

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Policy & Finance Committee** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Notts NG24 1BY on Thursday, 21 February 2019 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor D Lloyd (Chairman)
Councillor K Girling (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor R Jackson, Councillor B Laughton, Councillor P Peacock,
Councillor D Staples and Councillor T Wendels

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Mrs S Michael, Councillor Mrs P Rainbow and Councillor L Tift.

79 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS AND AS TO THE PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest.

80 DECLARATIONS OF INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

The Chairman advised that the proceedings were being audio recorded by the Council.

81 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2019

The minutes from the meeting held on 24 January 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

82 FORWARD PLAN OF POLICY & FINANCE ITEMS

The Committee noted the Forward Plan items to be considered by the Committee over the next 12 months.

83 CORPORATE OBJECTIVES CONSULTATION

The Organisational Development Officer presented a report which provided Members with the results of the corporate objectives consultation undertaken between October and December 2018. The report set out how the results of the consultation had shaped the content of the corporate objectives included within the Community Plan for 2019-2023.

A copy of the Corporate Objectives Consultation report was attached as Appendix to the report. The consultation consisted of a Parish and Town Council questionnaire, stakeholder feedback, and a resident survey completed by 11,224 residents. This equated to an 11.3% response rate. The corporate objectives were initially drafted by senior officers and Members. The corporate objectives were then shaped to reflect the points raised by residents and the key activities under each objective were prioritised to reflect feedback from residents on those areas identified as requiring the most improvement.

The survey confirmed how important it was for residents to feel safe in their local area and also highlighted the importance of tackling anti-social behaviour and the blights of fly tipping, littering and dog fouling. Residents also expressed their wish for improved care and support for vulnerable groups. The report detailed a number of actions the Council had taken to directly address these issues, including working with the Police for a Town Centre Police Officer, employing two Community Protection Officers and bidding for further funding to support rough sleepers.

The report also detailed the potential legacy as a result of the resident survey with 2,482 residents signing up to a mailing list and 820 residents expressing an interest in joining the newly created Resident Panel which had been created to help the Council understand the views and experiences of residents

The Members analysed some of the findings within the report and the relationship with current service provision and welcomed the further analysis which was to be undertaken at a Ward level.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Corporate Objectives Consultation Report, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be noted;
- (b) the proposed actions outlined in paragraph 3 of the report 'Legacy of the Resident Survey' be approved and the resident satisfaction be used to inform the Council's performance;
- (c) a copy of the Consultation Report be sent to Nottinghamshire County Council and Highways England highlighting the issues raised by residents surrounding road maintenance and congestion;
- (d) a copy of the Consultation report be sent to Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust highlighting the issues raised by residents regarding access to healthcare facilities;
- (e) a copy of the Consultation Report be sent to Nottinghamshire Police highlighting the issues raised by residents regarding reducing crime and lack of a police presence; and
- (f) the outcome of the survey be communicated to Residents via appropriate media including a section in the Corporate Plan and article in the Voice Magazine.

Reason for Decision

To enable Members to consider and take appropriate actions following the outcome of the consultation.

which provided Members with an opportunity to comment on the final draft of a new Community Plan.

The Council's current Corporate Plan had been reviewed and refreshed. In part, this was in response to a renewed focus on the 'Cleaner, Safer, Greener' agenda and also in recognition of the need for greater clarity and understanding about what the Council was trying to achieve which was one of the recommendations from the 2016 Peer Review. The development of the revised objectives included within the plan had been updated and refined following consultation with a range of stakeholders and the results of the residents survey had been used to sense check the objectives within the plan and where appropriate refinements made.

It was proposed that the plan be renamed Newark and Sherwood's Community Plan to better reflect the largely outward facing nature of the plan and acknowledging that its delivery was not something that the Council could achieve on its own. The Community Plan set out the purpose and values of the Council and included eleven objectives underpinned by supporting actions. A copy of the final draft was attached as an appendix to the report.

In respect of the objective contained within the Community Plan titled 'Enhance and Sustain Newark Town Centre' the Committee considered that such an objective was appropriate for all town centres in the District and not just Newark, and it was agreed (with 4 votes for and 3 against) that this be amended to read 'Enhance and Sustain Town Centres'.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Community Plan 2019 – 2023 be recommended to Council for approval and adoption.

Reason for Decision

To enable the Council to adopt a revised plan which in turn will provide focus around delivering what matters most to our communities.

