

**MINUTES OF CABINET**

**MEETING DATE** Wednesday, 23 January 2019

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillors Margaret Smith (Chair), Caroline Moon (Vice-Chair), Colin Clark, Cliff Hughes, Phil Smith, Susan Snape and Karen Walton

**OFFICERS:** Heather McManus (Chief Executive), Darren Cranshaw (Assistant Director of Scrutiny & Democratic Services) and Dave Whelan (Legal Services Manager/Interim Monitoring Officer)

**OTHER MEMBERS AND OFFICERS:** Paul Hussey (Temporary Director of Customer and Digital), Jennifer Mullin (Director of Neighbourhoods and Development), Tim Povall (Deputy Chief Executive (Resources and Transformation) and Section 151 Officer), Gregg Stott (Deputy Chief Executive (Regeneration and Growth)), Councillor William Evans, Councillor Derek Forrest, Councillor Paul Foster (Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Labour Group), Councillor Jim Marsh, Councillor Peter Mullineaux, Councillor Barbara Nathan (Member Champion (Safeguarding)), Councillor Michael Nathan, Councillor Michael Titherington (Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Deputy Leader of the Labour Group), Councillor Matthew Tomlinson, Councillor Paul Wharton, Councillor Barrie Yates and Councillor Graham Walton

**PUBLIC:** 0

**52 Minutes Silence**

A minutes silence was observed for former Councillor and Mayor, Joan Lawson, who had passed away on 22 January 2019.

**53 Apologies for Absence**

There were none.

**54 Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 21 November 2018 of Cabinet**

**Decision made (Unanimously):**

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 21 November 2018 be approved as a correct record.

**55 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**56 Forward Plan****Decisions made (Unanimously):**

That the forward plan be noted.

**57 Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan and Response to External Auditors Statutory Recommendation Update**

The Chief Executive presented a report that provided Cabinet with an overarching progress report on the actions taken and outcomes in relation to the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan and an update on the external auditors' statutory recommendation.

The Chief Executive referred to updates within the report concerning the deletion of paragraph 1.2 and that the spelling of 'significant' in recommendation 2.2.

The Leader indicated that she would be putting forward an additional recommendation relating to inviting the Local Government Association to carry out a focussed peer review in October 2019.

There was a comment from the audience that the report didn't reflect the exact discussion at the Improvement Reference Group (IRG) particularly around the words 'significant improvement'.

The Cabinet welcomed the progress that had been made with the Action Plan and External Auditor's statutory recommendation. Cabinet wanted to acknowledge the hard work of officers in developing the significant actions and felt that significant progress had been made.

**Decision made (Unanimously):**

1. That the report, appendices and their content be noted.
2. Cabinet notes that the Council is now in a position where significant actions have been taken and significant improvement has been made, and is continuing to be made, in the ongoing running of the Council.
3. That following the recommendation of the Improvement Reference Group, which has completed its work, a focused peer review be carried out in October 2019.

**Reason(s) for decision:**

To provide Members with an update on the work undertaken as a council to incorporate the recommendations from the Corporate Peer Challenge and the External Audit recommendations.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**58 Timetable of Meetings 2019/20**

The Assistant Director of Scrutiny & Democratic Services presented a report to determine the dates of the meetings of the Council, Cabinet and various committees for the 2019/2020 municipal year.

**Decision made (Unanimously):**

That the timetable of meetings be approved.

**Reason(s) for the decision:**

To enable the Council to conduct its business effectively it is important to have a carefully planned timetable of meetings in place.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**59 Award of Contract for Green Links Project**

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Development presented a report to request delegated authority to accept the most economically advantageous tender for the proposed installation of the Browndge to Hennel Lane Green Links multi use path as part of the Council's health and wellbeing agenda.

Cabinet welcomed the proactive approach to improving the health and wellbeing of our residents through the Green Links programme. Cabinet Members referred to the report including future sustainability and whole life costs, the popularity of walking and enjoying open spaces and working with partners such as the Bridleways Association.

**Decision made (Unanimously):**

Delegated authority be granted to the Director of Neighbourhoods and Development in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executives and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Leisure to accept the most economically advantageous tender for the proposed installation of the Browndge to Hennel Lane Green Links multi use path.

