

CABINET

Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,

on Monday, 18th February, 2019 at 10.30 am

Present: Councillor Jason Zadrozny in the Chair;

Councillors Christian Chapman, Tom Hollis,
Robert Sears-Piccavey, Helen-Ann Smith and
John Wilmott.

Officers Present: Craig Bonar, Carol Cooper-Smith, Ruth Dennis,
Martin Elliott, Theresa Hodgkinson,
Peter Hudson, Robert Mitchell and
Paul Parkinson.

In Attendance: Councillor Rachel Madden, Councillor
Matthew Relf and Councillor Christine Quinn-
Wilcox

CA.69 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and Non Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests.

There were no declarations of interest.

CA.70 To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 21 January 2019

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CA.71 Maid Marian Line Economic Growth Feasibility Study

The Chief Executive submitted a report seeking approval to commission a high level feasibility study into the local economic growth opportunities arising from the proposed Maid Marian Line between Sutton Parkway station and the proposed HS2 station at Toton.

The report stated that the proposed study would examine opportunities and the potential for economic growth linked to the line. It was noted that the proposed study was not looking at the feasibility of the line itself as this had already been considered through an AECOM study commissioned by the HS2 Strategic Board, and that a further study on the Maid Marian line itself was being undertaken alongside other connectivity projects via the Gateway process by the HS2 Partnership. The Leader and members of Cabinet

welcomed the study and noted that the proposed Maid Marian Line had the potential to bring increased connectivity and economic benefits to Ashfield.

RESOLVED

that the Interim Director Place and Communities, in conjunction with the Leader, be delegated authority to commission a high level feasibility study into local economic growth opportunities linked to the proposed Maid Marian line.

REASONS FOR DECISION

The Maid Marian line rail link between Sutton Parkway, to Toton was first proposed by Ashfield District Council and is now one of the options being considered by HS2 Steering Group to support connectivity with Toton. In order to further inform discussion and decision making a high level economic growth study is proposed.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REASONS FOR REJECTION

The option not to undertake a study is an option was not recommended as this would mean that the potential for local economic growth was overlooked.

CA.72 Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee Terms of Reference update

The Chief Executive submitted a report seeking approval for minor revisions to the Terms of Reference of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee which had been proposed following a review.

The report noted that the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee was a joint committee created by the N2 Local Authorities to promote partnership and collaboration on issues pertaining to economic growth, and was comprised of the Leaders of all the Local Authorities in Nottinghamshire. The proposed amended Terms of Reference that set out the purpose and scope of the Committee were attached as an appendix to the officer's report.

RESOLVED

- a) that the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee Terms of Reference, as attached at appendix 1 of the officer's report be approved.
- b) that authority be delegated to the Leader, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer to make any future minor non substantive changes to the Terms of Reference.

REASON FOR DECISIONS

In order to acknowledge and approve the revised terms of reference for the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee following a review.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REASONS FOR REJECTION

The option not to approve the revisions and to seek further discussion at the EPC regarding the details of the terms of reference was not recommended due to the relatively minor and positive changes to the Terms of Reference.

CA.73 Car Parking Order

The Place Team Leader submitted a report seeking approval for a range of initiatives to support town centres and green travel and for the amendment of the Ashfield District Council Civil Enforcement Off Street Parking Order to enable their implementation.

The proposed initiatives included:

- providing a number of parking bays for free two hours parking and changes to car parking charges
- installing electric vehicle charging bays within a number of car parks
- alterations to the boundary of Piggins Croft Car Park, Hucknall

The Deputy Leader (Outward Focus) welcomed the recommendations to revise the current car parking charges and the introduction of spaces that would provide up to two hours free parking in the three main town centre car parks as this would encourage longer stays in the town centres which would in turn benefit town centre businesses. It was also noted that the proposed changes, with an increase in charges for all day parking would be revenue neutral for the Council. The Leader advised that the installation of the ten electric vehicle charging points would be carried out at no cost to the Council as grant funding had successfully been gained for this project and that their installation showed the Council's commitment to a greener and cleaner Ashfield.

