

CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING Tuesday, 29th October 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Brett (in the Chair); Councillors Iftikhar Ahmed, Daalat Ali, Neil Emmott, Emsley, Heakin and Wardle.

OFFICERS: S. Rumbelow (Chief Executive), N. Thornton (Director of Resources), G. Hopper (Director of Children's Services), M. Widdup (Director of Neighbourhoods), J. Searle (Director of Economy), S. McIvor (Director of Adult Care/DASS), A. Fallon (Director of Public Health), D. Wilcock (Assistant Director – Legal, Governance and Workforce/Monitoring Officer), J. Rooney (Assistant Director - Neighbourhoods), F. Davies (Children's Services), M. Dalzell, C. Wolfenden, V. Clarke, M. Roberts (Neighbourhoods Directorate) and P. Thompson (Resources Directorate).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Cocks (Assistant Portfolio Holder), Councillor Dearnley, G. Davies (Rochdale Development Agency), M. Smith, L. Gavaghan (Genr8) and one member of the public.

31 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Blundell, Massey and Rowbotham.

32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests.

33 MINUTES

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 1st October 2019 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

34 UPDATE ON NEW SCHOOL SITES

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report that summarised the current status of the proposed delivery of both the Edgar Wood Academy secondary school at Bowlee in Middleton and the Autism Special School in Heywood. The report requested that the Cabinet approves in principle the revised red-line boundary for the Edgar Wood Academy and approves the disposal of the site at Heywood Sports Village for the Autism Special School.

The Cabinet were advised that the site at Heywood, for the Autism Special School, currently forms part of the site of Heywood Sports Village and was subject to a Lease in favour of Rochdale Boroughwide Cultural Trust Limited; and that the disposal of the site for the Autism Special School was subject to Rochdale Boroughwide Cultural Trust Limited ("Link4Life") and the Council completing a Deed of Surrender of part of the Trust's leasehold interest in the Autism Special School Site.

The report also detailed the procedure by which a trust would be sought and awarded the contract to run the Autism Special School. An Equalities Impact Assessment had been completed as required by the process.

Further to paragraph 4.7 of the report the Director of Children's Services presented revised information that she had received subsequent to the publication of the agenda for this meeting and that paragraph should now read: "In light of the topographical challenges, it is not yet clear how the cost of any "cut and fill" will be met on the Alternative site."

Alternatives considered:

With regard to the Edgar Wood Academy, the Authority could continue in accordance with the approval previously given on 13th March 2018 by Cabinet, following local consultation, which approved an alternative site at Bowlee as their preferred school site, would possibly require additional pre-build work to flatten the site and could significantly impact on the delivery date of the school. Such delay could also have an adverse effect on the ability of the council to deliver sufficient secondary school places. The DfE might alternatively choose to deliver a secondary school without a green field sports facility as they have done in other boroughs.

With regard to the Autism Special School, Heywood: Alternatives to moving forward with at the new Autism school on the site at Heywood Sports village were not considered.

Resolved:

1. Approval in principle be granted to the revised site boundary for the Edgar Wood Academy, shown edged red on the Plan in appendix 1 to the report, subject to a full due diligence exercise and an associated further report to the Cabinet.
2. Approval is given to the disposal, by way of a 125 year lease, of the site currently forming part of Heywood Sports Village, which is shown edged red on the Plan at appendix 2 to the report, for the purpose of the Autism Special School.
3. The Director of Economy and the Director of Resources, acting jointly, be given delegated authority for final sign off of the Heads of Term for the Autism Special School.
4. The Director of Children's Services is given delegated authority to approve the Local Authority suggested proposer trust for the Autism Special School.

Reasons for the decision:

With regard to the proposed new school - Edgar Wood Academy, Middleton – this had been awarded funding from central government as part of the Free School Programme. The council has been notified that funding for this Wave of schools has been significantly constrained and the Department for Education ("DfE") is looking for councils to provide deliverable sites. The DfE has indicated that the site approved previously by Cabinet, being the grazing land at Bowlee, would require, due to the topography of the site, a significant

amount of ground works to make it viable, which is why approval is sought to consider a revised site boundary.

In terms of the Autism Special School, Heywood, the Heads of Term and red-line site boundary have now been largely agreed between the council and the DfE, but details in respect of the rights of entry on to the site for the council, Link4Life and Utility providers were still to be agreed. There was therefore a recommendation to the Cabinet to delegate final sign off for the Heads of Term to the Director of Economy and the Director of Resources, acting jointly, in order to enable the project to move forward in the most time efficient manner.

Eligible for Call in: Yes

35 ADOPTION OF REVISED STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Director of Economy reported that a draft revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) had been published for public consultation for a period of eight weeks in late 2018 to allow for stakeholders and members of the public to comment and provide input. The Director's submitted report considered all of the consultation responses and proposed changes.

