

The Executive – 6 December 2017

Minutes of the meeting of **The Executive** held on **6 December 2017** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr T G Cutmore
Vice Chairman: Cllr M J Steptoe

Cllr G J Ioannou
Cllr Mrs C E Roe
Cllr S P Smith

Cllr D J Sperring
Cllr I H Ward
Cllr M J Webb

OFFICERS PRESENT

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| S Scrutton | - Managing Director |
| A Hutchings | - Strategic Director |
| J Bostock | - Assistant Director, Democratic Services |
| M Harwood-White | - Assistant Director, Commercial Services |
| M Hotten | - Assistant Director, Environmental Services |
| A Law | - Assistant Director, Legal Services |
| N Lucas | - Section 151 Officer |
| L Moss | - Assistant Director, Community and Housing Services |
| M Thomas | - Assistant Director, Planning and Regeneration Services |
| D Tribe | - Assistant Director, Transformation Services |

251 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

252 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr S P Smith declared an Other Pecuniary Interest in the item on Discretionary Rate Relief by virtue of his employer being in receipt of discretionary rate relief and applying for mandatory relief and left the meeting during its consideration.

253 QUARTER 2 2017/18 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Cllr S P Smith, presented the Quarter 2 report.

During discussion it was noted that:-

- There are always likely to be some in-year movements to and from the Council's reserves which will impact on the latest budget for the Council.
- Whilst it will be challenging to meet the earlier Accounts closure deadline, appropriate staff arrangements and a project plan are in place to address the new requirement that local authorities complete the year

end accounts by May. The Council's external auditors have also adjusted their own arrangements to accord with new requirements.

- Activity to reduce reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation for Homeless clients is progressing and it is hoped that taking action to increase the supply of homes in the local area will facilitate the move-on of people from temporary accommodation. Increase in the associated budget requirement to fund the current year financial pressure is recognised.

Resolved

- (1) That the Quarter 2 2017/18 revenue budget and capital position, as set out in paragraphs 3 and 4 and detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 of the officer's report, be noted.
- (2) That the current performance on key revenue financial indicators, as shown in Appendices 3 and 4 of the officer's report, be noted.
- (3) That a supplementary estimate of £62,000 be moved from General Fund balances to meet the estimated shortfall against the Homelessness budget. (S151O)

254 DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF

The Executive considered the report of the Section 151 Officer on the application of a criterion for the distribution of a Discretionary Relief Fund for Business Rates.

Responding to questions, officers advised that:-

- The Business Rates Revaluation in 2017 was designed to be financially net neutral for the Government; however individual rate payers could face a change in their business rates liability.
- The Government has made funding available for a number of relief schemes to help those most adversely affected, including the Discretionary Rates Relief Scheme. Government is keen that local authorities develop a suitable local scheme to distribute the available funding during the current financial year.
- There is a separate relief scheme in relation to public houses, with approximately twenty-two properties within the District identified as applicable for a flat rate £1,000 discount in 2017/18. Further information would be provided on this.
- Independent shops may already attract small business rate relief. In addition there is a new scheme for small businesses affected by loss of Small Business Rate Relief or Rural Rate Relief following the revaluation.

- Further information would be provided on how the relief applied to charitable organisations including charity shops is monitored and the percentage relief formula applied. Information would also be provided on the applicability of rate relief to public toilets.

Resolved

- (1) That a criterion for the distribution of a Discretionary Relief Fund for Business Rates be incorporated into a consolidated Discretionary Rate Relief Policy on the basis set out at Appendix A to the officer's report.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Section 151 Officer to make decisions relating to the application of the Discretionary Rate Relief policy for individual cases; with the proviso that any application that is considered to be of a contentious or significant nature be subject to consultation with the Portfolio Holder. (S151O)

255 ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY 2017

The Portfolio Holder for Enterprise, Cllr G J Ioannou, presented the Economic Growth Strategy report.

During discussion reference was made to the value of the strategy in the context of the notable entrepreneurial and business culture already existing within the District. The priorities chart on page five reflected the need for partnership working in recognition that companies and organisations do not work to set political boundaries.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft Economic Growth Strategy 2017 appended to the officer report be adopted as the framework for promoting economic development in the District, and that future updates and amendments, as required, be agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Enterprise to ensure the document is kept up to date.
- (2) That a detailed implementation plan be prepared and reported back to the Executive at a later date. (ADP&RS)

The meeting closed at 8.05 p.m.

Chairman

Date

CONFIRMED

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