



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP.

Telephone 01572 722577 Email governance@rutland.gov.uk

RECORD OF DECISIONS AT A MEETING OF THE CABINET

Decisions published on Thursday 22 August 2019

Decisions will be implemented on Wednesday 28 August 2019 unless the Call-in Procedure as outlined in Procedure Rule 206 is invoked.

PRESENT: Mr O Hemsley
Mr G Brown
Mrs L Stephenson
Mr A Walters

OFFICERS	Mrs H Briggs	Chief Executive
PRESENT:	Mrs H Bremner	Head of Communications
	Mr S Della Rocca	Strategic Director for Resources
	Mr J Morley	Deputy Director for People (Adult Services)
	Mrs C Traill	Strategic Director for Places
	Mrs J Morley	Governance Officer

173 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr D Wilby.

174 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND/OR HEAD OF THE PAID SERVICE

There were no announcements from the Chairman or the Chief Executive.

175 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Brown declared an interest in item 11, the Barrowden and Wakerley Neighbourhood Plan, as he had led the neighbourhood planning group responsible for the report. Mr Brown would withdraw from the meeting during discussion on this item.

176 RECORD OF DECISIONS

The Record of Decisions made at the meeting of the Cabinet held on 16 July 2019, copies of which had been previously circulated, were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

177 ITEMS RAISED BY SCRUTINY

The Chairman had not been formally notified of any items raised by Scrutiny.

178 PROGRESS UPDATE ON ST GEORGE'S BARRACKS

Report No.121/2019 was received from the Chief Executive.

Mrs Briggs, Chief Executive, introduced the report the purpose of which was to provide Cabinet with a progress report on St George's Barracks project further to the report of March 2018.

During discussions the following points were noted:

- The Project Board sub-groups set up to look at design and layout, highways, and transport infrastructure, had agreed their terms of reference.
- The Government had announced at the weekend details of HIF (Higher Infrastructure Funding) for much larger schemes however RCC had not yet heard anything about its own HIF bid submission.
- Delays in finding out about any HIF funding could delay delivery of the Local Plan. Mr G Brown, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environment, Property and Finance would be meeting with officers over the next few days to consider the implications of a delay with the Local Plan and the timing of any announcement.

DECISION:

Cabinet:

1. **NOTED** the progress update in respect of the St George's Barracks Project.

Reason for the decision:

Progress on the project is in line with the programme.

179 RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

Report No.124/2019 was received from the Chief Executive.

Mr Hemsley, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Rutland One Public Estate & Growth, Tourism & Economic Development, and Resources (other than Finance) introduced the report the purpose of which was to provide a background to the creation of the 2018/19 Rutland County Council annual report and information on how it would be used and distributed to highlight the impact the Council was making.

During discussion the following points were discussed:

- Members approved of the design and layout of the report and felt that it would be appealing to residents.
- A few typographical errors had been found and these would be passed on to the Communications Manager

- The Chairman asked Members to double check their sections of the draft report and inform the Communications Manager.

DECISIONS

Cabinet:

1. **CONSIDERED** the 2018/19 Annual Report (Appendix 1);
2. **PROVIDED** feedback on the content; and **RECOMMENDED** to Council the approval of the Annual Report, subject to any corrections notified by Members.

180 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT - RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL AND CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY

Report no.119/2019 was received from the Chief Executive who introduced the report. The purpose of the report was to seek cabinet approval for the Strategic Partnership Agreement with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- The Strategic Partnership Agreement would allow the Council to continue working with the Combined Authority as much as they could if they were still members of the Greater Cambridgeshire and Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership (GCGPLEP).
- The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) had recommended the approach of a partnership agreement although any agreement would be subject to the Combined Authority's own governance procedures.
- Mr A Walters asked about any residual funding for Rutland from the former LEP but was informed that any monies could only be accessed by going through a bidding process. The Strategic Partnership Agreement would put in place a structure that would allow the Council to bid for project funding in the future.
- Of all of the authorities in the former GCGPLEP Rutland County Council had been the most successful in bidding for LEADER funding.
- BEIS were supportive of the partnership agreement approach with the Combined Authority but were not party to it and therefore there could still be a process for the Council to decide whether it wanted to join the Lincolnshire LEP.
- If RCC were to move to the Lincolnshire LEP at a later date, the detail on any already allocated money and whether it moved with RCC or not would need to be discussed and decided at the point of exit.