85 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2019/20

The Business Manager – HR & Organisational Development presented a report which sought to review the content of the Pay Policy Statement for 2019 and subject to any necessary revisions to recommend the Statement to the Council for approval.

In accordance with Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 the Council was required to produce a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year. The Pay Policy Statement must set out the authority's policies for the financial year relating to:

- the remuneration of the authority's lowest-paid employees (together with a definition of "lowest-paid employees") and the reasons for adopting that definition;
- the relationship between remuneration of Chief Officers and that of other officers (pay multiples); and
- the remuneration of Chief Officers.

A copy of the Pay Policy Statement for 2019 was attached as an appendix to the report. It was noted that the statement had been updated to:

- include a link to the new pay and grading arrangements for officers engaged on NJC terms to reflect the nationally agreed scale points negotiated as part of the two year settlement;
- include amendments to the paragraph on Living Wage given that the Council will be paying an amount equivalent to the Living Wage (£9.00 agreed during November 2018) as part of its substantive pay and grading arrangements following implementation of the revised pay scale; and
- reflect revisions to the management structure arising from the recent restructure.

AGREED (unanimously) that the content of the Pay Policy Statement for 2019/20 be recommended to Council for approval.

Reasons for Decision

To comply with Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011.

86 APPROVAL OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE'S LOCAL OFFER FOR CARE LEAVERS

The Chief Executive presented a report which provided a summary of the District/Borough Council elements contained within the proposed Nottinghamshire Local Offer for Care Leavers. The proposed local offer was attached as an appendix to the report.

Section 2 of the Children & Social Care Act 2017 required each local authority (including District Councils) to publish a local offer for its care leavers (18 – 25 years). This would provide information about all the services and support, statutory and discretionary that was available to care leavers from each local authority. Through the Nottinghamshire Local Authorities Chief Executives' Group, the County Council and District/Borough Councils had agreed to create one joint single Care Leaver Offer for Nottinghamshire. The District/Borough Councils' Chief Executives had expressed an 'in principle' support for the proposals subject to the relevant approval of their respective Councils.

The elements of the local offer relevant to the District Council were detailed in the report and related to employment, skills and apprenticeships, housing, and physical and mental health. In addition, all Nottinghamshire Borough/District Councils had previously agreed to exempt care leavers from council tax up to their 25th birthday as part of the development of this local offer.

Members noted that the draft local offer did not include the Dukeries Academy within the list of Further Education Colleges within easy access to Nottinghamshire care leavers.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) Members express their commitment to, and support for, the proposed

Nottinghamshire Local Offer for Care Leavers and refer approval of the various Borough/District Council elements to the relevant committees; and

- (b) future consideration be given to how Borough/District Councils might work with Nottinghamshire County Council to support Looked After Children and those at risk/vulnerable of becoming so.

Reason for Decision

To fulfil statutory Corporate Parenting duties, improve lifetime outcomes for Nottinghamshire's care leavers and to reduce lifetime local and national spend on care leavers.

87 GENERAL FUND AND CAPITAL PROJECTED OUTTURN REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2019 AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2018

The Business Manager – Financial Services presented a report which compared the revised budgets for both the General Fund Revenue and Capital Programme, for the period ending 31 March 2019, with the Projected Outturn forecast for the period based on three quarters performance information.

The appendices to the report detailed anticipated performance against budget for the period to 31 March 2019. The overview of the General Fund Revenue budget showed a projected favourable variance against the revised budget of £213k on Service budgets, with an overall favourable variance of £959k. The main variations from the revised budget were detailed in the report.

In respect of the Capital Programme resources the estimated outturn of £26.425m would be financed through borrowing, external grants and contributions, capital receipts and revenue contributions as set out in the report. It was noted that any savings on capital projects would be assessed and used to meet additional demands or to fund the Capital Programme in future years.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the General Fund projected favourable outturn variance of £959k be noted;
- (b) the variations to the Capital Programme at Appendix B to the report, totalling - £6.057m be approved; and
- (c) the Capital Programme projected outturn and financing of £26.425m be noted.

Reason for Decision

To update Members with the forecast outturn position for the 2018/19 financial year.

88 REVENUE BUDGET - PROPOSED BUDGET 2019/20

The Business Manager – Financial Services presented a report which enabled Members to consider spending proposals and recommendations to the Council for the

budget in 2019/2020.

