

Executive Cabinet

1. Any Cabinet recommendations on the reports that require Council decisions appear as separate items on the agenda.

GENERAL REPORT OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2019

Statement of Community Involvement 2019

2. Gary Hall, Chief Executive, presented the report of the Director (Business, Development and Growth) which informs Members of the content of the draft Statement of Community Involvement and seeks approval for a four-week consultation period.
3. In response to a Member's query regarding a second call for sites, the Chief Executive confirmed that it is not unusual to have an iterative process and this did not mean there was a shortage of sites. We approved the recommendations within the report.

Draft budget 2019/20 and summary position over the medium term

4. Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member (Resources) presented the report of the Chief Finance Officer which sets out the budget position for 2019/20, including the forecast for the following 2 years to 2021/22, and also presents the relevant proposals in respect of the use of forecast resources identified in 2019/20 and budget consultation.
5. Councillor Wilson highlighted the cumulative gross budget deficit of £1.716m in 2019/20, based upon the reductions in funding and key budget assumptions described in the report, and outlined how this was to be addressed including:
 - An increase of Council Tax by 2.99% in 2019/20 and forecast to increase by 2.00% in 2020/21 & 2.00% in 2021/22;
 - Continued investment of approximately £1m to deliver corporate strategy priorities;
 - Progress against the current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) budget efficiency objectives including staffing reviews, contract savings and base budget reviews;
 - Policy decisions taken to reduce the budget deficit and the movement to specific reserves to help the Council manage change and invest in future income generation; and
 - Strategies to reduce the budget deficit in the medium term.
6. Members noted general balances were remaining at £4m, and that this stable position enabled further investment through the Capital Programme including improvements to Council offices, Astley Hall and Park (including the creation of Adventure Golf), and Westway Playing Fields. It was also noted that, as part of the budget consultation, views on the Council's contribution to Lancashire Constabulary for Police Community Support Officers (PSCO's) would be invited.

7. In response to Members' questions it was noted that the Executive Director (Resources) was attending the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting next week to discuss and answer questions on the draft budget. With regard to the commercialisation of Council-owned assets mentioned in the report, it was advised that this relates to the creation of flexible office space in vacant unit in the upstairs of Market Walk. In response to a further question about the Council establishing a housing company, the Chief Executive informed Members that technical details regarding VAT and tax were being considered and that informal consultation with staff was about to begin.
8. We approved the recommendations within the report.

Review of Fees and Charges

9. Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member (Resources) presented the report of the Chief Finance Officer which proposes amendments to some of the discretionary fees and charges the Council currently makes in order to bring the income in-line with the cost of delivering these services and, in doing so, to revise the income budgets for 2019/20 onwards. Some charges had not been reviewed for over 10 years and so were now increasingly significantly, but it was noted that these charges were still in-line with other local providers. We approved the recommendations within the report.

Council Tax Local Discounts & Exemptions Policy

10. Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member (Resources) presented the report of the Director (Customer and Digital) which informs Members of consultation responses on proposed changes to the Council Tax Long Term Empty Premium. These changes will maximise the incentive for owners of long term empty homes to bring their properties back into use and support work undertaken by the Council to reduce the number of long term empty properties and make better use of existing housing in the borough.
11. It was noted that discretion would remain to consider waiving or adjusting the Long Term Empty Premium for residents with special circumstances. We approved the recommendations within the report.

Adoption of Council's Revised Cemetery Policy

12. Councillor Adrian Lowe, Executive Member (Customer, Advice and Streetscene Services) presented the report of the Director (Customer and Digital) which seeks approval for the adoption of the Council's revised Cemetery Policy.
13. Members noted that memorials and headstones are only permitted on private graves and only with the Council's prior permission, and that the policy retains the right for the removal of any material which is deemed to be obstructive or excessive. We approved the recommendations within the report.

14. Members also expressed their thanks to Jo Oliver, Waste and Streetscene Manager, for her excellent and outstanding work and support she has provided over the years.

Approval to Procure Street Cleansing Vehicles

15. Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member (Resources) presented the confidential report of the Director (Customer and Digital) which seeks approval for the procurement of four street sweeping vehicles at the most economically advantageous option for the Council. We approved the recommendations within the report.

The Willows Improvement Proposals

16. Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform) presented the confidential report of the Director (Business Development and Growth) which provides an update on The Willows improvement project, and seeks approval for the project's budget, to tender the design for the open space, and for the contract award. We approved the recommendations within the report.

Recommendation

17. To note the report.

COUNCILLOR ALISTAIR BRADLEY
EXECUTIVE LEADER

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