

COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

18TH FEBRUARY 2016

Present:

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

Councillors -

Sue Coakley Mrs. SL Jepson
C Hancock

Observers:

SI Andrews RG Keeling
AR Brassington (invited to speak on LR Wilkins (from 4.08 p.m.)
Minute CAB.82)

CAB.79 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.80 MINUTES

RESOLVED that subject to the deletion of the words ‘to move towards achieving quality status’ in the tenth line of the preamble to Minute CAB.73 and their substitution by the words ‘in forward planning and accessing other funding streams’, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 21st January 2016 be approved as a correct record.

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

Arising thereon:

Approval of Energy Re-Procurement Process/Outcomes (CAB.78)

It was reported that savings on energy costs would be slightly lower than anticipated as it had been confirmed that the Council did not meet such costs in relation to the Leisure Centres.

CAB.81 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received.

CAB.82 MEMBER QUESTIONS

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

From Councillor AR Brassington to Councillor Sue Coakley, Cabinet Member for Health, Environment and Communities

‘In the Cotswolds, there are many publically-spirited members of the community who regularly go out, often by themselves, and pick litter up off the streets and road sides. Cotswold District Council should recognise the efforts of these individuals in some manner, such as a letter from the Chairman, which could be presented to them at a future Council Meeting. We should also try to get a local business to sponsor the occasion and present them with something. For instance, Whitbread could offer them two free drinks at one of their shops since their Costa Coffee cardboard cups are frequently a source of road side litter. Another example is McDonalds, for the same reason. Will the Council consider this suggestion and report its findings to the next Meeting of the Cabinet?’

Response from Councillor Coakley

‘Whilst we recognise and appreciate the efforts of these individuals, the difficulty of identifying who they are makes this suggestion impractical. Even if some of them could be identified, it is unlikely that all of them would be, and then we would be in a position where we were opening ourselves up to criticism for not treating all of these public-spirited members of our community equitably.

We should also not forget the individuals, local communities and local Councils who contact us to request pickers, bags etc. for an organised litter pick; and, perhaps even more fundamentally, the many people who just quietly do this and put the litter in their own bins or local litter bins.

Having said that, I am pleased to tell you that the Council will be highlighting a clean-up effort by one group of volunteers in the near future, as we have recently launched a prize competition linked to the national ‘Clean for the Queen’ campaign. When the competition concludes at the end of April, a panel of judges will award £1,000 funding for local environmental improvements (thanks to the generosity of Ubico Ltd.) to the best ‘tidy up’ by a group of volunteers. We have already had a healthy response to the competition and, although we will select an overall winner and name them publicly, all contestants will deserve praise for their efforts.

I am happy to place on record (as, indeed, we have in the past), the Council’s sincere thanks to all in our District who help in their own way to strive to ensure that the Cotswolds is litter-free.’

Councillor Brassington thanked Councillor Coakley for her response and commented that his suggestion had been born when he witnessed an elderly gentleman stopping to pick up some litter in the street. Councillor Brassington

explained that his suggestion had been intended to acknowledge such community-spirited actions.
By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Brassington sought an assurance that the budget for street cleaning would not be reduced in the next financial year.

In response, Councillor Coakley commented that acknowledging the actions of one individual person could disenfranchise many others, and confirmed that there was no intention to reduce the budget in respect of street cleaning during the next financial year, although consideration would be given to the introduction of efficiencies.

CAB.83 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader asked the Strategic Director for Corporate Services to request the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to seek assurance from the Bromford Housing Association that monies received from the sale of high-value former Council houses in the Cotswolds was ring-fenced to the Cotswolds and to investigate if such a requirement had been included in the terms of the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of the Council's housing stock.

CAB.84 CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAU - REVENUE GRANT FUNDING

The Leader of the Council introduced this item.

The Cabinet was requested to consider approving three-year revenue grant funding for the Stroud and District Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB). The Leader expressed appreciation for the work undertaken by the CAB, particularly by its volunteer staff, noting that assistance had been given to 2,364 households; over 600 issues had been resolved; and that a good geographical spread in relation to the giving of advice had been achieved in 2015. It was considered that a three-year funding commitment would give an element of certainty to the CAB, and could lead to a future reduction in costs. It was noted that, at its Meeting on 21st January 2016, the Cabinet had approved a similar funding regime in respect of existing community Visitor Information Centres (Minute CAB.73, 21st January 2016 referred).

In response to a question from a Member, the Cabinet was reminded of the monitoring arrangements which were already in place.

RESOLVED that a three-year funding agreement be entered into with Stroud and District Citizens' Advice Bureau, as detailed in the circulated report.

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

CAB.85 ALLOCATION OF FUNDING FOR PROVISION OF COACH PARKING AT BOURTON-ON-THE-WATER

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Communities introduced this item.

