

MINUTES OF CABINET

MEETING DATE **Wednesday, 12 February 2020**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Paul Foster (Chair), Michael Titherington (Vice-Chair), Aniela Bylinski Gelder, Bill Evans, Susan Jones and Matthew Tomlinson

OFFICERS: Gary Hall (Interim Chief Executive), Jane Blundell (Interim Section 151 Officer), Jennifer Mullin (Director of Neighbourhoods and Development), Jonathan Noad (Director of Planning and Property), Peter McHugh (Assistant Director of Property and Housing), Dave Whelan (Shared Services Lead - Legal & Deputy Monitoring Officer) and Nina Neisser (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

OTHER MEMBERS AND OFFICERS: Councillor Will Adams, Councillor Jane Bell (Deputy Mayor, Member Champion (Older People) and (Safeguarding)), Councillor Renee Blow, Councillor Damian Bretherton, Councillor Carol Chisholm, Councillor Colin Clark, Councillor Derek Forrest (Member Champion (Armed Forces)), Councillor Mary Green, Councillor Michael Green, Councillor Chris Lomax, Councillor Keith Martin, Councillor Christine Melia, Councillor Jacqueline Mort (Member Champion (Member Development)), Councillor Alan Ogilvie, Councillor Colin Sharples, Councillor Margaret Smith (Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Conservative Group), Councillor Phil Smith, Councillor Caleb Tomlinson, Councillor Jacky Alty (Member Champion (Social Justice and Equality)) and Councillor Karen Walton

PUBLIC: 5

90 Apologies for Absence

None.

91 Minutes of the Last Meeting

Decision made (Unanimously):

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 22 January 2020 be approved as a correct record for signing by the Leader of the Council.

92 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of any interests.

93 Cabinet Forward Plan

The Leader highlighted several reports that would be received by both Cabinet and Council over the next few months.

Decision made (Unanimously):

That the 12 month Forward Plan – February 2020 to January 2021 be noted.

94 Quarter 3 Performance Monitoring Report

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster presented the report of the Interim Chief Executive that provided an update on the first period of performance against the objectives of the Corporate Plan 2019-23. Those present were advised that Quarter 3 and Period 1 of the Performance Monitoring would be aligned in the new municipal year.

The Cabinet were pleased to note that the majority of projects were on track and particular thanks were given to the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Social Justice and Wealth Building, Councillor Aniela Bylinski-Gelder and officers for the improvements made to call waiting times in Gateway.

In response to a query from Councillor Alan Ogilvie on the status of the anti-idling campaign, the Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Susan Jones reported that the project had fallen behind due to resource issues, however since the appointment of a new member of staff this project was being delivered as a priority. Work would include appealing to motorists in hotspot areas around the borough and a meeting was scheduled with Runshaw College to address the issue at the site.

Members discussed how improvements to traffic light sequencing could also help to improve air quality in the borough. Lancashire County Council had recently quoted £50,000 to fix the sequencing issue at one site in the borough. The Council had responded to LCC in opposition this and a meeting had been scheduled with officers.

Decision made (Unanimously):

That Cabinet notes that the performance summary outlined in the report starts a new reporting period, referred to as period 1. This reflects the deliverables and priorities of the Corporate Plan approved by Council in September 2019.

Reason(s) for the decision:

The Council's performance framework sets out the process for reporting progress against the objectives of the Corporate Plan. The performance framework has been recently updated and the new reporting periods will be reflected in the framework. All reports will continue to be considered by the Council's Leadership Programme Board, Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel and Cabinet.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not applicable

95 Redundancy Policy

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster presented a report of the Interim Chief Executive which informed members of the revised Redundancy Policy for consideration.

Redundancy payment is based upon a specific number of weeks' pay, in accordance with the age of an employee and length of service. It is calculated in line with the statutory calculation. The council's redundancy policy was last reviewed in 2014, at this time the number of weeks payable increased by a multiple of 2.2. This was incrementally removed over two years and the policy now only pays redundancy compensation for both Compulsory and Voluntary redundancy on the statutory number of weeks entitlement.

