

# Cabinet Minutes

Date: 17 December 2018

Time: 7.00 - 7.55 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillor Ms K S Wood (Executive Leader of the Council - in the Chair)

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Councillor Mrs J A Adey    | - Cabinet Member for Environment                                 |
| Councillor D H G Barnes    | - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy & Communications |
| Councillor S Broadbent     | - Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration       |
| Councillor D J Carroll     | - Cabinet Member for Youth and External Partnerships             |
| Councillor D A Johncock    | - Cabinet Member for Planning                                    |
| Councillor Mrs J D Langley | - Cabinet Member for Housing                                     |
| Councillor G Peart         | - Cabinet Member for Community                                   |
| Councillor D M Watson      | - Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources                       |

## By Invitation

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Councillor Mrs S Adoh   | - Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing                 |
| Councillor Miss S Brown | - Deputy Cabinet Member for Community               |
| Councillor A R Green    | - Chairman of the Council                           |
| Councillor G C Hall     | - Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment             |
| Councillor D Knights    | - Chairman of the Improvement and Review Commission |
| Councillor R Raja       | - Leader of the Labour Group                        |
| Councillor S Saddique   | - Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources   |
| Councillor A Turner     | - Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning                |

**Also present:** Councillor H L McCarthy

## **59 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Wood (Cabinet Member for Digital Development and Customer Services), C Etholen (Deputy Cabinet Member for Digital Development and Customer Services), Z Ahmed (Deputy Cabinet Member for Strategy and Communications), M Harris (Deputy Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration), and M Knight (Leader of the East Wycombe Independent Party).

## **60 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS**

The Chairman reported that the Council had received confirmation from MHCLG that there would not be any local elections in 2019, and that a statutory instrument had been laid today to that effect. This would mean that district councillors would now continue until 2020 and that elections for the new unitary council would take

place in May 2020. Town and parish council elections had also been postponed until May 2020.

The Order would come into effect on 18 January 2019.

## **61 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 12 November and 26 November 2018 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

## **62 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **63 REFERRAL FROM THE IMPROVEMENT AND REVIEW COMMISSION - REMAKING THE RIVER WYE TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

Cabinet had before it a report that outlined the recommendations from the Improvement & Review Commission which had endorsed the recommendations of the Remaking the River Wye Task and Finish Group (TFG) at its meeting on 28 November 2018.

The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group, Councillor H L McCarthy, gave a detailed verbal presentation of the findings and recommendations of the TFG. The Chairman of the Improvement and Review Commission and the Cabinet thanked the Task and Finish Group and officers for all their hard work.

The following decisions were made to progress the recommendations of the Improvement and Review Commission where appropriate.

**RESOLVED:** That the recommendations made by the Improvement and Review Commission on Remaking the River Wye be received, and a further report be presented to a future Cabinet meeting responding to each of the recommendations in detail.

## **64 COUNCIL TAX PREMIUMS**

Since 2013 Local Authorities had discretion to vary the amount of Council Tax charged on long term empty properties under the Local Government Finance Act 2012. New legislation (The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018) allowed Local Authorities to increase the Premium charge.

Full Council had approved the charging mechanism for empty homes from 1 April 2013. Under the local scheme, long term empty dwellings were charged at the previous maximum rate – a 50% premium after 2 years.

Cabinet approval was sought to recommend to Council that the premium be increased to the maximum level, to meet the Council's objectives of bringing empty dwellings back into use.

The following recommendations were made as new legislation – The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 came into force on 1 November 2018. The decision supported the Council's aim of reducing the number of empty and unused properties.

**Recommended:** That (i) the Council increase the Long Term Empty Premium charge up to the maximum of an additional 100%; and

(ii) It be noted that a 12 month discount for structural alterations can be awarded if a taxpayer could demonstrate that they were actively renovating a property, and no such discount had previously been awarded on that property.

## **65 CLOSURE OF REMAINING RECYCLING BRING BANKS IN WYCOMBE DISTRICT**

The Joint Waste Collection Committee at its meeting in October 2018, had endorsed a report to close all the remaining bring banks operated by Chiltern District Council, South Bucks District Council and Wycombe District Council. Members noted that, each of the three Districts' Cabinets would be considering similar reports regarding the closure of the remaining banks within their area.

The report before Cabinet sought approval to close the remaining eight recycling bring banks in Wycombe District. It was noted that in recent years, the recycling tonnage had dramatically diminished as a wide range of recycling options had increased via the kerbside recycling collections.

The following decisions were made as the removal of the eight bring bank sites located in Wycombe District would release resources, provide service resilience and financial savings.

