Government funding towards the cost of Council Tax Benefit.

A cross party Advisory Group had examined the options available to the Council and had concluded that, for the first year of the localisation of CTB, the Council should adopt the current national scheme as its local scheme. In order to offset the projected loss, the Group had examined the options available under the technical reforms in respect of changes to the exemptions and discounts offered to Council Tax payers.

Whilst the Advisory Group had also considered the impact of the reduced grant for CTB on parishes, the Government had since revised its proposals to ensure that parishes were not adversely affected by the changes to benefits.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the identified financial pressure be noted, as reported.
- (ii) That a public consultation be undertaken on the agreed approach for the implementation of a local Council Tax Benefit scheme to commence on 1st April, 2013

REASONS

- (i) To comply with the legal requirement to consult on the proposed local Council Tax Benefit scheme prior to its adoption.
- (ii) To ensure that the Council has time to consider before making any changes to the Council Tax Benefit scheme including reviewing different schemes adopted elsewhere and taking into consideration the outcome of any legal challenges which may be made by vulnerable groups or individuals affected by changes to an authority's local Council Tax Support scheme.

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

EX81 **Budget 2012/13 - Progress Report to End of July 2012 and Outturn Forecast**

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report reviewing progress on the Revenue Budget for 2012/13.

EX81 Budget 2012/13 - Progress Report to End of July 2012 and Outturn Forecast (cont.)

The report compared actual expenditure and income to 31st July 2012 to the budget to date and provided a forecast for the full year outturn. In particular, it highlighted additions of £493,880 to the original budget approved on 22nd February 2012 and a full year forecast outturn of £13,270,615, which represented an under spending of the current budget of £8,019. However, a number of budgets were under review and it was certain that this forecast would change as the year progressed.

The Director and the Head of Financial & Legal Services responded to Members' queries in respect of Town Centre rents and the capital programme.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the expenditure to 31st July 2012 on revenue, capital and repairs and renewals budgets be noted.
- (ii) That the outturn forecast of revenue expenditure at this stage, and that it will be subject to revision as the year progressed, be noted.

REASON

Monitoring of the Council's budget is essential, so that if necessary action can be taken to safeguard the Council's financial position.

EX82 SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE – MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET

There were no matters currently outstanding for consideration.

EX83 FORWARD DECISION MAKING PLAN

It was noted that, under the new Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, there was no longer a requirement to publish a four-monthly Forward Plan of Key Decisions. However, there was a requirement to give 28 clear days notice of the intention to make a key decision and arrangements were in hand to give such notice by publishing this information on the Council's website.

The meeting closed at 6.25pm having commenced at 5.30 pm.

LEADER