

SOUTH RIBBLE BOROUGH COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING – 18 JANUARY 2017
REPORT OF THE CABINET

The Cabinet met on the evening of Wednesday 11 January 2017.

On that occasion the Cabinet considered the matters set out below. Decisions shown in boxed areas are subject to Council confirmation; the reports considered by the Cabinet were available to all members in advance of the Cabinet meeting.

1. City Deal – Masterplanning and the Delivery of Bamber Bridge

Councillor P Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Leisure, presented a report which related to the City Deal Masterplan project updates and to procure public realm items for the Bamber Bridge Scheme. In addition, the report also provided an update on progress and requests approval for changes to previously reported expenditure related to the City Deal and as previously set out in the Capital Programme for 2015/16 and approved by Cabinet on 7th September 2016. The report was seconded.

Following concerns from councillors in the audience, the Cabinet Member outlined the contents of each of the three Masterplans.

It was agreed:

- (a) That authority be granted under section 2.8 of the Financial Regulations to increase the revenue budget for planned spend on the Leyland Community Masterplan by £4,000 to a total of £44,000.
- (b) That permission be granted to spend £44,000 on the Community Masterplan for West Paddock subject to receipt of the specific grant income. This would be charged against South Ribble's budget but would be offset by the use of specific new grant funding from South Ribble's successful One Public Estate (OPE) bid of £20,000 and Innovation Agency funding received in the sum of £4,000.
- (c) That authority be granted to award Community Masterplan procurement to Capita (in accordance with the procurement exercise and in line with SRBC Contract Procedure Rules).
- (d) That the changes made to the procurement and costs related to the Penwortham, Lostock Hall and Leyland retail Masterplans be noted, which would mean that South Ribble's Community Infrastructure budget within the City Deal Infrastructure Delivery Plan would now not need to spend the £100,000 allocated in September.
- (e) That the good progress in Bamber Bridge be noted, and authority be given to procure the intermediate value items required to complete the Bamber Bridge scheme.

2. Corporate Debt Recovery Policy

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support and Assets, the Leader of the Council presented a report concerning the adoption of a Corporate Debt Recovery Policy which would set out the Council's approach to collecting and recovering debts owed to the Council by residents and businesses. The policy would apply to Council Tax, Non Domestic Rates, overpaid Housing Benefit and Sundry Debts.

It was agreed:

That the adoption of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy be approved.

3. Implementation of Risk Based Verification for benefit claims and automated Council Tax arrangements – Waiver of Contract Procedure Rules

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support and Assets, the Leader of the Council presented a report concerning the Implementation of Risk Based Verification for benefit claims and automated Council Tax arrangements which required the waiving of Contract Procedural Rules. He indicated that the module needed to be purchased to improve the system.

The Leader of the Council continued to explain that within the risk section of the report it stated that if the waiver was to be approved a report would be presented to Cabinet on 20th February 2017 to approve the Council's Risk Based Verification policy. However, he indicated that he proposed Cabinet agree this at this meeting. This was seconded by Councillor P Smith.

Concern was expressed that reports such as this were becoming more and more frequent and that a waiver should only be proposed if there were exceptional circumstances.

It was agreed:

- (a) That, in accordance with paragraph 39 of the CPRs, the waiving of paragraph 11 of the Council's CPRs to permit the procurement of the Risk Based Verification and Arrangements Manager modules from Capita for a period of up to four years, with the costings as detailed within the report, be approved.
- (b) That the council's Risk Based Verification policy, as required by DWP circular S11/2011, be approved.

4. Mayor and Deputy Mayor 2017/18

The Leader of the Council introduced this item and proposed confirming Councillor Mick Titherington as Mayor elect for 2017/18 and nominating Councillor John Rainsbury as Deputy Mayor elect for 2017/18.

It was agreed:

That Councillor Mick Titherington be confirmed as Mayor elect for 2017/18 and Councillor John Rainsbury be nominated as Deputy Mayor elect for 2017/18.

5. Performance and Risk monitoring report - Mid Year 2016/17 (April 2016 – September 2016)

The Leader of the Council was pleased to present the Mid-year Performance Monitoring Report for 1 April 2016 – 30 September 2016 and explained that the report had already been considered by the Scrutiny Committee on 25 October 2016.

In moving the report Councillor Hughes stated that it was a reasonable report considering the very busy and difficult last six months. Councillor P Smith indicated that there were lots of good things within the report and specifically referred to the retention of the Investors in People Gold Standard.

Councillor Foster thought that it wasn't a good report and hoped to see the report format

reviewed in future years. He added that the report looked back rather than at issues moving forward with the budget and other challenges faced. He thought that the Corporate Plan and Risk Register also required work and hoped that Cabinet would look to improve these.

The Chairman of Scrutiny, Councillor Titherington indicated that Scrutiny had made a number of recommendations and suggested that in future, this report should have these recommendations attached.