It was now being proposed to reintroduce the multiplier of 2.2 for compulsory redundancies and give the Head of Paid Service delegated authority, for those seeking voluntary redundancy, to enhance the compensation payment up to equivalent of 2.2.

In response to a question from Councillor Colin Clark regarding financial support and control of financial contributions, it was confirmed that financial impacts would be considered if/when it got to the point of redundancy. The Leader of the Council confirmed that statutory officers were in place to support this and the cabinet were confident with the proposals.

Decision made (Unanimously):

That Cabinet approves the inclusion of the revised redundancy policy in the Pay Policy to be approved by Council.

Reason(s) for the decision:

The changes to the redundancy policy will support the wellbeing of employees faced with a redundancy situation.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

No alternatives have been considered.

96 Pay Policy 2020/21

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster presented the report of the Interim Chief Executive which informed the Cabinet of the Annual Pay Policy Statement so that it can be agreed and published to allow the Council to comply with legislative requirements.

The Pay Policy sets out the current approach to the remuneration of all posts within the Council and specifies certain mandatory requirements that must be detailed within the policy.

The Cabinet commended the policy under the council's commitment as a Real Living Wage employer, in particular, the changes for apprentices. The changes will ensure that with effect from 1 April 2020, an apprentice will receive the National Minimum Wage for the upper age band of 25 and over, regardless of the age of the apprentice (currently £8.72 per hour). Subject to satisfactory performance in the workplace and

satisfactory progress on qualification, the apprentice will move onto the Living Wage hourly rate for the second year of the apprenticeship.

Councillor Aniela Bylinski-Gelder, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Social Justice and Wealth Building asked for confirmation on whether leisure centre staff and refuse collectors/loaders were included within this policy. The Leader of the Council confirmed that Leisure Centre and FCC Environment staff would be considered in Phase 2.

Decision made (Unanimously):

That Cabinet approves the Pay Policy Statement 2020/21 to be approved by Council.

Reason(s) for the decision:

The Localism Act 2011 requires all local authorities to set out their position on a range of issues relating to the remuneration of its employees. The Policy must be approved by the Council in open forum, by the end of March each year and then be published on its website.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

N/A - The Pay Policy must be agreed and published annually.

97 Budget Monitoring 2019/20 – Quarter 3

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Assets, Councillor Matthew Tomlinson, presented a report of the Interim Section 151 Officer which provided members with an update on the Council's overall financial position as at the end of December 2019, which is quarter 3 of the financial year 2019-20. The report also provided a forecast of the projected outturn to 31 March 2020 compared to the current approved budget.

The recommendation to create a Credit Union Reserve to ensure the most vulnerable residents have access to credit was highlighted. A proposed cost of £150,000 would be required to set up the Reserve for three years.

In response to Councillor Damian Bretherton's queries about the set-up costs and income generated after the initial three years, the Cabinet Member clarified that the council would be working with an existing Credit Union to establish a base at South Ribble. This was a not for profit scheme to meet a recognised need within the borough and would be funded through forecast budget underspend before becoming self-financing after the initial three years.

Decision made (Unanimously):

1. That Cabinet notes, reviews and comments on the contents of this report.
2. That Cabinet approves the creation of a Credit Union Reserve and to earmark £150,000 from the forecast budget underspends to pay into this reserve.

Reason(s) for the decision:

Robust financial monitoring, including scrutiny and challenging information, is a crucial aspect of running a successful and effective organisation.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not applicable

98 2020/21 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 to 2023/24

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Assets, Councillor Matthew Tomlinson presented the proposed 2020/21 Revenue Budget for Council and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for the next four years and sought approval and recommendation to Council on various elements.

The financial plan for the Council aligned with the Corporate Plan which sets out the Council's ambitions and priorities for the residents and businesses in the borough.

Councillor Damian Bretherton raised concerns about the increasing ratio (5% in 2020/21 to 12.4% in 2023/24) which reflects the additional level of borrowing required to finance the Council's planned Capital Programme. The Interim Section 151 Officer advised that the increase represented the funding costs but that no account was taken in the ratios of any income generated from that expenditure. It was anticipated that revenue generated would cover the increase in costs. Assumptions, including interest rate fluctuation, had been considered in the report.

