

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 23 January 2020.

PRESENT: Councillor R Fuller – Chairman.

Councillors Mrs M L Beuttell, J A Gray, D N Keane, J Neish, J M Palmer and K I Prentice.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor D B Dew.

47 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28th November 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

48 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

49 BURY VILLAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

With the aid of a report by the Service Manager - Growth (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet gave consideration to a report seeking agreement to act upon the Examiner's report into the Bury Neighbourhood Plan leading to a referendum on whether or not it should be brought into force as part of the statutory development plan.

In noting the support expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) and having thanked Officers, the Parish Council and the community for their involvement in the development of the plan thus far, the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning delivered assurances that the Neighbourhood Plan aligned well with the Council's Local Plan. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the District Council should act upon the Examiner's report and accept the recommended modifications and progress the neighbourhood plan to referendum.

50 CABINET APPOINTMENTS

Following changes made to the membership of the Cabinet and the Council's Committees and Panels, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that Councillor Mrs M L Beuttell be appointed to serve on the Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Joint Group in place of Councillor J M Palmer for the remainder of the ensuing Municipal Year;
- (b) that Councillors D B Dew and S J Corney be appointed to serve on the Development Plan Policy Advisory Group in place of Councillor R Fuller and K I Prentice for the remainder of the ensuing Municipal Year;
- (c) that Councillors J Neish and J W Davies be appointed to serve on the Member Development Group in place of R Fuller and D M Tysoe for the remainder of the ensuing Municipal Year;
- (d) that the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning be appointed to serve as an Ex-Officio Member on the Huntingdonshire District Council Growth and Infrastructure Thematic Group and act as Chairman of the Group for the remainder of the ensuing Municipal Year; and
- (e) that the Executive Councillor for Corporate Services be appointed to serve on the Shared Services Joint Group for the remainder of the ensuing Municipal Year.

(At 7.05pm, the meeting adjourned).

(At 7.13pm, Councillor J A Gray took his seat at the meeting).

(At 7.15pm, the meeting reconvened).

51 ALTERNATIVE BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR THE COUNCIL BUDGET 2020/21

(Councillor D B Dew, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth, was in attendance for consideration of this item).

A report by the Independent Group Leader was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining alternative proposals for the Council's budget 2020/21.

In the absence of the Independent Group Leader and/or his nominee, Executive Councillors noted the views expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth). In doing so, Councillor D B Dew, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) summarised the views expressed by the Panel at their meeting on 8th January 2020.

RESOLVED

that the proposed alternative budget and Council Tax proposals be received and noted.

52 DRAFT 2020/21 REVENUE BUDGET & MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (2021/22 TO 2024/25); INCLUDING THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

(Councillor D B Dew, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth), was in attendance for consideration of this item).

By way of a report by the Finance Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) Executive Councillors were presented with the details of the Draft Budget 2020/21 and the revised Medium-Term Financial Strategy for the period 2021/22 to 2024/25.

The Finance Manager reported upon the opportunity she had to challenge and deliver a robust and resilient budget. Efforts had been made to ensure the figures were as realistic as possible particularly in light of the difficult financial landscape within which the Council was operating. Attention was drawn to the forecast outturn position for 2019/20, the proposed increase in Council Tax of 2.6% and the latest position with Government Grants. Having regard to the latter, reference was made to the Fair Funding Review which would see a reduction in the level of income retained by the Council which would take effect from 2020/21.

The Executive Councillor for Resources commended the Finance Manager and her Team for their efforts in reviewing and refining the budget. He then went on to explain that the budget was in line with the Conservative Group's 2018 manifesto and tackled the short-term realities and challenges that the Council would be facing in the future. Satisfaction was expressed at the Commercial Investment Strategy and the positive impact that it was having upon the Council's revenue and in protecting frontline services. It was however acknowledged that the Council was now moving towards Phase 2 of the Strategy which was yet to be defined. In his concluding remarks, the Executive Councillor for Resources went on to explain the need to identify a more robust measure for calculating data in relation to salary statistics within the District.

Councillor D B Dew, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) was invited to report the Panel's views on the scrutiny of the budget at their meeting on 8th January 2020. He expressed his gratitude at the opportunity Members had to contribute their views and thanked Officers and Members for their support and delivery of a sound presentation at the Panel's meeting. Overall, the Panel were satisfied with the proposed budget and acknowledged the position in respect of Phase 2 of the Commercial Investment Strategy.

The Cabinet expressed their appreciation to the Executive Councillor for Resources, Senior Officers and staff for their continued assured management of the Council's finances and production of a comprehensive budget. Having welcomed the reduction in the budget gap at the end of the Medium Term Financial Strategy period which was now estimated to be £0.422m, it was

RESOLVED

- a) that the overall Draft Budget 2020/21 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 to 2024/25 (as attached as Appendix 1 of the report now submitted) be approved;

- b) that the savings and growth proposals (as per paragraphs 4.1 to 4.6 and attached as Appendices 3 and 4 of the report now submitted) of the draft Budget 2020/21 be approved;
- c) that the draft Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25 (as per paragraphs 9.1 to 9.2 of the report now submitted) be approved; and
- d) that the planned increase in Council Tax of 2.6% for 2019/20 and for the duration of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (as per paragraphs 7.1 to 7.3 and Table 6 of the report as submitted) be approved.

Chairman