

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING

held in

The Council Chamber, The Symington Building, Adam and Eve Street,
Market Harborough

On 10th February 2020

commencing at 5.02 p.m.

Present:

Councillor King (Chair),
Councillors: Bateman, Dann, Hallam and Nunn

Officers: D. Atkinson, G. Keeping, N. Proudfoot, J. Smith, K. Watling and V. Wenham

INFORMATION EXCHANGE FROM PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Corporate

Councillor Dann reported that the second of two visits for Councillors to the Contact Centre had taken place on 21st January. Members attending had found the visit beneficial and enjoyable. A third visit may be arranged later in the year. Councillor Dann, together with Verina Wenham, had also attended the meeting of the Revenue & Benefits Partnership meeting in Hinckley and was satisfied that the current performance indicators were being complied with.

Finance

Councillor Hallam reported that he had attended a meeting of the Harborough Innovation Centre (HIC) Board and was satisfied that the new processes were being put into place. Occupancy at the HIC was currently at 85-90%.

Strategy

Councillor King reported that he had attended meetings at County Hall including Alberto Costa, MP for South Leicestershire, regarding the East of Lutterworth Strategic Development Area (SDA). On 23rd January he had attended the monthly meeting of Chief Executives and District Leaders. On 28th January he had unveiled a nameplate recording sponsorship on the platform of the newly built Market Harborough railway station.

On 29th January, Councillor King had attended a meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group meeting about District Councils in the House of Commons, lobbying MPs about funding. On 31st January, at The Symington Building and also on site, he had met with Neil O'Brien, MP for Harborough, along with a team of civil servants from the Treasury that deal with housing and planning matters, to discuss the challenges facing local planning authorities.

On 5th February he had chaired a meeting of the Scraftoft North SDA Group and on the 5 / 6th February, had attended the District Council Network conference at Kenilworth. Later this week he will be attending the Harborough Developer Forum and the East Midlands Council's General Assembly.

TOPICAL ISSUES

There were none.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology was received from Councillor Rickman.

MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 13th January 2020 be approved as a correct record.

DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were none.

UPDATE REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF BIN POLICY

The Cabinet received a report providing additional information, as requested at the meeting of Cabinet on 13th January 2020, to allow members to consider the report which was deferred at that meeting and which was attached as Appendix A to the updated report.

The proposed changes to the Wheeled Bin Policy followed a review and allowed consideration of the options available for charging for the supply and delivery of bins within the district. The report also presented data on the scale of the current service, potential future costs to the Council and savings that could be made.

The current policy had been in place since 2012 and was now due for revision. Many authorities had adopted policies that help waste reduction and encourage the participation of recycling services. Cabinet was informed that, due to the increase in house building, the option to charge needed to be reviewed.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The revised Wheeled Bin Policy attached at Appendix A to the report be approved, to be implemented from 1st April 2020;
- (ii) The approved options be as follows:
 - A1 No Change to bin charging
 - B2 Change the large bin size from a 360 litre bin to a 240 litre bin.
 - C1 No Change to additional recycling bins.
 - D1 No Change to sack deliveries;
- (iii) The policy and the charges be subject to annual review; and
- (iv) Authority be delegated to the Head of Finance and Assets to make minor amendments to the Policy in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.

Summary of Reasons:

To reduce the costs to the Council overall and to update the current policy document to reflect the emphasis on the environment.

RISK AND OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Cabinet received a report seeking approval of the Council's Risk and Opportunity Management Framework for use in the 2020/21 and 2021/22 years. The Framework helps to ensure that a structured approach for managing risk and opportunity is in place and applied consistently across the

Council and enables the Council to avoid the occurrence of unforeseen events and therefore effectively plan the use of its resources.

At its meeting on 10 December 2019, the Governance and Audit Committee had considered the Council's Risk and Opportunity Management Framework and the Committee's comments were attached at Appendix B to the report.

RESOLVED that the Council's Risk and Opportunity Management Framework, attached as Appendix A to the report, be approved for use in the 2020/21 and 2021/22 years, and that for red risks only, the reasons for the scores be included in the Quarterly Risk and Opportunity Management reports.

Summary of Reasons:

The Risk and Opportunity Management Framework is subject to review on a two-year cycle to ensure that it remains appropriate to Council needs and requirements.

ADOPTION OF THE SMARTER SERVICES PROGRAMME STRATEGY

The Cabinet considered a report seeking approval of the Smarter Services Programme Strategy. The Smarter Services Programme is designed to ensure the Council can continue to meet growing demands for services and make best use of available resources. The Programme will build on the Council's long tradition of innovation and on the successes already achieved by taking a more comprehensive and ambitious approach to transforming services so that it can continue to keep pace with growing demands and provide consistently high-quality services to its customers. Funding of £300k for the programme had already been approved and no further financial decisions were being sought.

RESOLVED that the Smarter Services Programme Strategy, attached at appendix A to the report, be approved and adopted.

Summary of Reasons:

The Strategy seeks to prepare the Council to meet the challenges of delivering services to a growing and changing population; enable the organisation to meet the vision for the future of Harborough District; and remodel services to meet the needs of customers.