Decision made (Unanimously):

1. That Cabinet recommends to Council the revenue budget for 2020/21 as set out in Appendix A.
2. That Cabinet recommends to Council the 4-year Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2020/21 to 2023/24 as set out in Appendix A.
3. That Cabinet recommends to Council a Council Tax increase of 1.99%.
4. That Cabinet recommends to Council the Capital Strategy and its proposed funding as set out in Appendix C.
5. That Council be recommended to approve the Treasury Strategy, Prudential Indicators and the Annual Investment Strategy as attached at Appendix D.
6. That Cabinet note that consultation on the proposed budget commenced after publication of the budget report on 4 February and the results will be analysed and taken into consideration before the budget is taken to Council for approval on 26 February 2020.

Reason(s) for the decision:

It is the role of the Cabinet to provide initial consideration to the budget and associated matters and for them to make appropriate recommendations to Full Council which is the decision-making body.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

1. In preparing the revised forecasts, the potential for a reduction in core funding as a result of the government's planned Fair Funding formula review and possible Business Rates Reset has been considered. However, as it is not possible to assess the implications at this stage with any certainty, the business rates retention forecasts in the MTFS for 2021/22 onwards have been prepared based on the funding regime in the 2020/21 Finance Settlement and the council continuing to benefit from being in the Lancashire business rates pool.
2. When the funding changes are announced, the financial implications and the impact on the council's MTFS forecasts will be assessed and reported. It is possible that any changes introduced may include transitional arrangements to lessen the impact of any reduction in funding and allow local authorities to adjust future spending. The Business Rates Retention reserve has also been maintained to mitigate the impact of any significant movements in forecasts.

99 Worden Hall project Update

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Assets, Councillor Matthew Tomlinson presented the report which updated Cabinet on the capital and revenue costings associated with bringing Worden Hall back into use and provided plans of what the refurbished Hall would look like. These plans would form the basis of an application for planning permission to take the refurbishment project forward.

In response to Councillor Alan Ogilvie's concerns regarding the robustness of the business case, including the future maintenance of the Hall, the Cabinet Member reassured those present that a long-term business plan had been produced. This had been supported in the public consultation and future maintenance had been considered through the asset maintenance plan. A sensitivity analysis had been undertaken and it was agreed this could be circulated with Members.

The Cabinet and Members present extended their thanks to officers for their hard work on this project.

Decision made (Unanimously):

1. That subject to the approval of the capital programme as part of the budget approval process that Cabinet approves the capital and revenue costs contained within Appendix 1 to bring Worden Hall back into use with the aim to generate an annual operational surplus.
2. That Cabinet approves the submission of a planning application for Worden Hall based upon the plans as outlined within Appendix 1.

Reason(s) for the decision:

1. Following an extensive public consultation exercise which resulted in over 500 responses to the 3 investment options for Worden Hall, a report was provided to Cabinet on 16th October 2019 which summarised the feedback received and recommended that further work was required to develop a finalised option for consideration by Cabinet in January 2020.
2. At the Cabinet meeting on 16th October it was recommended that a multi-disciplinary officer working group be established to work through the development of an enhanced Option 1 Community use to incorporate small weddings and events.
3. The officer group has met on 3 occasions and have worked with consultants Purcell and Amion (report authors for the Options Appraisal on which the public consultation was based) to develop the proposals contained within this report.
4. The feedback from the public consultation exercise clearly stated that plans for Worden Hall needed to be economically viable and that the Hall must be able to run without recourse to subsidy from the council. This has been fully taken onboard and built into the business plan for the Hall.
5. At the Cabinet Meeting on 22 January 2020 Cabinet recommended that a further report be brought back to the next meeting in February 2020 providing detailed costings for the capital works to bring Worden Hall back into use.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

1. The Council could choose not to develop Worden Hall. This is not recommended as the feedback from the public consultation exercise strongly supported the Council investing in the Hall and bringing it back into use.

100 Exclusion of Press and Public**Decision made (Unanimously):**

That Cabinet agree that the meeting remain in public session. If any members had any comments on the confidential item (Appendix for Worden Hall Project Update), these could be discussed at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 13 February 2020.

Chair

Date