

CABINET

Wednesday, 16th January, 2019
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

Present:- Councillor Simon Tagg – Chair

Councillors M. Holland, T. Johnson, P. Northcott, S. Sweeney and J Waring

Officers Executive Director Operational Services- David Adams,
Geoff Durham - Mayor's Secretary / Member Support Officer,
Craig Turner - Principal Accountant,
John Tradewell - Acting Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service,
Interim Executive Director - Resources and Support Services - Jan Willis,
Janet Baddeley - Communications Manager,
Della Mobberley - Information Officer and
Sarah Wilkes - Finance Manager

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December, 2018 be agreed as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest stated.

4. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS

A report was submitted which reviewed progress on the completion of the revenue and capital budgets for 2019/20 following agreement of the 5 year Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Stephen Sweeney thanked everyone involved in the preparation of the budgets.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9 of the report showing factors giving rise to the budget gap for 2019/20 and consideration of ways to eliminate it.

The Leader, Councillor Simon Tagg supported everything that Councillor Sweeney had said, stating that this was the first full budget of this administration and that it was a forward-looking budget. Members' attention was drawn to Appendix 1 which outlined income and savings and alternative sources of finance.

Members were advised of the update to paragraph 3.14 which was tabled at the meeting, the paragraph would now read as follows:

The 'Borough Growth' fund will provisionally be used to enable investment in the following corporate priorities:

A Town Centre for All (£104,000)

- Developing and implementing a 10 year Parking Strategy aimed at supporting the local economy. Cabinet has set out a number of areas of focus for the new strategy, these were detailed at 2.14 to 2.17 of the October 16th 2018 Cabinet report 'Review of Town Centre Car Parks'.
- Revitalising the market, developing with traders a clear programme for improvement. At its November 7th 2018 meeting Cabinet agreed to review the management and operation of the market in Newcastle town centre in co-operation and consultation with local interested parties to revitalise our historic market.
- Facilitating bids for grants, including the Future High Street Fund (FHSF). FHSF is a government initiative announced in 2018 budget to help local areas regenerate high streets and town centres. Bids will be considered for both Kidsgrove and Newcastle town centres.

Council Transformation (£100,000)

- Digital Delivery Programme. The Council is committed to introducing more streamlined and speedy processes to improve service delivery to residents, particularly in recycling and waste, environmental services and planning. Residents will be able to customise, via 'My Account', how they get up to date information on particular Council services.
- Establishing capacity to develop commercial working practices to reduce costs and generate improved revenue streams. This includes creating a work force fit for the future by developing the skills of our staff and also investing in apprenticeship opportunities.

Building for the Future (£100,000)

- Enable Residential & Commercial development to generate improved revenue streams. We will use innovative models to ensure that when development opportunities arise the Council retains an income stream or reinvests the income into further opportunities.

As a result of the update, the Leader proposed an amendment to recommendation (vi):

- (vi) That the report be updated following the announcements at the Cabinet meeting and then the Finance, Assets and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee be asked to consider what comments it wishes to make on the draft Budget and Council Tax and be asked to consider and respond to the following questions before the final proposals are considered at Cabinet on 6th February 2019.

Does the Scrutiny Committee:

1. Support the inclusion of the income from the Charged Garden Waste Service in the revenue budget?
2. Support the use of the 75% Business Rates Retention Pilot income to accelerate the introduction of the Council's new recycling service?
3. Support the creation of the Borough Growth Fund as set out in the 'Statutory Guidance on the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts'?
4. Have you any comments on the use of the Borough Growth Fund to support the Corporate Priorities as set out in 3.14?

The update was accepted and the revised recommendation was agreed by Members.

Members of the Cabinet thanked Councillor Sweeney and officers for their work and welcomed the report.

With regard to Council Tax, there would be a 2.99% increase which equated to approximately 8p per week for the Borough's element.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the progress on the completion of the Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2019/20 be received and noted.
 - (ii) That the strategy for addressing the provisional forecast outturn for the 2018/19 revenue budget be noted.
 - (iii) That the Council Tax levy to be proposed for 2019/20 be noted.
 - (iv) That the level of reserves provisionally required to be maintained in 2019/20 be noted.
 - (v) That the report be amended following the update tabled at the meeting and that the Finance, Assets and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee be asked to consider what comments it wishes to make on the draft Budget and Council Tax and be asked to consider and respond to the following questions before the final proposals are considered at Cabinet on 6th February 2019:

Does the Scrutiny Committee:

1. Support the inclusion of the income from the Charged Garden Waste Service in the revenue budget?
2. Support the use of the 75% Business Rates Retention Pilot income to accelerate the introduction of the Council's new recycling service?
3. Support the creation of the Borough Growth Fund as set out in the 'Statutory Guidance on the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts'?
4. Have any comments on the use of the Borough Growth Fund to support the Corporate Priorities as set out in 3.14?

- (vi) That the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy be recommended for approval by Council on 20th February 2019.

5. **CAPITAL STRATEGY 2019/20**

A report was submitted seeking approval of the Capital Strategy 2019/29 for presentation to Full Council for final approval.

Members' attention was drawn to page 58 of the agenda – Annex B which listed Capital Projects and Funding.

The Leader advised that the Guildhall had been transferred to the Community on a twelve month lease and that there were other assets in the Borough which required attention.

Members welcomed the Capital strategy stating that it was difficult to look ahead ten years but there was confidence in the three year detailed strategy. In addition, the change to the elections cycle from election by thirds to all out elections would also give more confidence.

Resolved: That the Capital Strategy Report for 2019/29 be approved for submission to Full Council for final approval.

6. **INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2019/20**

A report was submitted seeking approval of the Investment Strategy 2019/20 for presentation to Full Council for final approval.

The Council need to have an approved Investment Strategy for 2019/20 in place before the start of the next financial year.

This was a new Strategy for 2019/20 which was why the document showed '£0' values (pages 64 and 65 of the agenda).

Members welcomed the Investment Strategy and thanked Councillor Sweeney and officers for the work that they had carried out.

Resolved: That the Investment Strategy Report for 2019/20 be approved for submission to Full Council for final approval.

7. **SCALE OF FEES AND CHARGES 2019/20**

A report was submitted to Cabinet which sought approval to the proposed scale of fees and charges to apply from April 2019.

The biggest change this year was with the carparking which had introduced a £1 parking charge between 3pm and 8am. This had been introduced during the Christmas period and figures from the BID showed that this had generated an increase in footfall in the town centre.

Resolved: That the fees and charges proposed to apply from 1 April 2019, as set out in Appendix 1 be approved.

8. **MAER CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

A report was submitted seeking adoption of The Maer Conservation area Appraisal and Management Plan as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Members were advised that both the Planning Committee and Conservation Advisory Working Party had both resolved that the document be brought to the Cabinet for adoption.

Members supported the document.

Resolved: That the Supplementary Planning Document relating to Maer Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted.

9. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

COUNCILLOR SIMON TAGG
Chair

Meeting concluded at 3.03 pm

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