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ADOPTION

The Cabinet received a report detailing the outcome of consultation and seeking approval to recommend the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for adoption. Each Local Planning Authority has a duty to prepare and maintain an SCI, setting out how parties with an interest in planning issues in the district, both planning policy and planning applications, can engage with the planning system.

The Council adopted its SCI in March 2015. Since then there had been several changes to legislation governing the planning system. The most recent had brought into effect a requirement to complete a review of the SCI every 5 years, and a requirement to include specific information in the SCI around the support available for Neighbourhood Plan preparation. The SCI had been reviewed and updated to reflect these legislative changes.

On the 18 November 2019 Council approved a draft SCI for the purposes of consultation. Following a period of consultation, a final SCI was proposed for adoption to replace the 2015 version.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the Harborough Statement of Community Involvement (January 2020) be adopted as Council policy.

Summary of Reasons:

To meet the requirements of legislation governing Statements of Community Involvement and to effect change to Council policy.

PROVISION OF A PAYROLL AND HR SYSTEMS

The Cabinet received a report seeking approval of an alternative solution for a new integrated Payroll and Human Resource system. The Council had had a delegated service arrangement with Leicester City Council for Payroll and Human Resource systems since 2011. A paper had been presented to CMT on 26 September 2018 recommending that the Council complete an Options Appraisal on the future of this provision, given the considerable issues that had been experienced with the system at that time.

In February 2019 Leicester City Council changed systems to Midland's iTrent, which is an industry leader, but this new system did not have the same functionality and/or information that was on the earlier system. In addition, Leicester City Council were expecting a rise in cost for the new system. As a result, an Options Appraisal has been undertaken to consider alternative provisions for this Council.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To give the twelve months' notice to Leicester City Council to cease the provision of Payroll and HR Systems; and
- (ii) To approve the delegation of the provision of a Payroll and Human Resource System to North West Leicestershire District Council from February 2021.

Summary of Reasons:

The primary decision to seek an alternative agreement relies on; the limited functionality we are currently being provided with, the unexpected request for an increased contract value to reimplement the previous level of functionality and the requirement for frequent manual intervention.

2020/21 BUDGET REPORT

The Cabinet received a revised report on the 2020/21 Budget and noted that this revised budget report had also been passed to the Performance Scrutiny Panel for consideration at its reconvened meeting.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The Meeting adjourned at 5.32 p.m, to be re-convened on the rising of the Performance Scrutiny Panel.

The meeting reconvened at 9.40 p.m.

2020/21 BUDGET REPORT

The Cabinet was requested to recommend the 2020/21 Budget and Capital Programme to Council. Cabinet had considered the emerging budget position at its meeting on 13th January 2020 and released proposals on budget growth, savings and capital projects for consultation on 14th January 2020. The results of that consultation (Appendix M to the report) were tabled at the meeting. The comments and questions from the reconvened meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Panel on the 10th February 2020 were considered and noted. The meeting considered a report, which in its various sections, tables, and appendices, set out proposals for the Council's 2020/21 budget (general fund revenue budget and capital programme) across the whole of the Council's activities. It also contained the Council's Capital Strategy.

It was reported that all Councils were facing ongoing and unprecedented uncertainty which made robust medium-term financial forecasting problematic. The lack of detail on the significant changes to be made by government to the local government finance system in 2021/22 had meant that the Council had not produced a medium-term financial strategy for the next four years. The strategy will be developed over the course of the 2020/21 financial year, as government's intentions on the timing, detail, and impact of the changes become clearer. The report therefore provided only a one-year budget position, although some context about the financial challenges that the Council was likely to face in the medium term.

The key highlights of the 2020/21 budget proposals, as presented in the report, were:

- No increase to Harborough District Council's element of the Council Tax charge for the second year running.
- Some £930k of revenue budget growth to invest in key service priorities including leisure, climate change, rural and environmental crime investigation, heritage and conservation, economic development, homelessness prevention, focus on young people, providing affordable homes, and support for the armed services.
- No reduction in services or service delivery levels.
- An ambitious capital programme totalling £49m over 2020/21 to 2022/23 including proposals to develop housing at De Verdon Road and Naseby Square, to acquire commercial property and thereby generate new additional income to fund Council services, and to build a new Leisure Centre at Market Harborough.
- The Council has benefited from growth across the district in new housing and businesses and is proposing to use £4.27m from both the New Homes Bonus grant and its share of estimated new Business Rates income to fund vital public services.
- Saving proposals, including the generation of additional new income, totalling £628k.

The budget was to be balanced by using £1.985m of reserves that were prudentially built-up in the past.

The Cabinet was also asked to note that:

- The annual Treasury Management Strategy, which sets out proposals for the management of the local authority's borrowing, investments, cash flows, banking, and money market transactions, along with the authorised limit and operational boundary for external borrowing, would be submitted to Council on 24th February 2020 for approval.
- A commercial investment strategy would be produced early in the new financial year for Council approval to govern the Council's approach to commercial property investment, lending to its wholly owned company (Harborough District Commercial Services Ltd), and commercial housing development projects. This document would also contain the non-financial investment indicators required to comply with the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government's revised Investment Code (revised for implementation in 2019/20).