The report set out the details of the proposed budget for the Council in 2019/2020. The budget proposals had been formulated in accordance with the framework set out in the Council's Constitution with the initial report having been presented to the Policy Committee on 20 September 2018. It was noted that the level of discretionary fees and charges for services provided by the Council were considered as part of the budget process rather than being implemented piecemeal throughout the year. The proposed fees and charges for 2019 were detailed in the report and would be included in the budget book which forms part of the agenda for the full Council Meeting.

The Local Government Finance Settlement provided key figures for Government Grant that formed part of the Council's budget. The draft settlement was announced on 13 December 2018 and was confirmed on 29 January 2019. It was reported that the overall Business Rates income was expected to rise by £1,262,100 due to an increase in the rateable value in the rating list.

The report had been prepared by the Resources Directorate in conjunction with the appropriate Committees and relevant budget holders. In accordance with the Constitution, all Members, Directors and Business Unit Managers had been involved with the preparation of the budget.

AGREED (unanimously) that it be recommended to Council on 7 March 2019 that:

- (a) the Employee Plan shown in Appendix C to the report be noted;
- (b) the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2019/2020 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011:
 - (i) £47,478,210 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for items set out in Section 31A(2)(a) to (f) of the Act (the gross District Council expenditure for 2019/20);
 - (ii) £35,499,020 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3)(a) to (d) of the Act (the gross District Council income for 2019/20); and
 - (iii) £11,979,190 being the amount by which the aggregate at (a)(i) above exceeds the aggregate at (a)(ii) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Net Budget Requirement for the year;
- (c) the figures shown as (b)(i) and (b)(iii) above to be increased only by the amount of Parish Precepts for 2019/20;
- (d) the budget figures included in the report be the Council's budget for 2019/20; and

- (e) the fees and charges shown in Appendices D to W to the report be implemented with effect from 1st April 2019.

Reason for Decision

To enable Policy & Finance Committee to make recommendations to Full Council of the amounts to be calculated in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011 for the purposes of setting Council Tax levels for the year 2019/20.

89 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2019/20 - 2022/23

The Business Manager – Financial Services presented a report which detailed the available capital resources, the Council's existing committed Programme and the priority schemes identified. In accordance with Financial Regulations the Policy & Finance Committee was required to consider the Capital Programme and recommend to Council the final Programme.

In respect of the general fund capital expenditure the Council intended to spend £33.3m from 2019/20 to 2022/23 on the schemes as set out in Appendix A to the report. In respect of the Housing Revenue Account expenditure the Council intended to spend £57.9m from 2019/20 to 2022/23. This was made up of £20.9m on existing property investment and £37m on Affordable Housing. The HRA property investment and development programme were set out in Appendix B to the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the Committee supports the General Fund Capital Programme 2019/20 – 2022/23 totalling £33.322m as detailed at Appendix A to the report, and recommends these to Full Council on 7 March 2019; and
- b) the Committee supports the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2019/20 – 2022/23 totalling £57.969m, as detailed at Appendix B to the report, and recommends these to Full Council on 7 March 2019.

Reason for Decision

To enable the Capital Programme to be considered by the Policy & Finance Committee in accordance with Financial Regulation 6.2.3 prior to its submission to Council.

90 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2019/20 - 2022/23

The Business Manager – Financial Services presented a report concerning the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2019/20-2022/23. A copy of the MTFP was attached as an appendix to the report.

The MTFP was a Corporate Plan to assist both Members and Officers to manage the Council's finances within a clear framework. It set out the Council's spending plans to support its strategic priorities over the current financial year and the following three years and detailed how that spend would be funded through grants, fees and charges,

local taxation, reserves and other income.

The MTFP showed that whilst the Council managed to balance the budget for 2019/20 because of prudent decisions made in the past, future funding of its services would depend on its ability to raise additional income, otherwise it would need to make up funding gaps by increasing Council Tax or/and depleting its general fund reserves.

The MTFP was due to be refreshed during June 2018 to reflect the expectations of future income and expenditure however this was deferred to enable strategic input from the new Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2019/20 to 2022/23 be recommended to Council for approval; and
- (b) Council approve the change in the minimum level of General Fund Balance, as set out in paragraph 1.8 of the Medium Term Financial Plan, from a 15% of Net Budget Requirement to a fixed balance of £1.5m.

Reason for Decision

To provide a framework to support the Councils future spending plans.

Meeting closed at 7.09 pm.

Chairman