The Cabinet was requested to consider funding to secure provision of coach parking facilities at Bourton-on-the-Water. The Cabinet Member apprised the Cabinet of recent developments in relation to the continued provision of coach parking facilities at Station Road, Bourton-on-the-Water, including provision on

alternative sites; environmental issues; and operating requirements. It was noted that Bourton-on-the-Water Parish Council had agreed a financial contribution and it was considered that the suggested option would maintain car parking capacity in the Council's existing car park in the village.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) planning permission be sought for the construction of a sound barrier at the Station Road Car Park, Bourton-on-the-Water;**
- (b) subject to the granting of planning permission as referred to in resolution (a) above, allocations of £50,000 and £2,000 be made from the Council Priorities Fund for the construction of the sound barrier and site set-up costs respectively at the Station Road Car Park, Bourton-on-the-Water;**
- (c) the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Partnerships, be authorised to appoint a contractor to provide and install the barrier referred to in resolution (a) above;**
- (d) the necessary Legal Agreements be entered into with the freeholder of the Station Road Car Park, Bourton-on-the-Water, and the Head of Legal and Property Services, in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Partnerships, be authorised to conclude such Agreements;**
- (e) the revenue costs relating to the Legal Agreement detailed at Exempt Appendix 'A' to the circulated report, and reasonable enforcement costs (to a maximum of £2,000), be funded from the Council Priorities Fund;**
- (f) the medium term implications of this arrangement be considered as part of the update of the Medium Term Financial Strategy in the Autumn of 2016.**

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

CAB.86

DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2016/17 TO 2019/20 AND BUDGET 2016/17

The Leader of the Council introduced this item.

The Cabinet was requested to consider the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2016/17 to 2019/20, budget proposals for 2016/17 and the Pay Policy Statement 2016/17, and to make recommendations thereon to the Council.

The Leader amplified various aspects of the circulated report, including the Cabinet's previous consideration of the draft MTFS; the Government's financial settlement and the range of funding streams; the impact of joint working arrangements and efficiency savings made by the Council; and Business Rates. The Leader considered that Government funding would reduce in the third and fourth years of the draft MTFS. He reminded the Cabinet that the Council sought to protect and deliver frontline services, and

referred to improvements made in some service areas. He considered the proposed budget to be a prudent one, which would enable the Council to freeze its element of Council Tax in 2016/17, parking charges and the charge for 'green bin' collections. The Leader contended that a freeze on the Council's element of Council Tax would mean that, overall, Council Tax would be lower than it had been ten years ago and he commented that the Council had a good record in that respect. He contended that this Council's element of Council Tax was one of the lowest in Gloucestershire, with only Tewkesbury Borough Council setting a lower rate, and stated that the Council should be proud of the level of services it provided.

This report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its Special Meeting on 9th February 2016 and the comments of that Committee had been appended to the circulated report. The Leader expressed his disappointment at the level of responses received in relation to the consultation exercise, but thanked those who had taken the time to respond, and noted that such responses had broadly supported the Council's proposals.

The Cabinet concurred with the views expressed by the Leader. It was considered that the Council was working hard to protect the level of frontline services, to be an 'efficient' Council, and to manage budgetary pressures. It was further considered that a freeze on the Council's element of Council Tax would be a positive statement, given the proposed increases in the Gloucestershire County Council and Police elements.

RECOMMENDED that:

(a) subject to an amendment in relation to a freeze on Council Tax, the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 to 2019/20, the Capital Programme 2016/17 to 2018/19, the Net Budget Requirement for 2016/17 detailed at paragraph 9 of the circulated report, and the Pay Policy Statement 2016/17 attached at Appendix 'D' to the circulated report, be approved;

(b) the reserves identified at paragraph 10.4 of the circulated report be closed and the balances therein transferred to the Council Priorities Fund.

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

Note:

The Leader thanked the Chief Finance Officer and her team for their work in respect of the draft budget.

CAB.87

DRAFT CORPORATE STRATEGY 2016-2019

The Leader of the Council introduced this item.

The Leader referred to the importance of developing a Corporate Strategy and noted that no significant change was being proposed in relation to the Council's on-going policy of being the most efficient Council, which he considered to be a good aspiration. The Leader reminded the Cabinet that the Council's work in respect of its third stated priority, particularly in relation to

flooding, had been recognised by the Government through its financial settlement.

A Member commented that assessing and meeting demands for car parking in Cirencester had been identified as a key task in the Corporate Strategy, and that work was proceeding in that respect.

RECOMMENDED that the draft Corporate Strategy 2016-2019 be approved.

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

CAB.88

STREET NAMING DISCRETIONARY SERVICE PROPOSAL

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Partnerships introduced this item.

The Cabinet considered a report detailing a proposal for the introduction of a discretionary service to assist developers with the siting of street name signs. The Cabinet Member explained that this proposal had been put forward in response to requests from developers for assistance with the siting of street name signs. He drew attention to the suggested fees for the service and commented that the service could generate income in an approximate sum of £5,000 per annum. It was noted that the proposed service would be shared with West Oxfordshire District Council.

RESOLVED that the proposed introduction of a new discretionary service to assist developers with the siting of street naming signs, and the associated charges, be approved.

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

CAB.89

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 Leader of the Council and the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Forward Planning.

CAB.90

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

There were no issues arising from Overview and Scrutiny and/or Audit, apart from the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 to 2019/20 and the Budget 2016/17.

CAB.91

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business that was urgent.

The Meeting commenced at 4.00 p.m. and closed at 4.36 p.m.

Chairman

Cabinet
2016

18th February

(END)