DECISIONS

Cabinet:

1. **AUTHORISED** the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to enter into the Strategic Partnership Agreement.
2. **DELEGATED** to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, authority to make any amendments necessary to finalise the agreement with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

Reasons for the decisions

The Agreement as proposed will facilitate partnership working with the CPCA who are a key partner in the securing of investment both sub-regionally and from central government.

181 **COUNCIL TAX - COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT, CARE LEAVERS RELIEF AND EMPTY HOMES PREMIUM**

Report No.115/2019 was received from the Strategic Director for Resources.

Mr Gordon Brown, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environment, Property and Finance introduced the report, the purpose of which was to:

1. Review whether any changes were required to the Local Council Tax support scheme and the Discretionary Fund for 2020/21 financial year and onwards.
2. Seek approval of the Care Leavers addendum to the Discretionary Fund Policy to ensure that the Council is helping care leavers to achieve financial stability by alleviating the pressure of paying Council Tax up to the age of 25.
3. Seek approval to undertake a public consultation exercise in order to ascertain people's views about making changes to the Council Tax premium on empty homes that have been unoccupied for over two years.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- The Council Tax Support Scheme discretionary fund was working well and was not oversubscribed which led officers to believe that there was not any compelling reason to change the scheme at this point of time.
- Relief for care leavers was to be extended from the present age of 22 up to the age of 25 in order to help relieve financial pressures and help care leavers achieve financial stability. This would be in line with the Government's care leavers strategy 'Keep on Caring' which encouraged Councils to introduce measures to exempt care leavers from paying Council Tax
- Mr A Walters, although he understood the motivation for the changes, did not support the terms of the extension to care leavers relief as he felt that they were not equitable. The extra relief did not reflect the length of time spent in care or the financial situation of any partner or family member that the care leaver lived with.
- Mr G Brown explained that the relief was not automatic and it was at the discretion of the care leaver whether they applied for it or not.
- In relation to the Empty Homes Consultation Members felt that Question 1 of the questionnaire (appendix B) was important in order to understand what residents' position was in relation to the other questions asked and whether the public had alternative suggestions.

DECISIONS

Cabinet:

1. **RECOMMENDED** to Council to continue with the existing Local council Tax support (LCTS) scheme and to adjust it annually for inflation in line with the Government's Adjudications and Operations Circulars from 2020/21 financial year and onwards.

2. **RECOMMENDED** to Council to retain the existing Discretionary Fund (DF) policy and to approve the addendum to the policy for Care Leavers detailed at Appendix A effective from financial year 202/21 year and onwards.
3. **NOTED** that Council had approved that the Strategic Director for Resources (s.151 officer) in consultation with the Cabinet Member with portfolio for Finance, can make minor changes to the Local Council Tax Support scheme and the Discretionary Fund as a result of best practice, guidance or legislation.
4. **APPROVED** that Officers undertake a public consultation on the premium for long term empty homes as described in the report and detailed at Appendix B.

Reasons for the decisions

LCTS and DF– It is the view of officers that there is no compelling reason for making changes to the scheme. Should Members wish to propose changes then officers will need to consider the steps required. Legal advice received is that formal consultation will be required if any changes to the structure of the scheme are made. This would exclude adjusting applicable amounts in the scheme in line with the Government’s annual circular.

Care Leavers – Young people who leave care are provided with support as part of our statutory duties to help them transition into adulthood and living independently. As corporate parents it is crucial that we offer a wide range of support to enable care leavers to succeed. Alleviating the financial burden of paying council tax empowers and enables care leavers and supports our intentions set out in the Care Leavers’ Covenant.

Long Term Empty Homes Premium- the premium was last reviewed in 2017, given the financial pressures that the Council is facing and our desire to reduce the number of empty homes in our area, is reasonable to consult the public on what we can change.