RESOLVED that the following items be noted:

- (i) The budget consultation process that was followed and the feedback gained.
- (ii) Section 6 of the report which gives the S151 Officer's views on the robustness of the budget estimates, the adequacy of reserves, and the key financial risks to the Council.
- (iii) That the Council Tax resolution for 2020/21, prepared in accordance with Sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011, will be calculated and presented to Council for approval once Leicestershire County Council, the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner, and the Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service have agreed their precepts for the 2020/21 financial year.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the following items be approved:

General Fund

- (i) The Council's net revenue budget requirement as £12.432m for the financial year 2020/21 including the budget allocations to portfolios shown in Appendix B and the growth and savings proposals set out in Appendix D of the officer's report.
- (ii) No increase to Harborough District Council's element of the Council Tax, meaning that the Band D Council Tax will be set at £167.97 (including average special expenses but excluding precepts - paragraph 3.33 of the officer's report).
- (iii) The schedule of fees and charges for 2020/21 set out in Appendix E of the officer's report.
- (iv) The Special Expenses for 2020/21 contained in Appendix F of the officer's report.
- (v) The planned use of £1.985m of reserves to finance the budget requirement in 2020/21 as set out in paragraph 3.39 of the officer's report.

Capital programme and Capital Strategy

- (vi) The revised capital programme for 2019/20 set out in paragraphs 4.3 to 4.5 of the officer's report.
- (vii) The proposed general fund capital programme 2020/21 to 2022/23 and its method of funding as set out in Appendix G and table 4. Of the officer's report.
- (viii) The capital strategy, contained in Appendix H of the officer's report, as required by CIPFA's (Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy) Prudential Code.

Council Reserves

- (ix) The changes proposed to the existing reserves as recommended by the S151 Officer in paragraphs 6.20 to 6.27 and shown in Appendix I of the officer's report.

Summary of Reasons:

The Council must set a balanced budget by the 11th March 2020. The duty to recommend a budget to the Council rests with the Cabinet.

CORPORATE PLAN AND CORPORATE DELIVERY PLAN

The Cabinet was presented with revised versions of the three-year (2018/19 to 2020/21) Corporate Plan and Corporate Delivery Plan, as set out at Appendices A and B to the report.

The Corporate Delivery Plan identifies high-level expected outcomes of the Key Activities, which will add depth to what the Critical Outcomes will mean for communities in the District. It also contains the headline performance measures for each Key Activity. The number of Key Activities proposed in the revised Corporate Delivery Plan is 34.

The Corporate Delivery Plan is a dynamic document and the development of the Key Activities is an iterative process. For this reason, elements of the Corporate Delivery Plan will continue to be developed and may change as a result of further review and target challenge sessions. Any proposed changes to the content of the Corporate Delivery Plan, including revisions to targets, will be reported to the relevant portfolio holder, the Cabinet, and Scrutiny, as appropriate.

Business Planning workshops were held with portfolio holders and the Corporate Management Team to prepare the Corporate Plan and Corporate Delivery Plan. At its reconvened meeting on 10

February 2020, the Performance Scrutiny Panel had considered the proposals set out in the two Plans.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the revised versions of the three-year (2018/19 to 2020/21) Corporate Plan and Corporate Delivery Plan, as set out at Appendices A and B to the officer's report be approved.

Summary of Reasons:

The Corporate Plan and Corporate Delivery Plan are documents which outline the Council's Vision, Priorities, and Critical Outcomes and associated Key Activities for the period 2018/19 to 2020/21. These documents are reviewed each year to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Cabinet received a report seeking approval of the Council's Performance Management Framework for use in the 2020/21 and 2021/22 years. The Framework sets out the overall high-level approach that Harborough District Council will take to managing its performance. The aim of the framework is to provide a basis for consistency in the way that performance is managed and joined-up across the Council – a 'one council' approach, which will encourage Members, Officers and Partners to work together to deliver activities.

A coherent and consistently applied Performance Management Framework encourages greater efficiency and focus on the most critical areas of service delivery at a time when financial pressures on the public sector are challenging. The framework demonstrates the 'golden thread', which flows through the organisation to link the Council's business planning activity, from the high-level vision and priorities in the Corporate Plan, to the Critical Outcomes and Key Activities in the Corporate Delivery Plan, Team Plans, and individual employee appraisal objectives.

The Performance Management Framework is subject to review on a two-year cycle to ensure that it remains appropriate to Council needs and requirements; it had been last approved in January 2018.

RESOLVED that the Council's Performance Management Framework attached as Appendix A to the officer's report be approved for use in the 2020/21 and 2021/22 years.

Summary of Reasons:

The Performance Management Framework is subject to review on a two-year cycle to ensure that it remains appropriate to Council needs and requirements.

MATTERS OF SPECIAL URGENCY

There were none.

The meeting closed at 9.52 p.m.