

Cabinet
24 JANUARY 2019

Present: Councillors: Ray Dawe (Leader) (Leader), Jonathan Chowen (Deputy Leader and Leisure and Culture) (Deputy Leader), Philip Circus (Waste, Recycling and Cleansing), Gordon Lindsay (Local Economy), Claire Vickers (Planning and Development) and Tricia Youtan (Community and Wellbeing)

Apologies: Councillors: Brian Donnelly

Also Present: Andrew Baldwin, John Blackall, Karen Burgess, Peter Burgess, Paul Clarke, Roy Cornell, Leonard Crosbie, Matthew French, Billy Greening, Nigel Jupp, Paul Marshall, Mike Morgan, Stuart Ritchie, Kate Rowbottom, David Skipp and Michael Willett

EX/44 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 22nd November 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

EX/45 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

EX/46 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling and Cleansing advised Members that there had been a large reduction in the number of missed bin collections reported in 2018 when compared with 2017. There had also been no increase in formal complaints regarding bin collections over the Christmas/New Year period compared with previous years.

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture:

- (i) Reported that he had that day visited The Bridge at Broadbridge Heath and was pleased to see how well it was working as a community hub. Demolition of the old leisure centre was going well.
- (ii) Reported that a bid for funding from the EU Agricultural Fund for Rural Development towards the development of a new Discovery Hub at Warnham Nature Reserve had been successful, with the sum of £278,000 being awarded. The Council would be providing £90,000 towards the project and the Friends of Warnham Nature Reserve would contribute £10,000.

- (iii) Gave an update on Year of Culture events, including the 'Global Gruffalo' project.

EX/47 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No questions had been received.

EX/48 **FUNDING FOR BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT FOR HORSHAM TOWN CENTRE**

The Cabinet Member for Local Economy reported that Business Improvement Districts (BID) were business-led partnerships, created through a ballot process to deliver additional services to local businesses. All BIDs had a clear and focused role, contained within a business plan, the development of which was led by the business community and involved extensive consultation to ensure that it included priority improvement actions.

The past few years had seen a significant change in the retail sector, with retailers on UK High Streets hit by weak sales, online competition and rising costs.

With the need for town centres to adapt, the night time economy was becoming a central part of the future of the UK high street. It was essential that an attractive night time economy was established in Horsham Town Centre and was a strategy that could be effectively led by a BID organisation. This partnership would bring together local businesses, community groups and the Council in developing night time economy strategies that could reduce costs, boost business rate income, improve community wellbeing and create jobs. A BID would generate additional resources that could be targeted at developing the night time economy.

Dedicated resources would be required to take the next steps to determine the BID area, develop a business plan and campaign to champion the establishment of a BID. The key cost would be the recruitment of a BID Project Manager, an independent role which would focus on consulting with town centre businesses on key issues and projects and promoting the benefits of a BID to secure a positive result in the ballot. There would also be additional ancillary costs in the lead up to the ballot, details of which were reported.

Gill Buchanan, the Manager of Swan Walk and one of the current town centre stakeholders committed to forming the core BID Project Board, addressed the Cabinet in support of the proposal.

The Local Economy Policy Development Advisory Group supported the proposal.

RESOLVED

That the £70,500 funding required to progress the Business Improvement District to the ballot stage be agreed, to be included as a revenue growth bid in the current budget process.

REASON

To ensure that resources are put in place to progress a Business Improvement District for Horsham Town Centre.

EX/49 **COUNCIL LOTTERY**

The Cabinet Member for Community and Wellbeing submitted a report recommending that the Council establish a Council lottery to raise money for local good causes. The scheme would provide a sustainable source of funding for local causes, as well as raising additional income for the Council's community grants fund. The lottery could also provide a legacy for the Year of Culture, as groups that ran events as part of this initiative who wished to continue beyond 2019 could apply to be part of the scheme and receive ongoing income to support cultural events.

It was proposed that the scheme would operate on a one year trial basis, followed by a progress report to allow a review of its success. In common with other established council lotteries, the lottery would be run in conjunction with an external lottery management company which would be responsible for the day-to-day running of the scheme and would share the operational risk with the Council.

Details of the operation of the proposed lottery were reported.

It was noted that the money the Council received from the lottery would be used to cover the running costs of the scheme (e.g. marketing and promotion) to ensure that it was self-funding. However, this was likely to be a small fraction of the total money raised and the majority of the money the council received would be redistributed via the community grants fund and would be in addition to the existing budget for this fund.

It was acknowledged that lotteries were a form of gambling and controls would be put in place by the external lottery management company to ensure that potential high risk players were identified and that under age players could not access the lottery. The lottery website and all literature would also make reference to the support that was available from Gamble Aware, an independent charity that funded research, education and treatment services to help to reduce gambling-related harms.

