

THE CABINET
29TH JANUARY 2015

Present: Councillors:
Ray Dawe Leader
Helena Croft Deputy Leader and Communication, Horsham Town
& Special Projects
Andrew Baldwin The Environment
Jonathan Chowen Arts, Heritage & Leisure
Gordon Lindsay Resources
Roger Paterson The Local Economy
Sue Rogers A Safer & Healthier District
Claire Vickers Living & Working Communities

Also Councillors: Roger Arthur, George Cockman, Leonard Crosbie, Malcolm
present: Curnock, Frances Haigh, Godfrey Newman, Kate Rowbottom

EX/37 **RECORD OF THE MEETING OF 20TH NOVEMBER 2014**

The record of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20th November 2014 was approved as correct and signed by the Leader.

EX/38 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

EX/39 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

EX/40 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No questions had been received.

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

EX/41 **The Budget/Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16**

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced this item, indicating that current Government grants (including New Homes Bonus) only covered 21% of the Council's total expenditure compared to 27% in 2006/07, thus illustrating the continuing decline in grant funding. In contrast, income from sources such as parking and green waste now covered 37% of the Council's total expenditure compared to 27% in 2006/07 and the Council was also becoming more reliant on business rates income, which now covered 10% of total expenditure. The report assumed that the Council would again accept the Government's Council Tax Freeze Grant and, therefore, not increase Council Tax for a fifth year.

EX/41 The Budget/Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 (cont.)

The Director of Corporate Resources presented a report which set out details of the proposed 2015/16 revenue and capital budgets and reviewed the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Director of Corporate Resources drew Members' attention to the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy projections, which indicated that there would be a moderate surplus in 2015/16, thereby adding money to reserves. The main reasons for this position were the delivery of a number of elements of the Business Transformation Programme, which had already realised annual savings of £440,000 with a further £100,000 anticipated; reduced financing costs resulting from the forthcoming sale of the Council's offices; and increased business rate income. The internal budget challenge process had also resulted in officers identifying a lot of low value savings.

Whilst it was anticipated that over the next few years there would be a deficit, the Council had time in which to formulate plans on how to deal with this situation. Whilst a number of assumptions had been made in projecting the future budget position there was some political uncertainty regarding future policies, particularly in respect of New Homes Bonus and business rates, following the General Election in May 2015. It was therefore proposed that an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy would be presented to Cabinet in the summer in the light of emerging policies following the election.

In accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Director of Corporate Resources also reported on the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves. She indicated that, whilst the Council had sufficient revenue reserves for the period covered by the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the projection of funds from New Homes Bonus might be too optimistic for 2016/17 and beyond. However, by holding some of the current New Homes Bonus in reserves, the Council should still be able to maintain a minimum level of reserves whilst it identified increased savings or additional income.

The report also set out a series of prudential indicators that were a statutory requirement to demonstrate that the Council's capital programme was affordable and prudent in the context of the Council's overall finances.

Cabinet Members supported the proposals in the report and expressed their thanks to officers for their efforts both in the current year and previous years in maintaining front line services whilst reducing costs and increasing income, which meant that Council Tax could be frozen for a further year. However, they were mindful of the uncertainty regarding future policies in the light of the forthcoming General Election. They were particularly pleased that the budget for grants to voluntary and community groups was to be maintained and expressed their appreciation for the contribution that such groups made to the community.

EX/41 The Budget/Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 (cont.)

Other Members also commented on the value of the work of voluntary and community groups.

In response to a Member's question, the Cabinet Member for a Safer & Healthier District indicated that she would ensure the list of beneficiaries of community and individual grants in the current year was circulated to all Members for information.

The Director of Corporate Resources responded to questions regarding business rates, the possibility of 'earmarking' reserves, Council Tax banding of improved/extended properties and unplanned maintenance consequences arising from delays in the capital programme.