RESOLVED

- a) that initiatives to support town centres and green travel including:
 - providing a number of parking bays for free two hours parking and changes to car parking charges
 - installing electric vehicle charging bays within a number of car parks
 - alterations to the boundary of Piggins Croft Car Park, Hucknallbe approved.
- b) that officers start undertaking preparations to commence the legal process for varying the existing Ashfield District Council Civil Enforcement Off Street Parking Order to enable the initiatives detailed at (a) above.
- c) that £24,200 be allocated from the Regeneration Reserve to fund the costs associated with a new Parking Order, upgrading of parking machines and line marking for the two hour free bays.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS

A revised Parking Order will be required to implement the following changes to parking provision:

- Revise the current car parking charges and to provide up to two hours free parking in the three main town centre car parks within a number of designated and 'marked out' spaces only.
- The installation of electric vehicle charging points within a number of car parks within the District. This will support the development of the charging point network across Nottinghamshire, supporting increased use of electric vehicles and reducing air pollution.
- To increase the area covered by the Parking Order at Piggins Croft car park, Hucknall to include land acquired during the purchase of the property occupied by Wilkinson's and Central Walk retail properties to ensure effective enforcement action can be undertaken when necessary.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REASONS FOR REJECTION

The option not to vary the Ashfield District Council Civil Enforcement Off Street Parking Order was not recommended as it would not allow the initiatives to support town centres and green travel.

The option to provide two hours free parking in all car parks was not recommended as the cost would be prohibitive. Additional costs would include alterations to seven ticket machines at an estimated cost of £14,000. There would also be significant loss of income from ticket sales, as total sales for two hour tickets in 2017 were £64,000.

The option not to introduce electric vehicle charging points was not recommended as all costs were being met through a grant secured by Nottingham City Council.

CA.74 Annual Budget and Council Tax 2019/20 and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Update

The Corporate Finance Manager submitted a report detailing the:

- 2019/20 Annual Revenue (General Fund) and Housing Revenue Account Budgets and the Capital Programme for 2018/19 to 2022/23
- 2018/19 In-Year Revised Budgets (Housing Revenue Account and Capital)
- 2019/20 District Council Tax
- Fees and Charges for 2019/20 for those services where this information was unavailable for publication when the Fees and Charges report was considered by Cabinet on 26 November 2018.

The report also set out the estimated financial challenge in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2020/21 and 2021/22 and the Chief Finance Officer's advice regarding the robustness of the estimates included in the proposed 2019/20 Budget and the adequacy of reserves for which the proposed budget provided.

The report noted that since 2010 Local Government had seen an unprecedented reduction in the level of funding from the UK Government, and that 2019/20 would be the final year that the Council would receive a Revenue Support Grant, but that despite these challenges the Council had in past years been able to set an annual budget and deliver an Outturn within the budget set. It was noted that it would be essential that following the May 2019 District elections that the elected Administration would need to work with the Council's management to identify and agree options to address the estimated financial challenge in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2020/21, 2021/22 and beyond to ensure that the Council had a sustainable financial future. It was proposed that it be recommended to Council that the level of District Council Tax for 2019/20 be frozen at the 2018/19 level.

The Leader welcomed the proposal to freeze the level of District Council Tax for 2019/20 as the Council was able to set a balanced budget for 2019/20 without increasing the District's Council Tax level. The Leader thanked the Cabinet Member (Inward Focus), Councillor Robert Sears-Piccavey, the Corporate Finance Manager and other officers for their work in producing such a positive and forward looking budget in the context of the challenging financial situation that local authorities currently faced.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet recommends to Council that:

- a) the level of the District's own Council Tax for 2019/20 be frozen, setting the Band D equivalent at £185.46; the same as in 2018/19.
- b) the proposed Revenue (General Fund) and Housing Revenue Account 2019/20 Budgets, as set out at Sections 3 and 4 of the officer's report be approved.
- c) the proposed Capital Programme and associated borrowing 2018/19 to 2022/23, as set out at Section 5 of the officer's report be approved.
- d) the 2018/19 Revised Housing Revenue Account and Capital Budgets, as set out at Sections 4 and 5 of the officer's report be approved.
- e) the precept figures from Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Authority, Police and Crime Commissioner and the two Parish Council's within the District, be incorporated, when known, into the Council Tax recommendation to Council on 4 March 2019.
- f) the estimated financial challenge in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2020/2021 and 2021/22, and the planned approach to address the challenge as set out at Section 6 of the officer's report be

noted.

