



**MINUTES OF**

**EXECUTIVE CABINET**

**MEETING DATE**

**Thursday, 17 January 2019**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councillor Alistair Bradley (Chair), Councillor Peter Wilson (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Beverley Murray, Jane Fitzsimons, Paul Walmsley and Adrian Lowe

**OFFICERS:**

Gary Hall (Chief Executive), Chris Moister (Head of Legal, Democratic & HR Services), Rebecca Huddleston (Director (Policy and Governance)), Asim Khan (Director (Customer and Digital)), Andrew Daniels (Communications and Events Manager), Jo Oliver (Waste and Streetscene Manager), Philippa Braithwaite (Democratic and Member Services Officer) and Tom Halstead (Community Engagement Officer)

**OTHER MEMBERS:**

Councillors Aaron Beaver, Eric Bell, Gordon France, Danny Gee, Tom Gray, Yvonne Hargreaves, Steve Holgate, Marion Lowe, June Molyneaux, Greg Morgan, Alistair Morwood and John Walker

**19.EC.80 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 13 December 2018 of Executive Cabinet**

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member (Resources) opened the meeting.

**Decision: That the minutes of the Executive Cabinet meeting held on 13 December 2018 be confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Executive Leader.**

**19.EC.81 Declarations of Any Interests**

There were no declarations of any interests.

**19.EC.82 Public Questions**

There were no public questions received.

**19.EC.83 Statement of Community Involvement 2019**

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.

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.

**Decision:**

**To approve the draft Statement of Community Involvement for a 4-week period of consultation.**

**Reasons for Recommendation(s):**

To ensure that the Council fulfils its commitment set out in the Local Development Scheme to produce such documents in a timely fashion.

**Alternative options considered and rejected:**

None as subject to statutory regulations as how prepared.

**19.EC.84      Draft budget 2019/20 and summary position over the medium term**

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.

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.

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.

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.

**Decision:**

Approval granted to start the budget consultation process on the proposals contained within the report and noted in particular:

- Council tax to be increased by 2.99% in 2019/20 and that it is forecast to increase by 2.00% in 2020/21 & 2.00% in 2021/22;
- The resourcing of corporate priorities for 2019/20 including additional capital investment;
- The forecast balanced budget for 2019/20;
- The forecast budget position in 2020/21 and 2021/22;
- The consultation regarding the use of £110k budget currently allocated to the provision of PCSOs within the borough.

**Reasons for Recommendation(s):**

To progress the Council's 2019/20 budget setting process to achieve an approved and balanced budget.

**Alternative options considered and rejected:**

None, setting the budget is a statutory responsibility.

**19.EC.85      Review of Fees and Charges**

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.

**Decision:**

**That the proposed changes to the fees and charges be noted and it be further noted that the proposals will form part of the budget papers to be presented to Council.**

**Reasons for Recommendation(s):**

The Council should endeavour, when it is legal and feasible to do so, to charge users to meet the full cost of providing services.

**Alternative options considered and rejected:**

Without a regular review of fees and charges, new opportunities to introduce new services and charges may be missed.

**19.EC.86      Council Tax Local Discounts & Exemptions Policy**

Councillor Alistair Bradley arrived at 6.48pm.

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.

It was noted that discretion would remain to consider waiving or adjusting the Long Term Empty Premium for residents with special circumstances.

**Decision:**

**Approval given to the proposed policy changes to increase the Council Tax Long Term Empty Premium from 1 April 2019 as shown below:**

Effective Date	Empty Period	Existing Premium	Proposed Premium
1 April 2019	2 years+	50%	100%
1 April 2020	2-5 years	50%	100%
	5 years+	50%	200%
1 April 2021	2-5 years	50%	100%
	5-10 years	50%	200%
	10 years+	50%	300%

**Approval given to the following amendments to the Council Tax Local Discounts and Exemptions Policy:**

- a) to reflect changes to the Long Term Empty Premium from 1 April 2019;
- b) to include discretion under delegated powers for the Executive Member for Resources to consider not charging the Long Term Empty Premium in special circumstances.

**Reasons for Recommendation(s):**

Charging greater Council Tax premiums on homes that have been empty and unfurnished for more than 2 years will support the Council's Empty Residential Property Policy and encourage owners to bring these properties back into use. The proposed policy changes demonstrate commitment to meeting the needs of residents and the local area by tackling the borough's shortage of housing and the demand for affordable homes.

**Alternative options considered and rejected:**

To leave Council Tax premiums unchanged on homes which have been empty and unfurnished for more than 2 years; this option has been rejected as the Council would not be using all available measures to incentivise long term empty property owners to bring their properties back into use.

**19.EC.87 Adoption of Council's Revised Cemetery Policy**

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. 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.

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.

**Decision:**

- 1. The policy be approved.**
- 2. The Executive Member for Customer, Advice and Streetscene Services be granted delegated authority to approve the standard agreed with the Muslim Trust for the Muslim section of Chorley Cemetery and for this to be incorporated into the policy.**

**Reasons for Recommendation(s):**

To ensure the Council has a robust policy in place for the management of the cemeteries it is responsible for.

**Alternative options considered and rejected:**

To not adopt the revised policy could potentially leave the Council open to challenge.

**19.EC.88 Exclusion of the Public and Press**

**Decision: To exclude the press and public for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.**

**19.EC.89 Approval to Procure Street Cleansing Vehicles**

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.

**Decision:**

- 1. To approve the procurement of four sweepers. Tenders will be evaluated to establish the most economically advantageous tender based on 80% cost, 20% quality.**
- 2. That the award of the contract be delegated to the Executive Member for Resources for approval based on the evaluation criteria.**

**Reasons for Recommendation(s):**

Under the Council's contract procedure rules approval by the Executive Cabinet of contract, award procedures and evaluation criteria for tenders greater than £100,000 in value is required.

**Alternative options considered and rejected:**

To continue to use the existing sweepers would incur excessive costs for maintenance and repair and prolong issues with reliability. To not agree the contract award procedure would fail to comply with the Council's Procurement rules.

**19.EC.90 The Willows Improvement Proposals**

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.

**Decision:**

1. To note the project update.
2. To approve the budget for the project from existing s106 receipts and note that the budget is to be supplemented from the capital receipt generated by the garden extensions at The Cedars.
3. To approve the design of the open space and delegate contract award to the Executive Member (Resources).

**Reasons for Recommendation(s):**

The S106 sum needs to be spent or there is a risk of having to repay this contribution to the developer. The open space is in need of improvement for the residents of Eaves Green to use and enjoy, it is a gateway into Yarrow Valley Country Park providing improved access for recreation.

**Alternative options considered and rejected:**

To return the S106 to the developer and leave the land unmanaged.

Chair

Date