The Cabinet Member for Resources concluded the debate by expressing his thanks to the staff in the Finance Department for their work in producing the report now before Cabinet.

RECOMMENDED

- (i) That the level of Council Tax for 2015/16 remains at £135.54 at Band D.**
- (ii) That the net revenue budget for 2015/16 of £13.000m be approved as submitted.**
- (iii) That Special Expenses of £267,120 and a Band D charge of £23.60 be agreed in respect of the unparished area for 2015/16, as set out in the report.**
- (iv) That the capital programme for 2015/16 be approved as submitted and that the indicative capital budgets in the programme for future years be noted.**
- (v) That the projected future deficits on the revenue account be noted and the Medium Term Financial Strategy continue to be reviewed and refined to ensure that decisions are taken to develop a balanced budget in 2016/17 and subsequent years.**
- (vi) That the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement set out in be approved, as set out in the report.**

EX/41 The Budget/Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 (cont.)

- (vii) That the prudential indicators and limits for 2015/16 to 2017/18 be approved as set out in the report.**

REASON

To meet the Council's statutory requirement to approve the budget and the prudential indicators before the start of a new financial year.

REPORT BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

EX/42 **Review of Waste Services in response to Waste England and Wales Regulations 2011 (as amended): 'TEEP Assessment'**

The Cabinet Member for the Environment reported that the Waste England and Wales Regulations 2011 (the Regulations) imposed a duty on waste collection authorities to arrange for separate collection of each stream of recycling or to demonstrate that any alternative collection system used achieved objectives for high quality recycling as required by Regulation 13 of the EU Waste Framework Directive. The West Sussex Waste Partnership had therefore commissioned consultants to undertake a 'TEEP' review (which assessed whether the collection system used was technically, environmentally or economically practicable) for each of the Districts. The review had concluded that, whilst the current system did not achieve the quality of recycling that would be achieved by adopting source segregated collections, it was not economically practicable to change the current collection arrangements.

It was therefore considered that the existing co-mingled recycling collection system using blue-topped bins complied with the requirements of the Regulations. However, it was noted that there was an ongoing duty to ensure continued compliance with the regulations, therefore any significant changes in collection systems or external factors would require further reviews to be undertaken.

Members thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for their work on the review and noted that the conclusion was a good result for householders as there would be no increase in the number of bins per property. Members were reminded that the Council had received a Government grant which was now being used to fund a communications programme to promote and improve the quality of recycling. The possibility of a recycling and refuse collection calendar app was also being investigated. It was noted that the types of plastic that could be put in the recycling bin were currently being reviewed and that there might be some encouraging news in this respect later in the year.

EX/42 Review of Waste Services in response to Waste England and Wales Regulations 2011 (as amended): 'TEEP Assessment' (cont.)

RESOLVED

- (i) That the findings of the 'Waste Regulation 13 Assessment' produced by Ricardo-AEA on 19 December 2014, in particular the primary conclusion that, since it would not be economically practicable to change to source segregated recycling collections, the existing system complies with the duties imposed by the Regulations, be adopted.
- (ii) That the Director of Community Services be authorised to monitor continued compliance and undertake future reviews of compliance with the Regulations, as required by changes in circumstances or proposed service changes.
- (iii) That the Cabinet Member for the Environment and the Director of Community Services be authorised to promote environmental and economic improvements in recycling quality through the established partnership arrangements with West Sussex County Council and the other Districts and Boroughs in the area.

REASONS

- (i) To ensure compliance with the duties imposed by the Regulations as interpreted through statutory and non-statutory guidance issued by Government agencies.
- (ii) To seek to achieve continuous improvement of the environmental and economic performance of recycling collection arrangements.

REPORT BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR A SAFER & HEALTHIER DISTRICT

EX/43 **Introduction of an Anti-social Behaviour Policy**

The Cabinet Member for a Safer & Healthier District reported that whilst the Council had had an anti-social behaviour team since 2003, it had never had a formal policy to govern the work of this function. However, over the years and by learning from best practice, the team had achieved an excellent reputation for delivering real results for residents using the powers set out in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

Approval was therefore sought for the introduction of an Anti-social Behaviour

EX/43 Introduction of an Anti-social Behaviour Policy (cont.)