Alternatives considered:

The Cabinet was advised that it was a legal requirement for the Council to produce a SCI and to carry out consultation on planning policies and planning applications. The only alternative possible would be to not adopt the revised SCI; failure to adopt an up to date SCI could leave the Council open to legal challenge.

Resolved:

1. The Cabinet notes the representations and officers' responses to representations received following consultation and the proposed changes to the SCI.
2. The Cabinet approves the adoption of the revised Statement of Community Involvement.

Reasons for the decisions:

The Cabinet were informed that Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to produce a SCI, which should explain how they will engage local communities and other interested parties in producing their Local Plan and determining planning applications.

In addition, the approval of the revised SCI would enable savings proposals for the Economy directorate through increased efficiencies in notification and publicity undertakings in the Development Management service through a reduction in the volume of letter notifications issued in relation to planning applications.

Eligible for call-in: Yes.

36 LIBRARY SERVICE STRATEGY 2019 - 2022

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Neighbourhoods that sought approval for the Council's revised Library Service Strategy 2019 –

2022. The proposed strategy document was appended to the submitted report.

Alternatives considered:
None reported.

Resolved:
The Cabinet approves the Library Strategy 2019- 2022 as detailed at the appendix to the report.

Reasons for the decision:
The current strategy covered the period 2016 - 2019. A new strategy was therefore required to outline the service's future plans and how the Council will work with partners and the wider community to improve services.
Eligible for call-in: yes

37 CORPORATE PLAN 2019 - 2022

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Neighbourhoods that sought approval of the Council's revised Corporate Plan 2019 – 2022. The Corporate Plan was described as a necessary tool for providing strategic direction. It set out the authority's vision for the Borough and the Council's contribution in achieving that vision. It was designed to enable the Council to tackle challenges and deliver improvements for the people that live, work or visit Rochdale. The Plan informs the allocation of resources so that the Council delivers the right services and should hold the authority to account in achieving outcomes.

Alternatives considered:
None reported.

Resolved:
That the Corporate Plan 2019 - 2022 be recommended to Council for approval.

Reasons for the decision:
The Corporate Plan replaces the current version (2016-2019) with the purpose of providing ongoing strategic direction over the three year period up to 2022. The Council is responsible for approval of the Corporate Plan on recommendation by the Cabinet.
Eligible for Call-in: No.

38 DISCRETIONARY FEES & CHARGES

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Finance Officer which set out proposed discretionary fees and charges for 2020/2021.

The Chief Finance Officer reported that during the 'years of austerity' there had been significant increases to the level of Fees and Charges, which had resulted in pressures across some income budgets. It was decided that the budget assumptions which were previously agreed by the Cabinet, on 30th July 2019, would recommended a nil increase for 2020/21.

The various Council Directorates were requested to review the level of their charges to identify any opportunities to increase charges above nil inflation, in order to contribute towards bridging the budget gap. The submitted report therefore provided Members with proposed fees and charges by service for 2020/21, and details of any fees and charges above a 0% general uplift.

In receiving the report, Cabinet Members noted that it had been considered by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 28th October 2019.

Alternatives considered:

The alternative reported was not review or increase the Council's fees and charges. This would potentially reduce the income available to the Council and make it more difficult to achieve a balanced budget.

Resolved:

1. The proposed discretionary fees and charges as detailed in the report be approved for consultation;
2. The Cabinet recommends that the proposed fees and charges in relation to the supply of waste bins be implemented with effect from February 2020.

Reason for the decision:

The proposed fees and charges detailed in the submitted report had been proposed by each Directorate, taking into account the 0% general uplift in Discretionary Fees and Charges that had previously been agreed at the Cabinet's meeting held on 30th July 2019. Any uplifts that were not in line with the 0% proposal, were highlighted in section 5.3 of the report.

Eligible for Call-in: No

39 SAVINGS PROGRAMME 2020/21 TO 2021/22

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Finance Officer that provided members with recommendations regarding Savings Proposals, in order that the Council meets its budget gaps for the financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22.

In receiving the report, Cabinet Members noted that it had been considered by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 28th October 2019 and the specific recommendations which that Overview and Scrutiny Committee made in this regard were considered at Minute 42 (below).

Alternatives considered:

The Council was legally obliged to set a balanced revenue budget. Whilst budgets are prepared in accordance with the approved guidelines a number of alternative options relating to savings proposals and budget pressures were considered as part of the overall budget setting process.

Consideration was given to a number of options detailed in the individual savings proposals that were contained in the submitted report and in the individual savings reports (that were considered at minute 42 (below)). To do nothing was not considered to be an option as the Council as it could impede the setting of a balanced budget.

In addition Cabinet Members could decide not to implement these proposals and to provide alternative options so as to enable the achievement of a balanced budget.

Resolved:

That the saving proposals contained in the report and the consultation timetable and process as detailed in the report be noted.

