

COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

19TH NOVEMBER 2015

Present:

Councillor Lynden Stowe - Chairman
Councillor NJW Parsons - Vice-Chairman

Councillors -

Sue Coakley Mrs. SL Jepson
C Hancock

Observers:

AR Brassington (invited to speak on Juliet Layton
Minute CAB.56) NP Robbins
AW Berry

CAB.53 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest under the Code of Conduct for Members or Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

There were no declarations of interest under the Code of Conduct for Officers.

CAB.54 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 15th October 2015 be approved as a correct record.

Record of Voting - for 5, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

CAB.55 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received.

CAB.56 MEMBER QUESTIONS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, questions had been submitted, and responses provided, as follows:-

From Councillor AR Brassington to Councillor Lynden Stowe, Leader of the Council

'The Public Protection team is currently being re-organised as part of the joint working initiative with other local authorities. Can the Leader give a guarantee that front line staff numbers in this section at CDC will not be reduced? If he cannot, and the number of front line staff is to be

cut, can he guarantee that front line services to the public will not be reduced?’

Response from Councillor Lynden Stowe:-

‘I have asked the Cabinet Member for Health, Environment and Communities to respond to these questions as Public Protection is part of her remit.’

Responses from Councillor Sue Coakley, Cabinet Member for Health, Environment and Communities:-

‘The Business Case to create a shared Public Protection service, which has been agreed by each Partner Council, outlined the level of efficiency savings and benefits from collaboration, which are on-track to be achieved in 2016. The proposed shared service framework would see an overall reduction in staff, with the greatest level being taken from management tiers. The Project Team, which includes staff from this Council, has undertaken an assessment of demand for services in the Cotswolds during the process redesign. The level of resource being proposed will meet this demand. In addition, we are not proposing to reduce the level of service, and the new framework will provide a more resilient delivery model.’

Councillor Brassington thanked the Cabinet Member for her responses and sought assurance that front-line services would not be affected. The Cabinet Member repeated her response to the second part of his original question and the Leader of the Council explained that the intention was not to reduce the level of service and he hoped it would be enhanced.

Councillor Brassington noted that the business case report had been prepared and, by way of a supplementary question, asked why that report had not been submitted to the Joint Consultative Committee for discussion.

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) explained that the creation of a shared Public Protection service had been subject to continuous discussions with the Union and Non-Union Representatives since December 2014, including through the Joint Consultative Committee and the Joint Liaison Forum. The Director was unsure which report Councillor Brassington was specifically referring to, but he reiterated that consultations with staff were currently being undertaken.

The Cabinet Member for Health, Environment and Communities concluded by adding that an update on the creation of a shared Public Protection service would be given to the Joint Consultative Committee at its next Meeting.

CAB.57

LEADER’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements from the Leader.

CAB.58

DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2016/17 TO 2018/19

The Leader of the Council introduced this item.

It was noted that the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) would be subject to consultation in advance of the budget proposals for the financial year 2016/17, and had already been discussed at the recent Town/Parish Council Liaison Meetings. The Leader drew attention to the key items detailed in the report and stated that the MTFS brought together significant strategic elements including savings from the 2020 Vision and joint working, fees and the Council's income policy. The Leader further stated that such elements would enable the Council to consider freezing parking charges and charges for weekly garden waste collections until 2020. The Leader also drew attention to some of the challenges being faced by the Council, including year-on-year increases in pension contributions, and capital expenditure. The Leader announced that, at this point in time, the Council was considering a maximum increase of 1.99% in Council Tax for the 2016/17 financial year. The Leader reminded the Cabinet that, as specific details of the Government's financial settlement for 2016/17 were still awaited, realistic Council Tax proposals for the next financial year would be reported to the Cabinet and the Council in the New Year.

The Leader also amplified aspects relating to the Local Council Tax Support Grant for Town/Parish Councils, which would be continued at the same level in the 2016/17 financial year. However, the Leader suggested that it would be reasonable for such Support Grant to be reduced in proportion to any reductions in Government funding to the Council. The Leader contended that the Council was in a relatively healthy financial position, given the challenges it had met over the past five years when year-on-year funding cuts equated to 35%. The Leader concluded by stating that early delivery on savings had paid off and represented an on-going commitment by the Council to protect front-line services.

RESOLVED that:

(a) the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy and proposed budget consultation process be approved;

(b) the allocation of the Local Council Tax Support Grant to Town/Parish Councils/Meetings, as detailed at Appendix 'B' to the circulated report, be approved.

Record of Voting - for 5, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

CAB.59

SYRIAN REFUGEE PROPOSAL

The Cabinet Members for Health, Environment and Communities, and Planning and Housing introduced this item.

The Cabinet was requested to consider a proposal to accept five Syrian refugee families, in a phased approach commencing in December 2015.