Policy which had been developed to reflect the Anti-social Behaviour, Police and Crime Act 2014 and to ensure that the good work of this team was built upon. The policy would provide a transparent and consistent approach to dealing with the victims and perpetrators of anti-social behaviour, with clear information and advice.

The Council had a duty as a Relevant Body to ensure that it had the necessary procedures in place to deal with a Community Trigger activation. Adopting and applying the Anti-social Behaviour Policy was a key method of ensuring that the Council was doing all that it reasonably could to tackle anti-social behaviour, thereby reducing the likelihood of Community Trigger activations in the first place.

Cabinet and other Members welcomed the proposed introduction of this policy.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the draft Anti-social Behaviour Policy, applicable to all departments of the authority, be adopted as set out in the report.
- (ii) That the Community Safety Manager, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, be authorised to make minor amendments to the policy, once adopted, to reflect changes in legislation or guidance and codes of practice where a full review of the policy is not warranted.

REASON

Horsham District Council as a Local Authority is considered by the new legislation a 'relevant body' and as such has a statutory duty to have a Community Trigger procedure to undertake case reviews where necessary.

REPORT OF THE FINANCE & PERFORMANCE WORKING GROUP

EX/44 **Finance and Performance Indicators for Quarter 2 2014/15, District Plan Priorities and Tracked Project List Progress**

Councillor Leonard Crosbie, Chairman of the Finance & Performance Working Group presented a report summarising the outcome of the Finance & Performance Working Group's quarterly performance review on 19th November 2014.

The report to the Working Group had detailed finance and performance

EX/44 Finance and Performance Indicators for Quarter 2 2014/15, District Plan Priorities and Tracked Project List Progress (cont.)

information for Quarter 2 of 2014/15 and had been presented in the new combined report format, providing a summary of financial expenditure along with performance data by service area. Councillor Crosbie thanked officers for the considerable effort they had put into the production of this report and noted that they were continuing to refine its presentation.

The Working Group had noted positive performance in the following areas:

- The forecast outturn for the year to 31 March 2015, which estimated an underspend of the approved revenue budget by £395,000.
- Increased attendance figures for Horsham Museum.
- Good attendance figures for visits to sports centres and swimming pools.
- The key government measure to improve the quality of decision making in relation to the percentage of all major planning applications allowed at appeal.

The Working Group had also expressed their thanks to the Spatial Planning Manager and her team for their work in relation to the Horsham District Planning Framework Public Examination.

Additional background information had been requested in respect of the number of household and minor applications that had been subject to voluntary extensions and enforcement case data. This information had subsequently been provided to the Business Improvement Working Group.

The Working Group had also discussed the underspend on capital projects as at the end of Quarter 2.

With regard to the key performance indicators, the Working Group had noted that 68% were within target and 21% were close to target. Staff turnover and staff sickness were two areas that were outside the target range, although it was acknowledged that one case of long term sickness could have a disproportionate impact on the overall figures.

Councillor Crosbie noted that Councillor Claire Vickers, the Cabinet Member for Living & Working Communities was in the process of setting up a CIL Advisory Group, an area of interest that had also been raised at the Working Group.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

EX/44 Finance and Performance Indicators for Quarter 2 2014/15, District Plan Priorities and Tracked Project List Progress (cont.)

REASON

Performance Indicators are provided as part of the duty of Best Value to drive up service improvement.

EX/45 **SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE – MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET**

There were no matters currently outstanding for consideration.

EX/46 **MATTERS OF SPECIAL URGENCY**

There were no matters of special urgency to be considered.

The meeting closed at 6.51pm having commenced at 5.30 pm.

LEADER