It was agreed that the report be noted.

6. Private Sector Housing Grants Programme

Councillor Hughes, the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Housing, presented a report concerning the last Private Sector House Condition Survey which had been undertaken in 2012. The survey had found that 19.8% of the private sector housing stock within the borough was non-decent. In response to this, it was proposed that the Council implement a grants programme to specifically address category 1 hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. This would form part of the Housing Capital Programme to support the delivery of the South Ribble Housing Framework, which was approved by Cabinet in February 2016. The Cabinet Member understood that work was still to be done but as vulnerable people were involved; he suggested the Council needed to move forward with this.

Although the principal of the scheme was supported, concerns were expressed from councillors in the audience regarding the lack of means testing the applicants which apply for the grant. A further concern was how the Council could recoup the cost should the Council be required to undertake the works if the homeowner was unable to afford the work required. Other concerns raised also included the funding of the scheme from the Right to Buy clawback receipts and how this fits in with the Housing Strategy for the borough.

The Leader of the Council was aware from the debate that members were currently dissatisfied with the report. Following a suggestion from Councillor M Tomlinson, the Leader of the Council suggested that Cabinet should reconsider the matter with officers looking to address the concerns raised by members in a revised report to be presented to Council on 18 January 2017.

It was agreed:

That Cabinet notes the contents of the report and requests that a revised report be presented to Council on 18 January addressing the concerns raised by members.

** The amended report has subsequently been attached as Appendix A to this report*

7. Timetable of Meetings 2017/18

The Leader of the Council introduced a report concerning the Timetable of Meetings for the ensuing municipal year.

Concern was expressed regarding the start time of Cabinet and that it was not consistent with other meetings and as some members of the council found it challenging to attend meetings at 5.00pm due to work commitments. The Leader of the Council indicated that the large attendance at the meeting that evening proved that the time was acceptable

It was agreed:

That the Timetable of Meetings for 2017/18 as set out in the attached appendix be approved.

8. Pension Deficit

This item was withdrawn.

9. Firmstep Renewal

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support and Assets, the Leader of the Council introduced a report concerning the Council continuing to use the Firmstep product to provide the Council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Website solution.

Concerns were expressed regarding the content of the report and what exactly was being requested. The lack of information within the Financial, Legal and Risk Implications was also a major concern as members thought that there should be implications in each of these areas.

It was agreed:

That this report be deferred to enable an amended report to be considered by Council on 18 January 2017.

** The amended report has subsequently been attached as Appendix B to this report*

10. Cabinet Forward Plan

It was agreed:

That the Forward Plan submitted under Section 22 of the Local Government Act 2000 be approved.

11. Exclusion of Press and Public

The member of the public read a statement questioning the legality of the following three items being exempt from the press and public. The Leader of the Council indicated that he had received an e-mail from the member of the public on the same matter and would respond to this. However, as these items were exempt on the agenda, this is how they would be dealt with.

It was agreed:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following three items of business as they involves the discussion of information which is defined as exempt from publication under paragraph 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and in which case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

12. Standing Order No. 31 Constitution of the Cabinet and Committees

At 7.00pm, the Leader of the Council indicated that under Standing Order No. 31, meetings of the Cabinet should not last longer than two hours. However, this provision could be suspended at any meeting once a motion to that effect had been moved,

seconded and carried.

It was agreed:

That Standing Order No. 31 be suspended in order for the remaining business on the agenda to be dealt with.

13. Vacant Accommodation at Civic Centre, West Paddock, Leyland

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support and Assets, the Leader of the Council presented a report concerning the vacant accommodation at the Civic Centre, West Paddock, Leyland.

It was agreed:

That the draft heads of terms for the proposed lease of 4,047 sq. ft. of office accommodation at the Civic Centre to a public sector partner be approved and further co-working opportunities and rationalisation of the Civic Centre accommodation be explored.

14. Gregson Green Community Centre and Playing Fields, Gregson Lane, Hoghton

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support and Assets, the Leader of the Council presented a report concerning Gregson Green Community Centre and Playing Fields, Gregson Lane, Hoghton.

It was agreed:

That the proposed surrender and renewal of the lease to Gregson Green to enable the replacement of the existing community centre together with integral changing rooms for both Gregson Lane Football and Cricket Clubs be approved.

15. Land at Leyland

(Councillor Hughes declared a personal but non prejudicial interest in the following item as he received a pension from Places for People, but was able under the Code of Conduct for Elected Members to remain in the meeting and take part in the consideration of the item.)

This item was withdrawn to enable further discussions to take place with officers, the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Labour Group. Subject to the outcome of these discussions an urgent decision may need to be taken if timescales did not allow further discussion at a subsequent meeting.

I hereby commend the report of the Cabinet to the Council.

COUNCILLOR PETER MULLINEAUX

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL