

MINUTES OF CABINET

MEETING DATE **Wednesday, 13 February 2019**

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

OFFICERS: Heather McManus (Chief Executive), Tim Povall (Deputy Chief Executive of Resources and Transformation (Section 151 Officer)), Gregg Stott (Deputy Chief Executive of Regeneration and Growth), Paul Hussey (Director of Customer and Digital), Dave Whelan (Legal Services Manager/Interim Monitoring Officer), Darren Cranshaw (Assistant Director of Scrutiny & Democratic Services), Andrew Richardson (Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods) and Dianne Scambler (Governance and Member Services Team Leader)

OTHER MEMBERS AND OFFICERS: Councillor Jane Bell, Councillor Carol Chisholm (Deputy Mayor), Councillor Derek Forrest, Councillor Paul Foster (Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Labour Group), Councillor Mary Green, Councillor Michael Green, Councillor Jon Hesketh, Councillor Susan Jones JP, Councillor Keith Martin, Councillor Jacqueline Mort (Member Champion (Member Development)), Councillor Peter Mullineaux, Councillor Alan Ogilvie (Member Champion (Armed Forces)), Councillor Michael Titherington (Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Deputy Leader of the Labour Group) and Councillor Matthew Tomlinson

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63 Apologies for Absence

An apology was received from Councillor Caroline Moon.

64 Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 23 January 2019 of Cabinet

Decision made (Unanimously):

That the minutes held on 23 January 2019 be approved as a correct record.

65 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of any interests.

66 Cabinet Forward Plan

Decision made (Unanimously):

That with the inclusion of the Neighbourhood Plans to be included for determination by Cabinet on 20 March 2019, the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.

67 Corporate Plan 2019-2024 and Risk Registers

The Chief Executive presented a report that provided Cabinet with a copy of the updated Council Corporate Plan for 2019/20, the Corporate Plan Risk Register and Corporate Risk Register for 2019/20.

Cabinet noted the hard work by officers in producing a very comprehensive document that followed on from the success of last year.

Decision made (Unanimously)

That:

1. Cabinet recommends full Council to approve the proposed Corporate Plan for 2019/24 on 27 February 2019.
2. Cabinet acknowledge the Corporate Plan Risk Register and Council Corporate Risk Register for 2019-2020, in addition to the Equality Impact Assessment.

Reason(s) for the decision:

1. The updated 2019-2024 Corporate Plan has responded to the findings of the community strategy consultation carried out by the South Ribble Partnership.
2. This plan brings forward specific programmes and projects that will be delivered by South Ribble Borough Council throughout 2019/20.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

There are no other options to be considered as a five year Corporate Plan, including corporate priorities and programmes were agreed at Council on 28 February 2018. It is good practice for the annual delivery plan to be regularly monitored and refreshed to ensure that the plan continues to meet the need of the community.

68 Nomination of Mayor-elect and Deputy Mayor-elect 2019-20

The Cabinet received a report of the Assistant Director of Scrutiny and Democratic Services that sought nominations for the Mayor Elect and Deputy Mayor Elect for 2019/20.

The Leader of the Opposition commented that over the past 14 years, there had been 13 Conservative Mayors and stated that should the Labour Group gain administration of the Council in the May Elections they would look to overturn the decision.

It was proposed by the Leader of the Council, seconded by the Cabinet Member (Public Health and Safety, Wellbeing and Environmental) and

Decision made (Unanimously)

That:

1. Cabinet recommends full Council to elect Councillor Carol Chisholm as the Mayor Elect for 2019/20.
2. Cabinet recommends full Council to elect Councillor Peter Mullineaux as the Deputy Mayor Elect for 2019/20.

Reason(s) for the decision:

Cabinet is requested to nominate the Mayor Elect and Deputy Mayor Elect for 2019/20 for appointment at the Annual Council Meeting and to enable arrangements for the Mayoral Installation in May 2019 to be commenced.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not applicable. The Constitution indicates that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor should be appointed at the Annual Council Meeting held each year.

69 Council Tax Support Scheme - Modelling outcome and Hardship Scheme Review

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Customer and Digital that informed them on the steps being undertaken by the Council on the remodelling of the Council Tax Support Scheme. The report also provided information on the work being undertaken to actively promote the Exceptional Hardship Fund.

The Deputy Chief Executive of Resources and Transformation explained that it was important for the Council to consult with their major preceptors before undertaking statutory consultation with its residents and in response to a Member question outside the Cabinet, confirmed that the authority had made a concerted effort to reduce its use of bailiffs for debt collection purposes.

The Cabinet Member (Finance) also talked about the importance of proactively promoting the local hardship scheme in the community by advertising this support at key sites across the Borough.

Decision made (Unanimously)

That:

1. Cabinet notes the recent Government budget announcements and the remodelling work carried out to inform the formal consultation required to adopt a revised Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21.
2. Cabinet notes the proposed work to proactively promote the hardship funds.

Reason(s) for the decision:

1. The adoption of a revised Council Tax Support Scheme has been agreed as a priority in the Corporate Plan 2018/23 and Medium Term Financial Strategy.
2. To ensure that any future, new or revised scheme is intended to address the potential administrative burden of the rollout of Universal Credit and satisfy the statutory requirement within the localisation of Council Tax Support that consultation must take place with major preceptors and residents.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

70 2019/20 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 to 2022/23

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive Resources and Transformation (Section 151 Officer) that set out the proposed 2019/20 Revenue Budget for the Council and Medium Term Financial Strategy for the next four years and sought approval and recommendation to Council on various elements.

This financial plan for the Council is aligned to the Corporate Plan and provides the financial detail on how the Council will deliver its ambitions and services for its residents.

A Member outside of Cabinet asked for clarification on the continuation of New Homes Bonus payments to County Council as part of the City Deal following the Fair Funding changes proposed in 2020/21. The Deputy Chief Executive, Resources and Transformation explained that any changes would need to be worked through to make sure that any new arrangement benefited the Council.

In response to a member of the public, the Deputy Chief Executive for Resources and Transformation also provided assurance that the Council would meet the £150k efficiency saving that had been identified over the next four years, explaining that this was down to natural staff turnover.

Decision made (Unanimously)

That:

1. Cabinet recommends full Council to approve the 2019/20 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2019/20 to 2022/23 on 27 February 2019.
2. Cabinet approved the Reserve estimate for 2018/19.
3. Cabinet approved the Revenue Budget for 2019/20 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2019/20 through to 2022/23.
4. Cabinet approved the Corporate Asset Management Plan.
5. Cabinet approved the Capital and Investment Strategy.
6. Cabinet approved the Capital Programme 2019/20 to 2022/23.
7. Cabinet approved the Treasury Management Policy Statement.
8. Cabinet recommends full Council to set a Council Tax increase of 1.99% on 27 February 2019.

Reason(s) for the decision:

Cabinet recommends the budget for approval to full Council for 2019/20 as per Local Government Finance Act 1992 to set a Council Tax for 2019/20 by 11 March 2019. The Corporate Policy Framework is updated to reflect the revised reports above and to include the Corporate and Investment Framework and Capital Programme in our Constitution.

The report also provides the overall strategy for the Council for the next four years that will enable delivery of the Corporate Plan ambitions. It sets out a clear affordable programme of investment, organisational development and growth. All of these factors are summarised in the four year MTFS to be recommended to Council. The MTFS allows for spending to be made to deliver changes and improvements and for funding to be generated to pay for future capital spending and liabilities.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

71 Pay Line Implementation 2019

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive of Resources and Transformation (Section 151 Officer) that sought approval to apply the National Pay Award for 2019 and to implement the new pay line ahead of applying annual incremental rises.

The implementation to apply the new pay line ahead of applying the annual incremental rises but be of most benefit to the lower paid staff.

Decision made (Unanimously)

That:

1. Cabinet grants approval to apply the pay line agreed by the National Joint Council.
2. Cabinet grants approval to implement the new pay line ahead of applying annual incremental rises.

Reason(s) for the decision:

The pay line is a National Joint Council (NJC) collective agreement and is incorporated within the employees' contract of employment and therefore employees have a contractual right for it to be implemented and assimilated into the relevant spinal column point on the new pay line.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Applying incremental rises on the current pay scales and then implement the new pay line. This was rejected as less favourable to lower paid employees.

72 Digital Strategy 2019-2022

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Customer and Digital that sought approval to adopt a three year Digital Strategy to establish a clear direction for how the Council will transform using Digital and technology over the coming years. The Strategy will support and enable the Council to deliver on the objectives of its Corporate Plan 2019/20 to 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Director of Customer and Digital accepted that its implementation was quite challenging given the timescales but that it was integral to the delivery of the Council's transformational programme over the next few years.

In response to a member of the public querying as to why the Council had not already implemented a Digital Strategy it was explained that ICT is always changing and it is important for the Council to keep abreast of any changes. It was also recognised that improved use of technology would help the Council to deliver its growth agenda by being able to utilise staff in different ways.

Decision made (Unanimously)

That:

1. Cabinet supports the adoption of the three year Digital Strategy.
2. Cabinet notes the consultation undertaken to date to help inform the Strategy.
3. Cabinet notes the arrangements for the effective implementation of the Strategy through the Digital to improve programme.
4. Cabinet notes the allocation of resources within the Capital Programme to fund the Digital Strategy on the basis of invest to save principles.

Reason(s) for the decision:

The Digital Strategy directly supports projects aligned with the Corporate Plan priorities, as well as existing projects identified within the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Transformation agenda.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

1. If the status quo was to be maintained, it is likely that the Council would miss the benefit of added value to its services together with wider promotion Digital inclusion, participation, and creating active citizens.
2. The lack of an effective Digital Strategy presents risks to the Council's delivery of the Corporate Plan and Transformation.

73 Refurbishment of Worden Park Play Area

The Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods and Development that sought approval to allocate Section 106 monies, as part of the Green Links Project approved at budget 2018/19, to partially refurbish Worden Play Area with inclusive equipment allowing use by individuals of all abilities.

Both Cabinet Members and other Members of the Council welcomed the improvements that were planned. Worden Park is an extremely popular and well used facility by people of all abilities, and who live inside and outside the borough.

Assurance was provided that there would be additional Section 106 monies for spend on other play areas and open spaces across the Borough.

Decision made (Unanimously)

That:

1. Cabinet grants approval of the £177,000 capital spend to permit partial refurbishment of the play area at Worden Park.
2. Cabinet grants approval to undertake a procurement exercise to procure and install the play equipment for the partial refurbishment of the play area at Worden Park.
3. Cabinet grants delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods and Development in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive of Resources and Transformation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Streetscene to award the contracts.

Reason(s) for the decision:

Health and Wellbeing is a major priority within the Council's Corporate Plan. The Council wants to promote health and wellbeing objectives by developing high quality community open spaces, connected across the borough which supports residents in adopting healthier and more active lifestyles. The investment within our parks and green links will connect a network of community open spaces developed in partnership with local neighbourhoods across the borough offering opportunities for sustainable travel, leisure activities, sustainable living and a sense of connecting people to places.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

The option to maintain current equipment levels was considered, however this would mean that the equipment would continue to deteriorate and the opportunity to enhance and improve the facilities and increase its usability by individuals of all abilities would be missed.

Chair

Date