**RESOLVED:** That the closure of the remaining eight recycling bring banks in Wycombe District (Table 1 of the report), to commence after the Christmas 2018 holiday period be agreed and that financial savings arising from the closures be diverted to increase resources and so improve the existing bulk bin collection service for flatted properties.

## **66 COUNCIL TAX BASE SETTING 2019/20 AND COLLECTION FUND ESTIMATED SURPLUS**

Cabinet was asked to consider and determine the figure to be used for the Council Tax base in the Council Tax setting calculation for 2019/2020 in order for the Council to set the Council Tax. It was confirmed that the estimated Council Tax Collection Fund balance for the year ending 31 March 2019 had an estimated surplus of £1.312m, Wycombe District Council's share was £0.139m.

The following decision was made to agree the estimated Collection Fund Surplus as at 31/03/2019 and to determine the Council Tax Base for 2019/20.

**RESOLVED:** That:

(i) In accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 the amount calculated by Wycombe District Council (i) as its Council Tax base for the whole of its area for the year 2019/20 shall be 69,104.75 and (ii) as the Council Tax Base for each of the parts of its area for the year 2019/20 shall be:-

| Parish                          | 2019/20                 |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Bledlow-cum-Saunderton          | 1,212.82                |
| Bradenham                       | 233.56                  |
| Chepping Wycombe                | 6,420.82                |
| Downley                         | 1,984.11                |
| Ellesborough                    | 438.95                  |
| Fawley (Parish Meeting)         | 144.42                  |
| Great & Little Hampden          | 165.16                  |
| Great & Little Kimble cum Marsh | 494.18                  |
| Great Marlow                    | 726.67                  |
| Hambleden                       | 845.16                  |
| Hazlemere                       | 4,015.27                |
| Hedsor (Parish Meeting)         | 81.73                   |
| High Wycombe Town               | 23,208.46               |
| Hughenden                       | 3,984.07                |
| Ibstone                         | 146.21                  |
| Lacey Green                     | 1,247.21                |
| Lane End                        | 1,431.42                |
| Little Marlow                   | 805.07                  |
| Longwick-cum-Ilmer              | 699.61                  |
| Marlow Bottom                   | 1,523.22                |
| Marlow Town                     | 6,787.04                |
| Medmenham                       | 523.38                  |
| Piddington & Wheeler End        | 265.88                  |
| Princes Risborough              | 3,713.37                |
| Radnage                         | 385.10                  |
| Stokenchurch                    | 1,945.00                |
| Turville                        | 217.92                  |
| WestW'- Parish Council          | 548.08                  |
| Wooburn and Bourne End          | 4,910.86                |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b><u>69,104.75</u></b> |

(ii) The provision for uncollectable amounts of Council Tax for 2019/20 be agreed at 1.7% producing an expected collection rate of 98.3%.

(iii) the estimated surplus for 2018/19 on the Council Tax element of the Collection Fund of £1.312m be approved; this was to be shared between the District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, and Thames Valley Police in proportion to their 2018/19 precepts on the Collection Fund.

## **67 BAKER STREET - PHASE 2**

Cabinet had before it a report setting out proposals for converting land at Baker Street into a public car park and upgrading the existing buildings on the site. Members were informed that this would enable the Council to continue the regeneration of the Baker Street area and improve the desirability of DesBox with the proposed nearby parking.

The following decisions were made as the Baker Street area renewal scheme originally included Phase 3, as a proposed commercial redevelopment (Phase 1 and 2 being Aldi and DesBox). It had not proven possible, so an alternative use was proposed.

**RESOLVED:** That (i) the development of the Baker Street 'Phase 2' site outlined in black on the plan at Appendix A of the report, as surface car parking with the retention / upgrading of existing buildings, as set out in paragraph 3 of the report, be approved; and

(ii) the delegation of the release of the budgets referred to in paragraph 4 of the report, to the Corporate Director in consultation with the Major Projects Executive, Head of Finance & Commercial and Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Regeneration be approved.