The Cabinet Member for Health, Environment and Communities reminded the Cabinet of the Government's five-year commitment in respect of the Syrian humanitarian crisis. The Cabinet Member referred to the Working Group

established to consider the Council's response and suggested it would be appropriate for the Council to undertake to house five Syrian families as a robust initial offer. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing amplified aspects of the key factors of the proposal, as detailed in the circulated report. The Cabinet Member explained that the Council would be seeking private sector accommodation in order to avoid any adverse impact on Housing Waiting List applicants but could allocate social housing accommodation in exceptional circumstances. The Cabinet Member reminded the Cabinet that the Council owned a property in Querns Road, which was currently empty and could, potentially, be used to provide accommodation for a large family.

In response to various questions from Cabinet Members, it was reported that the Council had sought to be open and 'up front' in respect of the costs detailed in the circulated report, which would be underwritten by the Home Office; the second paragraph of the support proposal detailed at Appendix 'A' to the circulated report set out the proposals for support; the intention was to initially offer six weeks' intensive support to each refugee family; the Council would be able to call on resources from other organisations, as and when necessary; the Council was working with Gloucestershire County Council, West Oxfordshire and Stroud District Councils, and local charities, which had more advanced proposals; a full-time resource was not considered to be an appropriate allocation in these circumstances; and the Council would be looking to utilise existing in-house skills and initial support to be provided by the Government.

In expressing support in principle for the proposal, it was considered that some residents could feel that some of the suggested elements were unfair. It was further considered that that aspect should have close Member scrutiny and that the appropriate Cabinet Members should be involved in the administration of the proposal.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the proposal to accept five Syrian refugee families, in a phased approach commencing in December 2015 as detailed in Appendix 'A' to the circulated report, be approved;**
- (b) the proposal be despatched immediately to the Home Office, in anticipation of a response that the proposal will be fully funded by the Home Office;**
- (c) the Cabinet Members for Health, Environment and Communities and Planning and Housing be authorised to approve the detailed expenditure in principle before any allocations are made.**

Record of Voting - for 5, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

CAB.60

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Forward Planning introduced this item.

The Cabinet was requested to consider the principle of a draft Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule for the Council. The Deputy Leader reminded the Cabinet that the introduction of such a scheme was optional, but

suggested that if the Council chose not to operate such a scheme in parallel with the Local Plan, it could lose out on community benefits accruing from developments. The Deputy Leader explained that, if the Cabinet decided to agree to the scheme in principle, further work would be required to progress it, the aim being that the scheme would be submitted for formal examination to the Inspector at the same time as the Local Plan was submitted. In updating the circulated report, the Deputy Leader explained that the words 'Prepare Preferred Draft Charging Schedule' in points 2 and 4 of Table 1 at paragraph 2.4 should be amended to read 'Prepare Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule'.

There was considered to be discrepancies between the rates being proposed by other neighbouring local authorities and it was noted that this might impact on developers' decision-making.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the principle of preparing a draft Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule for the Cotswold District, be agreed;**
- (b) the provisional work programme to prepare the Community Infrastructure Levy detailed in the circulated report, be approved, as amended;**
- (c) a further report detailing the resource implications relating to the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy be submitted to a future Meeting of the Cabinet.**

Record of Voting - for 5, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

CAB.61

CONTRACT AWARD - CLEANSING AND MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Partnerships introduced this item.

The Cabinet was requested to consider the award of a new four-year contract for the cleaning and maintenance of its public conveniences. The Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Partnerships amplified aspects of the circulated report, drawing attention to the benefits that would accrue to the Council from economies of scale.

In response to a question, it was reported that the proposal was for a fixed-price contract and that the cost to the Council over the period of the contract would only rise if there was an increase in the cost of consumable materials.

RESOLVED that the contract for the cleansing and maintenance of the Council's public conveniences be awarded to the Preferred Contractor (Contractor A), as identified within Exempt Appendix 'A' to the circulated report, for a period of four years from 1st January 2016.

Record of Voting - for 5, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

CAB.62 SUMMARY FINANCE/SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT - 2015/16
QUARTER 2

The Leader of the Council introduced this item.

The Cabinet was requested to consider and comment on the overall finance/service performance for the second quarter of the 2015/16 financial year. The Leader commented that no significant change had been suggested in relation to Performance Indicators, and noted that performance in relation to the Planning and Building Control services needed to be addressed. The Leader congratulated Officers on the financial performance to date and commented that performance on capital expenditure, particularly in relation to flood mitigation, had been encouraging.

It was noted that the report would be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its Meeting which was scheduled to be held on Tuesday 1st December 2015.

RESOLVED that service and financial performance for Quarter 2 of the financial year 2015/16 be noted.

Record of Voting - for 5, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

CAB.63 SCHEDULE OF DECISION(S) TAKEN BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
AND/OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet noted a Schedule detailing decisions taken by the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Forward Planning, and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing.

CAB.64 ISSUE(S) ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND/OR AUDIT

There were no issues arising from Overview and Scrutiny and/or Audit.

CAB.65 OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business that was urgent.

The Meeting commenced at 4.00 p.m. and closed at 4.45 p.m.

Chairman

(END)