182 **QUARTER 1 FINANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT**

Report No.114/2019 was received from the Strategic Director for Resources.

Mr G Brown, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environment, Property and Finance introduced the report, the purpose of which was to inform Cabinet and all members of the full year forecast position as at Quarter 1 for 2019/20 and to highlight issues that may impact on the Medium Term Financial Plan to enable them to maintain sound financial management of the Council’s operations.

During discussions the following points were noted:

- The Council was forecasting a surplus of £261k against a deficit of £249k.
- Income on investments has been higher than expected as there were no current projects utilising the £10m capital investment fund
- There were a number of staff vacancies that were contributing to current underspends.

- Continuing pressures included meeting Special Educational Needs, Adult Social Care and additional work done on the Woolfox site for the Local Plan
- The Government had announced that it was going to have a single year spending review rather than completing its comprehensive review. It was not known whether this would be favourable to the Council but if the settlement was similar to 2019/20 then it would be better than expected.
- Capital spend had been approved for the new boiler at Catmose and on the redevelopment of unit 4 at the Oakham Enterprise Park.
- The Strategic Director for Resources confirmed that in order to remove capital schemes that would not proceed from the capital programme then a decision would have to be made by the original decision makers who approved the funding e.g. Cabinet or Council.
- There had been two high cost cases that had been transferred into Adult Social Care, one from Children's services and one who was a prison leaver. One case could have been reasonably predicted and the budget updated, and the new structure within the People's directorate would facilitate this in the future. The prison leaver had never had any connection with Rutland and there had been a dispute over responsibility between RCC and 2 other authorities. The Secretary of State had deemed that the prison leaver was the responsibility of RCC but he had been given some misinformation so the issue was still in dispute.

DECISIONS

Cabinet:

1. **NOTED** the 2019/20 estimated revenue and capital outturn positions as at Quarter 1
2. **NOTED** the approved changes to the original budget detailed in Appendix A including the decision to use ring fenced BCF reserves to part fund the 19/20 programme
3. **NOTED** the additional pressures for 2020/21 detailed in para 2.4

Reasons for the decision

As the Council is required to make savings over the medium term, the Q1 position is positive, despite a number of significant variances.

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Mr G Brown left the room
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183 BARROWDEN AND WAKERLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Report No.122/2019 was received from the Deputy Director for Places.

Cllr Hemsley, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Rutland One Public Estate & Growth, Tourism & Economic Development, Communications, Resources (other than Finance) introduced the report the purpose of which was to note the Examiner's recommended modifications to the Barrowden & Wakerley Neighbourhood Development Plan, agree

the publication of the 'Decision Statement' and to make arrangements to hold a Neighbourhood Plan Referendum on the plan.

During discussions the following points were noted:

- A huge amount of work had gone into the process and both parish councils had accepted the recommendations and changes.
- The Barrowden & Wakerley Neighbourhood Development Plan involved both Rutland County Council and East Northants District Council and had been an excellent example of good working practices between authorities.
- Following the publication of the Decision Statement the Barrowden and Wakerley Neighbourhood Plan would proceed to referendum which would be organised by Rutland County Council.

DECISIONS

Cabinet:

1. **NOTED** the Examiner's Report and recommended modifications to the Barrowden & Wakerley Neighbourhood Development Plan to meet the Basic Conditions.
2. **AGREED** to publish the 'Decision Statement' as set out at Appendix 2 of the report.
3. **AGREED** to put the Barrowden and Wakerley neighbourhood Plan (subject to the recommended modifications) to Referendum and delegate all arrangements for this to the Chief Executive.
4. Following a referendum where more than 50% of those voting, vote in favour of the proposal, **AGREED** to delegate the decision to "make" the Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan to the Strategic Director for Places, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reasons for the decisions

The Barrowden & Wakerley Neighbourhood Plan is considered to meet the 'Basic Conditions' subject to modifications set out by the examiner. It is recommended the Decision Statement should be agreed and for the Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to a referendum within the statutory 56 days of the publication of the Decision Statement.

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Mr G Brown returned to the meeting

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184 ANY ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

No items of urgent business were received.

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 10.45am.

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