### **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** That pursuant to Regulation 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Minute Nos 68, 69, 71 and 72, because of their reference to matters which contain exempt information as defined as follows:

**Minute 68 Future Years Draft Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2023/24 – Appendices B & C**

**Minute 69 Draft Revenue Budgets 2019/20 - Appendix D**

**Minute 71 Collins House**

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (Paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972)

(The need to maintain the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure, because disclosure could prejudice the Council's position in any future tender process or negotiations)

**Minute 72 - File on Action taken under Exempt Delegated Powers**

**Community sheet no: C/10/18**

**Economic Development & Regeneration sheet nos: EDR/48/18 - EDR/53/18**

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (Paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972)

(The need to maintain the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure, because disclosure could prejudice the Council's position in any future tender process or negotiations)

**68 FUTURE YEARS DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018/19 TO 2023/24**

The report before Cabinet detailed the Capital Programme which set out how the Council would spend £48.1m in 2019/20 and £134.6m across five years from 2018/19 to 2023/24. The report included details of the proposed virements and adjustments, funding proposals and the key risks to the programme. It was noted that a core principle in setting the programme had been to ensure zero borrowing over the term of the programme.

Cabinet were asked to recommend to Council a virement of £2.200m to assist with the development cost of the Temporary Accommodation scheme.

The following recommendation and decisions were made as the Cabinet approved a capital budget each year to invest in the Council's key priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan. Programme boards review the major projects within the capital programme on a monthly basis and take corrective action as appropriate within their delegated limits. Regular monitoring reports were submitted to Cabinet for review during the financial year, with management actions highlighted to ensure that Cabinet could assess whether any further action was required.

**Recommended:** To recommend to full Council, approval of the Capital virement of £2.200m to meet the potential increase in development cost of the Temporary Accommodation scheme, funded from the Strategic Acquisitions budget in Economic Development and Regeneration as detailed in Appendix B (Exempt) of the report.

**RESOLVED:** That (i) the draft capital programme in December 2018 for 2018/19 to 2023/24 totalling £134.6m as summarised in Table 2 (paragraph 13 of the report) be noted;

(ii) the Capital Supplementary Budgets of £0.718m, Capital adjustments of £0.355m and virements of £0.584m as in Table 3 (paragraph 14 of the report) be approved;

(iii) It be agreed that a core principle of setting the Capital programme is that of zero borrowing with the exception of investment proposals that deliver a return in excess of a minimum net return specified by the Treasury Management Strategy and each proposal would require a business case to be presented to Cabinet for approval; and

(iv) It be noted that a new Investment Strategy was currently being prepared and would be submitted to Cabinet in February 2019.

## **69 DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2019/20**

The report before Cabinet set out the expected revenue expenditure position within the draft budget for 2019/20, including savings and growth proposals, fees and charges proposals, and funding changes. The draft budget proposal had been modelled on the basis that there would be no Council Tax increase for 2019/20.

The following decisions were made as the Council had a statutory requirement to set a balanced budget for 2019/20 and the report formed a key part of the budget setting process by setting out the likely Revenue expenditure for that year.

**RESOLVED:** That (i) the draft budget proposals for 2019/20 and financial planning assumptions set out in this report be noted;

(ii) it be noted that the draft budget for 2019/20 would be refined and updated for Cabinet in February 2019, to be recommended for approval at Full Council meeting in February 2019 to set the Budget and Council Tax for 2019/20;

(iii) it be noted that the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2019/20 to 2022/23 would be presented to Cabinet for review in February 2019; and

(iv) it be noted that the detailed budget proposals would be submitted to the Budget Task and Finish Group to provide feedback by 12<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

## **70 FILE ON ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY**

Cabinet received the following files on actions taken under delegated powers:

Community  
Planning & Sustainability

C/48/18 – C/56/18  
PS/24/18 – PS/25/18

## 71 COLLINS HOUSE

Cabinet considered a report in relation to Collins House, a three storey 1960s building on the corner of Bridge Street and Desborough Road, High Wycombe.

The following decisions were made as Cabinet approval was required for a below market value disposal.

**RESOLVED:** That (i) the disposal, either freehold or long leasehold, at below market value, to facilitate a 50/50 shared ownership/affordable rented scheme, on terms set out in paragraph 2 of the report be approved;

(ii) the budget in the Major Projects Capital Programme be released for the 'buy back' of a long leasehold of the ground floor commercial units and demolition of the building; and

(iii) the finalisation of the detailed terms for the disposal and for the demolition contract be delegated to the Corporate Director in consultation with the Major Projects Executive and the Head of Finance & Commercial, and the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development & Regeneration and Finance.

## 72 FILE ON ACTION TAKEN UNDER EXEMPT DELEGATED POWERS

Cabinet received the following files on exempt actions taken under delegated powers:

Community Sheet No: C/10/18

Economic Development & Regeneration Sheet Nos: EDR/48/18 – EDR/53/18

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Chairman

### **The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:**

Ian Hunt - Democratic Services Manager  
John East - Interim Corporate Director