

The Executive – 5 October 2016

Minutes of the meeting of **The Executive** held on **5 October 2016** 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

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs J R Lumley.

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Scrutton - Managing Director
N Khan - Executive Director
J Bostock - Assistant Director, Democratic Services
D Tribe - Assistant Director, Customer, Revenues and Benefits Services

224 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

225 GOVERNMENT FOUR YEAR SETTLEMENT OFFER

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Cllr S P Smith, presented the report on the four year settlement offer.

Notwithstanding that concerns could be expressed at its nature, in the prevailing financial climate, acceptance of the offer could be seen as providing some stability and facilitate forward planning. The Council was as well positioned as possible in the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and embedded business planning to getting financial self-sufficiency. It was understood that ninety per cent of local authorities had already signed up to the settlement offer.

During discussion it was observed that, given the expected high level of sign up, there could be a considerable amount of protest at a national level if Councils that had not signed up found themselves in a financially advantageous position. It was also observed that it would be appropriate for the Government to be advised of Member concern at the poor nature of the offer, which could only be signed up to with some reluctance.

The Managing Director advised that a presentation on the nature and timetable of changes to the business rates process, made available to a recent meeting between the Leaders and Chief Executives of Essex Authorities, would be provided to all Members of the Council for information.

The Section 151 Officer confirmed that Members would be appraised of any salient information emanating from the development of responses by 151 Officers to Government consultation papers on business rates and local authority funding.

Given that the offer would only be endorsed with some reluctance, it was agreed that it would be appropriate for final acceptance to be held in abeyance until the final deadline for submission, in case a fundamental change happened to have occurred by that point and it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That authority be delegated to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Finance, to agree to the four year settlement (2016/17 to 2020/21) by publication of the proposed efficiency plan at the latest possible point so that account can be taken of any fundamental change in position that may arise in advance of that point.
- (2) That the decision in (1) above be treated as urgent and not subject to call-in, by virtue of the associated timescale.
- (3) That correspondence be sent to the Government advising of Member concern at the poor nature of the settlement offer, which could only be signed up to with some reluctance (Section 151 Officer).

226 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2017/18

The Portfolio Holder for Governance, Cllr Mrs C E Roe, presented the report on arrangements for public consultation on setting the 2017/18 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

During discussion it was noted that:-

- Consultation arrangements included the Council's website, the 'have your say' group, partners (including the Town/Parish Councils and housing association groups), libraries and public places. Consideration would be given to the documentation being able to be opened via the various electronic devices currently available. There would also be appropriate media releases.
- The Council's new website, which was imminent, would include a new facility for residents to sign up to regular updates on items of interest.
- The results of the public consultation exercise would be reported back, a final decision on the way forward being made by Full Council.

Resolved

That the public consultation document 'Consultation on Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18', attached as an appendix to the officer report, be approved. (ADCR&BS/S151O)

The meeting closed at 8.08 pm.

Chairman

Date

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