

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Friday, 3rd February, 2017

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Albiston, Allcock, Clark, Cowles, Sansome, Short, Walsh and Wyatt.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Mallinder, Price and Julie Turner.

82. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Allcock declared a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 86 (Amendments to the Housing Allocations Policy) on the grounds of being a Council tenant.

83. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

84. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2017

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th January, 2017 be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

85. BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2017-18

Consideration was given to the report presented by Councillor Read, Leader of the Council, and Judith Badger, Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services, that proposed the Council's Budget and Council Tax for 2017/18 based on the outcome of the Council's Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement, budget consultation and the consideration of Directorate budget proposals through the Council's formal Budget and Scrutiny process (Overview and Scrutiny Management Board) alongside a review of the financial planning assumptions within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

This Budget incorporated over £10m of additional investment in Children and Young People's Services, of which £5.7 m was from reserves. In addition, there was also over £3m of additional direct investment in Adult Social Care alongside indirect budget increases resulting from increased costs of current service provision. It would enable the reinstatement of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Living Wage rate from April, 2017 for the Council's own staff and would also provide £100k funding to help to partially mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform on the most vulnerable and the capital investment plans from the Capital Programme.

In setting the proposed 2017/18 Budget, Cabinet were being asked to recommend to Council an increase of 1.99% in the Council's basic Council Tax and a further 3% increase for the Adult Social Care precept;

a combined increase of 4.99% for 2017/18.

Although this report contained proposals to balance the revenue budget for 2017/18, further work needed to be undertaken to bring forward proposals for future years to enable the Council to establish a clear and sustainable financial plan which addressed the estimated £42m financial gap that remained over the next two years (2018 to 2020).

The Budget would provide resources to support and enable the delivery of the specific savings included within this report and to assist with the development and delivery of the further £42m savings that were required over the next two financial years and should be sustainable moving forward.

This report also provided feedback from both public and partners in relation to the budget proposals that were published on the Council's website for consultation until 3rd January, 2017.

Clarification was sought on a number of areas through Members' questioning and were summarised as:-

- The reviewing and developing of existing services and the need for additional information.
- Supporting adults with disabilities and older people and their carers to be independent and resilient.
- Impact of changes to ordinary prescriptions on older people.
- Expectations and perceptions of public services.
- Service by service approach.
- Delivery and associated costs with asset based community approaches.
- Modernisation and exploration of different delivery models such as shared services and partnering arrangements and the likelihood of this happening.
- Adoption of a more commercial approach to service delivery and the need for transparent robustness with any submitted business plan to Members.
- Drivers for growth and skills and programmes through the Sheffield City Region, including the Brokerage Scheme for Employers, Skills Council and H.E. Campus in Rotherham.
- Encouraging investment into the region.
- Council tax calculations, including the increase in the precept by 1.97% for the Fire and Rescue Authority when fire appliances were being reduced.
- Shared services and resource partnerships.
- Community asset transfer and commercial activity.
- Changes to staff terms and conditions of employment and delivery of the savings.
- Replenishment of reserves and maintaining the value over the medium term.

- Formal consultation and engagement in the budget process.
- Review of the district heating charges and proposals to come forward.
- Investments and review of networking equipment, server equipment and storage area network.
- Use of mobile devices and remote working.
- Monitoring of performance against the budget and the challenges facing Local Authorities.
- Becoming a smaller, more efficient, more connected organisation.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received, the contents noted and the report progress to the Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting.

(2) That a further report be submitted to the Board on consultation and an early commencement of the budget consultation process for 2018/19.

(3) That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board receive further reports on commercialisation and how this could be progressed.

(4) That Councillors and Officers be thanked for their hard work in the budget process and in the development of the budget for 2017/18.

86. **AMENDMENTS TO THE HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY**

Consideration was given to the report presented by Councillor Beck, Cabinet Member for Housing, supported by Sandra Tolley, Housing Options Manager, which detailed the proposed amendments to the Housing Allocations Policy, following a period of review and consultation, and which would come into force from 1st May, 2017.

Six amendments were recommended which aimed to increase tenancy sustainability, take into account lessons learned over the past twelve months, changes brought about by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, give priority to under thirty-five year olds and to prepare for the Homelessness Reduction Bill.

The details of the amendments, as set out in the report, and the rationale behind each one were shared with Board Members.

Resolved:- That the report be received, the contents noted and the report progress to Cabinet and the Commissioners' Decision Making meeting for approval.

(Councillor Allcock declared a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 86 (Amendments to the Housing Allocations Policy) on the grounds of being a Council tenant)

(THE CHAIRMAN AUTHORISED CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM FOR A PRE-SCRUTINY DECISION PRIOR TO CONSIDERATION BY THE CABINET AND COMMISSIONERS ON THE 13TH FEBRUARY, 2017)

87. PROPOSAL TO PERMANENTLY REMOVE PUBLIC PHONE BOXES IN THE BOROUGH

Consideration was given to the report presented by Bronwen Knight, Planning and Building Control Manager, which detailed how British Telecommunications had proposed the removal of forty-eight public telephone boxes around the Borough which they considered to be no longer viable to maintain in use.

Under Ofcom guidance the Council was required to undertake a two stage public consultation on the proposal. After considering comments, raised from the consultation process, the Council would provide a final decision on any telephone boxes which it was in agreement with that British Telecommunications could then remove or any which it considered should remain in active use for public calls.

The Council having undertaken consultation and was now in agreement to the removal of twenty-five of the forty-eight phone boxes. Twenty-three were proposed for retention for public calls under the local veto, the details of which were set out as an appendix to the report.

Discussion ensued on the consultation process, response rate to the consultation, alternative uses for telephone kiosks and the discussions taking place about housing defibrillators, consultation with Parish Councils, the criteria adopted in line with Ofcom guidance and the use of "local veto" by the Council.

Resolved:- That the report be received, the contents noted and the report progress to the Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting for approval.

88. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That a further meeting be held on Friday, 17th February, 2017, at 9.00 a.m.