- g) an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy be brought back to Cabinet after the 2018/19 Accounts have been closed and audited.
- h) the proposed use of reserves, as set out at Table 6 (Revenue) and Table 11 (Housing Revenue Account) of the officer's report be approved.
- i) the comments and advice of the Corporate Finance Manager (Section 151 Officer), provided in compliance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, as to the robustness of the estimates included in the 2019/20 Budget and the adequacy of the reserves for which this budget provides (Section 7) be accepted and noted.
- j) the Fees and Charges set out at paragraphs 3.10, 3.11, 3.12 and 3.13 of the officer's report, which were not available for inclusion in the Fees and Charges report submitted to Cabinet on 26 November 2018, be approved.
- k) the use of in-year Capital Receipts up to 2020/21 to maximise capitalisation opportunities arising from service transformation to deliver efficiencies and improved services to residents and clients, and thereby minimise the impact of costs on the revenue budget, as included in the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy 2018/19 approved by Council on 11 October 2018, be approved.

REASON FOR DECISIONS

In accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 the Council must set its annual budget by 10 March in the preceding financial year.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REASONS FOR REJECTION

The District Council is able to set a Council Tax increase of up to the greater of 2.99% or £5 per annum without triggering a referendum. The proposal to freeze the level of District Council Tax for 2019/20 was recommended as the Council is able to set a balanced budget for 2019/20 without increasing the District's Council Tax level.

Careful consideration has been given to each of the proposed investments included in this report. The investments proposed will support the Council in delivering its Corporate Plan priorities and will further facilitate the progression of the Council's Digital Transformation Programme for the benefit of residents and customers.

CA.75 Capital Strategy

The Corporate Finance Manager submitted a report requesting that Cabinet recommend to Council for approval the Ashfield District Council Capital Strategy 2019/20 – 2022/23. The proposed Capital Strategy provided an overarching framework on how capital investment decisions should be

undertaken by the Authority. It was noted that from 2019/20 it was a statutory requirement for local authorities to produce a Capital Strategy.

The proposed Capital Strategy and the proposed Investment Property Acquisition Process 2019-2023 were attached as appendices to the officer's report.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet recommends to Council that:

- a) the Capital Strategy be approved.
- b) the non-treasury Investment Strategy, as set out at appendix 1 of the officer's report, and the annex that documents the processes and responsibilities in respect of Commercial Property Investment, be approved.
- c) that subject to the receipt and evaluation of expected CIPFA guidance in respect of Commercial Investment Property acquisitions it be noted that it may be necessary to submit a revised Capital Strategy for Council approval, as detailed at paragraph 6.2 of the officer's report.

REASON FOR DECISIONS

The Capital Strategy provides an overarching framework on how capital investment decisions should be undertaken by the Authority. It is a statutory requirement to produce a Capital Strategy from 2019/20.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REASONS FOR REJECTION

To not have a Capital Strategy is not an option as this is a requirement of the CIPFA Prudential Code which all Local Authorities need to observe.

CA.76 Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Policy and Prudential Indicators

The Corporate Finance Manager submitted a report requesting that Cabinet recommended to Council for approval the Treasury Management Strategy for 2019/20 (including the Treasury Management Policy; Minimum Revenue Provision Policy; Investment Strategy; Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Practices: Main Principles). It was noted that the Strategy had been prepared in accordance with the Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice, issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), and relevant legislation.

The Treasury Management Strategy for 2019/20 was attached as an appendix to the officer's report.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet recommends to Council that:

- a) the Annual Investment Strategy be approved.
- b) the revised Minimum Revenue Provision Policy be approved.
- c) the proposed Prudential Indicators be adopted.
- d) that the remaining content of officer's report be noted.

REASON FOR DECISIONS

The recommendations to Council will allow for effective Treasury Management operations within the Authority, the revised Minimum Revenue Provision Policy will ensure that Minimum Revenue Provision charges will be applied more effectively and the Prudential Indicator ratios offer a benchmark by which any future capital expenditure decisions should be made. The Treasury Management Code of Practice requires Council approval of these Policies.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REASONS FOR REJECTION

There were no alternative options considered as it is a requirement of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code for all Local Authorities to have a Treasury Management Strategy Statement.

The meeting closed at 11.25 am

Chairman.