Reason for decision:

The Cabinet is required to recommend a balanced Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2020/21 to the Budget Council meeting and to recommend provisional budgets for 2021/22 to 2022/23. The Council, in turn, is required to set a balanced budget for 2020/21 by 11th March 2020. To enable the achievement of statutory requirements savings proposals were to be considered to reduce the expenditure of the Council.

Eligible for call-in: No

40 BUDGET UPDATE AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2020/21 TO 2024/25

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Finance Officer that provided an update on the latest budget position for both the Council and the Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale Clinical Commissioning Group. The report also provided an update on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

In receiving the report, Cabinet Members noted that it had been considered by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 28th October 2019.

Alternatives considered:

The Council is legally obliged to set a balanced revenue budget. The budget setting process was described as complex and had to be undertaken in a planned way. Whilst budgets were prepared in accordance with the approved guidelines a number of alternative options relating to savings proposals and budget pressures were considered as part of the overall budget setting process.

Resolved:

1. The updated Revenue Budget position for the Council and Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale Clinical Commissioning Group be noted.
2. The Council's updated Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 to 2024/25 be approved.
3. The cabinet continues to identify savings proposals in order to alleviate ongoing demand pressures and to bridge the estimated budget gap identified for future years.

Reasons for the decisions:

The Cabinet is required to recommend the setting of balanced budgets to the Budget Council meeting as well as recommending provisional budgets for 2021/22 to 2022/23. The Medium Term Financial Strategy, therefore provides a key part of the budget setting process.

Eligible for Call-in: No.

41 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:

That the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following three items of business, in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

Reason for the Decision:

Should the press and public remain during debate on these three items there may be a disclosure of information that is deemed to be exempt under Parts 1 and 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

42 SAVINGS PROGRAMME 2020/21 TO 2021/22 (PRIVATE)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Finance Officer which presented recommendations regarding a series of savings proposals in order to meet the reported budget gap.

In receiving the various savings proposals report, the Cabinet noted that it had been considered by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 28th October 2019 and gave consideration to the specific recommendation that the Scrutiny Committee had made.

In relation to the Committee's recommendations regarding fees and charges, the Cabinet noted the preference for increases in line with inflation, with the exception to services relating to bereavement.

The Scrutiny Committee requested that the Cabinet be asked to reconsider the saving proposals it is considering for consultation on;

- (a) Reduction in Voluntary Sector Grants to a homelessness charity - £3,000;
- (b) Proposal to close Milnrow Youth Centre - £3,200;
- (c) Environmental Management Township Rangers - £17,000;
- (d) That Cabinet be requested not to implement charges for new or replacement bins.

With regard to (a), above, the Cabinet agreed to withdraw this particular savings proposal. With regard to (b), above, it was noted that the proposal was not to close Milnrow Youth Centre but to relocate. With regard to (c) and (d) it was agreed that the Cabinet would review these specific proposals at the conclusion of the consultation exercise.

Resolved:

1. The Cabinet agrees to withdraw savings proposal NH-2020-21-006: 'Reduction in Voluntary Sector Grants to a homelessness charity'.
2. The title of the savings proposal: CS-2020-21-003 be amended from 'Proposal to close Milnrow Youth Centre' to 'Proposal to relocate Milnrow Youth Centre' and that the savings proposal be approved for consultation.
3. The remainder of the savings proposals, detailed in the Chief Finance officer's report be approved for consultation.

Reasons for the decision:

Reason for decision:

The Council is required to set a balanced budget for 2020/21 by 11th March 2020. To enable the achievement of statutory requirements savings proposals were to be considered to reduce the expenditure of the Council.

Eligible for call-in: No.

43 LEASE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CORONERS HOSTED SERVICE

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Neighbourhoods, the purpose of which was to confirm the arrangements agreed between Rochdale, Oldham and Bury Councils to move the Coroner's Hosted Service and Court facilities to Newgate House Rochdale and to seek approval to enter into lease arrangements for the accommodation.

Alternatives considered:

All available assets were considered including new build options.

Resolved:

1. The Cabinet grants approval to enter into a 15 year lease arrangement for the Coroner's accommodation at Newgate House, Rochdale.
2. Following receipt of any instructions, the Assistant Director (Legal, Governance and Workforce/Monitoring Officer) be authorised to advise appropriate Council Services, to prepare the appropriate legal documents and execute such documents on behalf of the Council.

Reasons for the decision:

Local authorities have a statutory duty, contained within the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, to provide, or secure the provision of, accommodation that is appropriate to the needs of those coroners in carrying out their functions and to maintain, or secure the maintenance of, accommodation provided.

Eligible for Call-in: Yes.

44 ROCHDALE RIVERSIDE OCCUPIER UPDATE

The Director of Economy and representatives of the company Genr8 gave a confidential presentation concerning current and ongoing developments and future proposals with regard to the Rochdale Riverside retail and leisure project.

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted and welcomed.