

CABINET

Wednesday, 18th January, 2017
Time of Commencement: 6.00 pm

Present:- Councillor Elizabeth Shenton – in the Chair

Councillors Beech, Kearon, Robinson, Turner and J Williams

Officers Executive Director (Operational Services) - David Adams
Executive Director (Regeneration and Development) - Neale Clifton
Geoff Durham
Phil Jones – Head of Communications
Chief Executive - John Sellgren and
Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) - Kelvin Turner

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Naylor and Rout. Councillor Naylor was due to speak on item 9 but had had an accident at home.

The Cabinet wished Councillor Naylor well for a speedy recovery.

2. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December, 2016 be agreed as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest stated.

4. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2017/18

A report was submitted to Cabinet reviewing progress on the completion of the revenue and capital budgets for 2017/18.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 3.4 of the report with regard to changes made to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the funding gap for 2017/18.

Members discussed the proposed increase to Council Tax for 2017/18 and agreed to 2.77%.

It had also been agreed to cease production of the Council's free newspaper – the Reporter and as a result, an amendment was required to Appendix three of this report. Under ref G5, the 'detail' column should be amended to read 'Utilisation of external printers to provide printing service'.

Resolved: (i) That, subject to the amendment to Appendix 3, the assumptions set out in the report be approved.

- (ii) That Council Tax Levy for 2017/18 be set at 2.77% - equating to an annual increase of £5 on a Band D property.
- (iii) That the Finance Resources and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee be asked to consider what comments it wishes to make on the draft Budget and Council Tax proposals before the final proposals are considered at Cabinet in February 2017.

5. SCALE OF FEES AND CHARGES 2017/18

A report was submitted to Cabinet seeking approval for the proposed scale of fees and charges to apply from 1 April, 2017.

Members' attention was brought to paragraph 2.9 of the report.

Two amendments were requested by the Portfolio Holder for Town Centres, Property and Business:

Page 61 of the report, under the Markets heading, the cost of an 'Open market- stall (per day)' should be changed to £21 per day instead of £20.

Page 62, at the top of the page, Catering pitches be increased to £28.50 and not £30 giving an increase of £3.50 per day.

Resolved: That, subject to the requested amendments, the fees and charges proposed to apply from 1 April, 2017, as set out in Appendix 1 be approved.

6. UPDATE ON ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND DELIVERY PLAN

A report was submitted to Cabinet updating Members on progress with the delivery of the approved Asset Management Strategy and to approve further actions.

Members' attention was drawn to Appendix 1 of the report and in particular, sites subject to Village Green Applications.

A consultation process had recently been carried out for two sites in Newcastle-under-Lyme – Victoria Street, Chesterton and the former Crackley Community Centre, Holly Road, Chesterton. In respect of the former Crackley Community Centre, one response was received from Aspire Housing which gave a positive approach. The Cabinet agreed that both sites could and should be disposed of and added to the Asset Management Plan.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the updated Asset Management Strategy and Delivery Plan be approved and officers be authorised to proceed with disposals in liaison with the relevant Portfolio Holder.
 - (ii) That, having reviewed the consultation responses, the disposal of land at Victoria Street, Chesterton be agreed.
 - (iii) That, having reviewed the consultation responses, the disposal of the former Crackley Community Centre be agreed.

- (iv) That officers be authorised to take the necessary steps to dispose of the operational assets referred to in the report arising from the Council's move to the new Civic Hub in 2017.
- (v) That a further report, refreshing the Asset Management Strategy Delivery Plan be considered by Cabinet following approval of the Open Spaces Strategy.
- (vi) That officers be authorised to engage with the County Council on the basis set out in the report in respect of Council-owned land that is the subject of Village Green applications.
- (vii) That officers identify premises within its commercial portfolio, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, which are considered appropriate for disposal on the basis set out in the report and that officers be authorised to take all necessary steps to expedite any such disposals.

7. COMMUNICATIONS - MOVING FORWARD

A report was submitted to Cabinet outlining proposals for enhancing the way the Council communicates with residents, elected Members and staff.

It had been agreed to cease production of the Council's 'Reporter' newsletter and therefore, paragraph 3.9 of the report should have all wording removed after the first paragraph. Similarly with paragraph 4.2, all wording should be removed after 'March 2017 on the first line.

By ceasing production, the table at 7.1 of the report, would also be amended, taking out £12,210 from proposed expenditure for the Reporter and therefore, the total saving would be £53,116.

Resolved: That subject to the requested amendments, the proposals outlined in the report for developing the Council's external and internal communications be supported.

8. DIGITAL DELIVERY OF SERVICES

A report was submitted to Cabinet outlining proposals for enhancing the way in which the Council provides digital services to customers through the introduction of a customer portal. Going down this route would also be a cost saving to the Council.

Resolved:

- (i) That proposals to introduce a customer portal to further develop the way that residents can access council services be supported in principle.
- (ii) That officers be authorised to prepare a business case for the introduction of a customer portal including an assessment of the options available and identifying a preferred set of proposals to be reported back to Cabinet.
- (iii) That the Digital Strategy for the Council be endorsed.

9. DAVIS REPORT 2016 - FEEDBACK FROM CLEANER, GREENER AND SAFER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A report was submitted to Cabinet to consider the Action Plan recommended by the Cleaner Greener and Safer Communities Scrutiny Committee.

In the absence of Councillor Naylor – the Chair of that Committee, Councillor Shenton read out the Comments in respect of the Davis Report which had been provided in writing by Councillor Naylor summarising the decision of the Scrutiny Committee meeting.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the Action Plan be approved.
 - (ii) That officers provide the Leader, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder with monthly reports to monitor progress.

10. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

COUNCILLOR ELIZABETH SHENTON
Chair

Meeting concluded at 7.15 pm