**Reason(s) for the Decision:**

To mitigate any risk of unforeseen circumstances delaying authority to award the contract and safeguards the scheme's completion within the 2018/2019 capital programme.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Several schemes have been considered as part of the central parks programme. To provide a grade separated crossing of the A6 linking Bamber Bridge in the east, to the spine of Central Parks in the west. All of these options were significantly more expensive.

**60 Council Tax Support Scheme**

The Deputy Chief Executive (Resources and Transformation)/Section 151 Officer presented a report reviewing the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2019/2020 and clarifying the legal position. It also identified the number of policy changes following the Chancellors Autumn Statement.

Questions raised from outside Cabinet were:

- How quickly the Council Tax Support Scheme can be changed?
  - The Deputy Chief Executive advised this would be subject to the consultation process and agreement by a future Cabinet and Council.
- Increased use of bailiffs and how many of these cases related to the Council Tax Support Scheme?
  - The Deputy Chief Executive (Resources and Transformation)/Section 151 Officer undertook to provide the numbers to the Member outside the meeting.
  - He also advised that bailiff numbers are not separated to identify those on the support scheme. Detailed information would be provided in future Council Tax Support Scheme updates.
- Have we implemented the six recommendations of the Money Advice Trust?
  - Three had been implemented and the remainder would be highlighted in future reports.

**Decision made (Unanimously):**

1. That Cabinet notes the legal position regarding the decision taken at Budget Council on 28 February 2018.
2. That Cabinet proposes to Council that the Council Tax Support Scheme remains unchanged for 2019/2020.
3. That Cabinet proposes to Council that it agrees the level of the deduction to be applied to Working Age recipients of Council Tax Support from 1 April 2019 and that this level be finalised and agreed in accordance with South Ribble's scheme as part of the Council's budget and council tax setting at the Council meeting on 27 February 2019. The figure will continue within the range (between £3.00 and £5.00 per week) which was consulted upon during the introduction and implementation of the Council's scheme.
4. Delegated authority be granted to the Director of Customer and Digital in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance to make all necessary updates to this Council's Council Tax Support Scheme to comply with any prescribed requirements that may be issued by central government. This may be by the making of specific regulations, or by amendment to the Local Government Finance Acts of 1992, 2012 and 2017 and Government funding formulae.
5. Delegated authority be granted to the Director of Customer and Digital in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance to make all necessary amendments to the Council's scheme to uprate the allowances and premiums in accordance with the revised Housing Benefit Circular.
6. To publish the updated scheme in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 2012 and any regulation amendments.

**Reason(s) for the decision:**

To approve the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme for the financial year 2019/20 which serves to assist citizens on a low income with the cost of council tax.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

The original consultation exercise considered a number of alternatives to reducing the amounts that claimants received in their council tax support. These included reducing council services and increasing levels of council tax.

**61 Exclusion of Press and Public****Decision made: Unanimously:**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business as it involved the discussion of information defined as exempt from publication under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, 'Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) 'and in which the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing it.

**62 Replacement Mini-Sweeper**

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Development presented a report seeking approval to increase the capital expenditure allocated for the replacement mini sweeper in the 2018/2019 capital budget to enable the purchase of a larger 10 tonne midi sweeper. The increase in immediate expenditure would be met from underspends in the overall vehicle replacement budget for other purchases and would remain within the existing allocation for 2018/2019. The additional costs would be recovered through future operational efficiency savings in future years.

Members felt that this purchase would be of great benefit to keeping the Borough cleaner, be more efficient and improve resident satisfaction further. It was also highlighted that the selection of the vehicle followed an extensive evaluation process by those employees who use the vehicles, which was commended.

**Decision made (Unanimously):**

1. That Cabinet agree the increase in allocated funds to acquire a new sweeper from within the overall approved capital programme. This would allow for purchase, tax and delivery costs.
2. Subject to the tender received being within budget allowance that the Director of Neighbourhoods and Development in consultation with the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive (Resources and Transformation) be given delegated authority to award the contract.

**Reason(s) for the decision:**

To enable the delivery of an enhanced service to the residents of the Borough through the addition of additional sweeping frequencies and additional flexibility in the delivery of the service.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

Consideration was given to the like for like replacement of the existing mini-sweeper, however whilst this would allow service standards to be maintained it would not enable further development and enhancement of the service going forward. Not to replace the vehicle would result in increased down time and cost of repairs.

Chair

Date