The Community and Wellbeing Policy Development Advisory Group supported the proposal. Concerns raised regarding gambling were addressed within the report, as outlined above.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the establishment of a Council lottery for a one year trial be approved.
- (ii) That a progress report be submitted after year one to agree the continuation or cessation of the lottery.
- (iii) That the procurement of an external lottery management company to provide the expertise to establish a lottery and be responsible for the day-to-day running of this service be approved.
- (iv) That the Director of Community Services be authorised to approve the award of the management contract.

REASONS

- (i) To raise funding for local voluntary and community groups.
- (ii) To allow the Council to determine if the lottery is raising sufficient funding for local good causes.
- (iii) To provide expertise to the council and advice and support to local good causes that join the scheme.
- (iv) For expediency.

EX/50 **COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME**

The Leader gave an overview of the Council's current Council Tax Reduction scheme, together with a recommendation that no changes were made to the scheme for 2019/20.

The Finance & Assets Policy Development Advisory Group supported the proposal.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

That the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20:

- (i) Maintains the existing protected groups.
- (ii) Maintains the existing £10,000 capital limit and band D restriction.
- (iii) Maintains the existing practice of charging at least 10% of the Council Tax bill to all unprotected groups.

REASON

Council Tax Reduction schemes are annual schemes and therefore require an annual review and approval, even when no changes to the scheme are being proposed.

EX/51 **BUDGET 2019/20 AND THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO 2022/23**

The Leader reported details of the proposed 2019/20 revenue and capital budgets, following the receipt of the provisional financial settlement from Government on 13th December 2018, and reviewed the Medium Term Financial Strategy, which had been approved in December 2018. It was noted that the Council was able to set a budget for 2019/20 that would generate a surplus, which would help towards funding future transformation to maximise efficiency and effectiveness. In 2019/20, the Council would be delivering a £19,300,000 capital programme, while the level of council tax proposed remained the lowest in West-Sussex and in the lowest quartile nationally.

It was currently projected that there would also be a budget surplus in 2020/21, despite the continued reduction in Government funding. However, without taking action this would result in budget deficits and the budget projections for 2021/22 and 2022/23 were to breakeven, provided significant transformation continued to be delivered.

It was therefore planned to continue to deliver savings and income generation through a combination of measures including: service reviews; procurement; income generation; and other efficiency measures.

The report set out a series of prudential indicators, which 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, together with a statement on the robustness of reserves.

The proposals were supported by the Finance and Assets Policy Development Advisory Group.

The Leader also reported that the calculation used for the budget figures in the report were based on the November 2018 forecast for inflation. However, the December 2018 forecast, recently received, reduced the inflation figure from 3.2% to 2.7%. It was therefore proposed that the level of Council Tax (recommendation (i)) for 2019/20 should be increased by 2.7% and not 3.2%, as proposed in the report. A similar reduction to the Special Expenses in respect of the unparished area (recommendation (iii)) was also proposed

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture also proposed that the overall capital budget for Highwood Community Centre should be increased from £1,500,000 to £2,000,000.

Details of the impact of these changes on recommendations (v) and (vii) below would be reported to Council.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- (i) That the level of Council Tax for 2019/20 be increased from £145.60 by £3.93 (2.7%) to £149.53 at Band D.
- (ii) That the net revenue budget for 2019/20 of £10.435m be approved (Appendix A to the report).
- (iii) That Special Expenses of £299,140 (Appendix D to the report) and a Band D charge of £25.46 be agreed in respect of the unparished area for 2019/20.
- (iv) That the capital programme for 2019/20 (Appendix E to the report) be approved, subject to the overall budget for Highwood Community Centre being increased from £1,500,000 to £2,000,000, and that the indicative capital budgets in the programme for future years be noted.
- (v) That the projected future balanced budgets on the revenue account in 2021/22 and 2022/23 be noted and the Medium Term Financial Strategy continues to be reviewed and refined to ensure that decisions are taken to deliver these balanced budgets in these two years.
- (vi) That the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement set out in Appendix F to the report be approved.
- (vii) That the Capital Strategy and prudential indicators and limits for 2018/19 to 2021/22 set out in Appendix G to the report be approved.
- (viii) That the statement on the robustness of the level reserves in Appendix I to the report be noted.

REASON

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

EX/52 **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There were no matters currently outstanding for consideration.

EX/53 **FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan was noted.

EX/54 **TO CONSIDER MATTERS OF SPECIAL URGENCY**

There were no matters of special urgency to be considered.

The meeting closed at 6.25 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN