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**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE****MINUTES**

of the meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on 21 January 2020 between 7.47pm and 8.52pm.

Councillors present:

Sara Bedford (Chairman) (Local Plan)  
Matthew Bedford (Resources and Shared Services)  
Stephen Giles-Medhurst (Transport & Economic Development)  
Steve Drury (Infrastructure and Planning Policy)  
Stephen Cox  
Alex Hayward

Chris Lloyd (Vice-Chairman) (Leisure)  
Andrew Scarth (Housing)  
Reena Ranger  
Roger Seabourne (Community Safety and Partnerships)  
Sarah Nelmes (for Cllr Phil Williams)  
David Sansom  
Alison Wall

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Officers Present: David Hill, Interim Chief Executive  
Joanne Wagstaffe, Director of Finance  
Geof Muggerridge, Director of Community and Environmental Services  
Andy Stovold, Head of Community Partnerships  
Carl Harris, Customer Contract Programme Manager  
Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager

**PR59/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Phil Williams with the substitute Member being Councillors Sarah Nelmes.

**PR60/19 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 9 December 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

**PR61/19 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman ruled that the following item of business had not been available 5 clear working days before the meeting but was of sufficient urgency for the following reason:

**Item 10 - APPOINTMENT TO THE HERTFORDSHIRE BUILDING CONTROL BOARD**

To enable the Council to appoint a new Director on the Board.

**PR62/19 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None received.

## **PR63/19 TO RECEIVE A PETITION UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 18**

The Committee received the following petition, presented by the Lead Petitioner.

Watford Rural Parish is losing out on funding: Three Rivers District Council have applied a Zero Rate Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to all new local developments. This "Developments' Tax" is used to fund local facilities including education, highways, playgrounds and leisure facilities. Our Parish area has seen significant development, particularly in South Oxhey, but has not received a single penny of funding from the "Developers' Tax".

In other Three Rivers Parishes, developers must pay CIL rates of £120 or £180 per square metre on developments above a certain size. For example, the new Batchworth Community Council (less than two years old) has already received over £200,000 of CIL funding – Our Parish gets nothing which is simply not fair. We would urge you to sign our petition to help bring a change to this unfair policy.

The Chairman advised the Lead Petitioner as follows:

- There appeared to be a fundamental misunderstanding regarding the way developer contributions were raised and spent.
- The Council had taken the decision to adopt CIL with the rates specified in 2015 and that this had been supported by councillors of all parties.
- There was one big difference between CIL and Section 106 contributions in that CIL could be spent in any area of the District. It was not limited to being spent in the area to which it was raised. Section 106 funds could only be spent for that development.
- CIL is based on a set rate which will facilitate development. If it was set at too high a rate, development would not take place or it would come forward without providing any other forms of contributions to the local infrastructure.
- Under the terms approved when CIL was adopted, it was agreed that the South Oxhey development would receive Section 106 contributions to go to schools, medical facilities and other facilities. The exact locations are determined by the responsible authority e.g. Hertfordshire County Council, CCG.
- Around £1m had been paid for local facilities from the developments in South Oxhey.
- If residents were not seeing a difference in the roads, local schools or medical facilities, they needed to talk to the County Council and the CCG who were responsible.
- There were no sites currently selected under the current Local Plan anywhere in the District. Sites had been put forward by developers but none had yet been selected.
- The only site which had been ruled out was the land on which the South Oxhey Jets were located, to allow them to negotiate the renewal of their lease.
- The CIL rates will be recalculated as part of the Local Plan process.
- If Watford Rural received CIL using the same calculations as Abbots Langley (which was £120 per sqm index linked), the amount available would have only been £9,000 which was set against over a £1m in Section 106 contributions.

She thanked the Lead Petitioner for presenting the petition.

**RESOLVED:**

That the receipt of the petition be noted and a letter sent to the Lead Petitioner on response provided to the petition.

## **PR64/19 HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

Since the formation of the Hertfordshire Growth Board in September 2018 Leaders and Chief Executives of the eleven Hertfordshire Councils and the Local Enterprise Partnership have worked together to develop a Place Leadership model for Hertfordshire. In March 2019 the Growth Board development programme was commissioned. This six-month supported programme has explored how issues relating to housing, infrastructure, and funding can be jointly addressed in future. This programme reached a major milestone at the September Growth Board meeting where an ambitious forward work programme was approved and the transition into an implementation phase was started.

At the September meeting Leaders also agreed to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to signal their intent to work collaboratively on place-based issues to central government, partners, and Hertfordshire residents. This document would help set out the objectives of the work to be undertaken through the Hertfordshire Growth Board, the principles which the parties will apply to their work and to working with each other, and what is – and what is not – within its scope.

A Member referred to Paragraphs 2.2 and 5.2 in the MoU on the growth challenges the partners faced and the areas which would remain within the domain of each individual Partner. They asked if the all the partners would play fairly. The Chairman advised that each Authority would remain sovereign over the number of houses that were agreed and built. What the Partners can do was to agree the points set out in 2.2 of the MoU and the challenges facing us all and work together on the infrastructure to be provided. Nobody conducted their entire life within the boundaries of their Council area so we needed to ensure that the infrastructure provided was in suitable places across the whole of Hertfordshire.

A Member referred to Paragraph 5.1 of the report which said the signing of the MoU did not commit any Hertfordshire Council or Local Enterprise Partnership to expenditure at this stage but wondered if there would be expenditure later. The Chairman advised that at this time it was just the signing of the MoU. If something came up where we would want to build some infrastructure like a road and it was, for example, 10 yards outside our District boundary we could consider that it was helpful to be involved. At the moment we were not committing any financial contribution.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation was declared CARRIED by the Chairman the voting being unanimous.

### **RECOMMEND:**

That Council agrees to the Memorandum of Understanding set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

## **PR65/19 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY**

The Customer Experience Strategy 2019-23 builds on the existing good work from the Customer Programme Strategy from July 2012 which focused on 'changing the face of Customer Services'. Its aim was to identify how customers accessed our services. The 2012 strategy delivered a number of successes in creating and implementing digital platforms, including a new customer relationship management system. This will allow for continued customer channel migration in the new Customer

Experience Strategy, which will help us make further improvements to the services and experience we provide to our residents, businesses, stakeholders and visitors. The Customer Experience Strategy will also bring the current redevelopment project for Three Rivers House into one strategy. Excellent work has already taken place with the relocation of office staff to the first floor. The strategy will now look at making the reception area and customer facing areas welcoming, modern, flexible and able to support staff in delivering the strategy.

A Member raised concern about the request for a further £100,000 to support the delivery of the strategy. There was no information on what this amount would be used for. There was also mention of £244,000 for the redesign of the reception area and wondered if this had come to the Committee. The Director of Finance advised that this was an existing budget which had already been provided through the approvals process and was identified as Three Rivers House. Within the report at Paragraph 6.4 there were details on the potential additional budget requirements of around £56k. The remaining amount would be for other projects as they came forward around the technology for the pieces of work which would need to be done. The request for the £100k was that it be considered as part of the budget setting process. If the funding was not provided the Council could still do some of the work.

A Member asked about e-billing for Council Tax as 5% take up seemed very low. The Director of Finance said it was very difficult to get people to sign up to this. The Council does campaigns every year as part of the Council Tax distribution and also organised other campaigns throughout the year. The Member asked if the Council had considered giving incentives similar to those offered by utility companies. The Director of Finance said if Members wished this to be looked at it could but there would be a cost implication.

The Chairman said that the increase in the Council Tax was likely to be in the region of single figure pounds and the incentive could not be more than around £5 otherwise the Council would not get any extra money in from the increase. She was not sure she would be incentivised with the chances of winning a voucher. If other partners were interested (i.e. the County Council) then it could be a possibility. The Customer Contract Programme Manager advised that the Council had looked at incentives last year and found another Council had offered a draw for a year's free Council Tax for people who signed up to e-billing. They had found that once the draw was over there was no increase in the number of people using e-billing to the number of people before the draw.

A Member asked if residents would still be able to telephone the Council as the amount of telephone calls was reducing. The Customer Contract Programme Manager said the Council was looking at the transactions where there was little value to be gained by talking to someone. It was those transactions which would be moved to other channels so that people who needed face to face or telephone communication would be able to do so. It was requested that Members get a list of which services were being moved. The Customer Contract Programme Manager said details could be provided on the services to be moved online. An example of a service already moved online was the e-collection calendars which residents actually used and had resulted in a reduction in telephone calls. This change was supported by other social media channels like Facebook and Twitter. Every Sunday at 5pm the Council posted details on the waste collections the following week and was one of the most popular posts receiving lots of positive comments. A Member thought the social media following had gone down but the Customer Contract Programme Manager advised it had gone up when compared to 2017. Our Facebook following was up 85% and twitter was up 13%. In 2017 we had no Instagram followers but it was now around 800. The Chairman said that a lot of people did not work the standard hours and if you got home and found your bin had been missed. It was easier to send an email rather than having to wait for office hours to be able to phone up.

A Member said the webpage reviews had gone down. It was advised that the Council was looking to review the website and improve the information flows and how to find information. The Director of Finance said that £50k had been set aside to review the website to make it more functional and one of the early things to be done was look at the search functionality. The Chairman said there was also a growth bid for Mod.gov which if successful would very much improve how documents were searched for. The Council had received some very positive feedback on our customer service recently and also with regard to the organisation of a replacement bin which was resolved in 24 hours and was described as better than Amazon.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation was declared carried the voting being 9 For, 0 Against and 4 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee agree:

the realignment of budgets as set out in;

the appointment of an apprentice post to support the delivery of the Customer Experience Strategy.

that £100,000 to support the delivery of the Customer Experience Strategy is considered as part of the budget setting process.

RECOMMEND:

That the Committee recommend to Council:

the adoption of the Customer Experience Strategy.

**PR66/19 REVOCATION OF DELEGATED POWERS TO HOLD A MARKET IN ST ANDREWS ROAD SOUTH OXHEY DUE TO RELOCATION OF THE MARKET AS PART OF THE SOUTH OXHEY DEVELOPMENT**

The current market operated by Watford Rural Parish Council (WRPC) at St Andrews Road precinct is due to be relocated shortly as part of the redevelopment of South Oxhey. Countryside Properties Ltd (CS) has been working with TRDC and WRPC to move the market to Prestwick Road and a suitable site and facilities are already in place. Officers at the Council have been in discussions with WRPC which are ongoing over the practicalities and exact timings. CS will facilitate the physical infrastructure for the new market place. WRPC is responsible for procurement, appointment (following TRDC agreement) and overall management of the market operator.

A Member said they understood that Watford Rural Parish Council (WRPC) had difficulty in part of the recommendation at 8.3.1. The Member was not entirely sure it was for this Council to decide who the operator of the market should be. They felt that WRPC should be deciding this and not this Council.

Councillor Stephen Cox moved an amendment to the recommendation that the operator be chosen by WRPC.

The Chairman said it was the Council's market and it was for this Council to delegate the running of the market. Whilst the views of WRPC would be taken into account it was Three Rivers' market and this Council's right to delegate this power. The Council needed to have the oversight of who would run it.

The Member said WRPC was unhappy about the recommendation. The Member was also unsure how the delegation was going to work between the Leader, the

CEO and the 3 Ward Members. The Chairman said in this situation the decision is delegated to the CEO in consultation with the Leader and the Ward Councillors so it was not a vote. The Council had a legal responsibility for what happened with the market.

A Member asked what the proposed floor area would be for the new market area compared to the old site. The Director of Community and Environmental Services said he would provide a written response. He knew the details on the new site had been through a full consultation and WRPC was supportive of the new site.

#### POST MEETING NOTE:

The exact location is not specified, but the available space is approximately 688 square metres, between Prestwick Road and the new shops fronting Market Place.

A Member sought clarification on the fact that the decision on the operator rested with the District Council because it is the Council's market. The Council as the landowner authorised the establishment of South Oxhey Market and delegated its power to operate the market to Watford Rural Parish Council. That delegation would be revoked with the relocation of the market. A new delegation, with the consent of Countryside Properties as leaseholder, would be made and the Council will again look to delegate authority to operate to the Parish.

#### POST MEETING NOTE

The Director of Community and Environmental Services confirmed that the Chairman's comments were correct.

A Member sought clarification on the consultation with the Ward Councillors as the site was within the South Oxhey Ward. The Chairman said the definition of Ward Councillors can include 3, 6, 9 or 12 depending on the level of interest. The consultation with the Ward Councillors was purely discretionary and was not part of the decision making process. The Chairman provided other examples of consultation being undertaken with Ward Councillors was provided to the Committee

On being put to the Committee the recommendation was declared carried the voting being 9 For, 0 Against and 4 Abstentions.

#### RECOMMEND:

That on or before the 20 March 2020 the Council revokes the powers delegated to Watford Rural Parish Council in 1990 to hold a market at St Andrews Road, South Oxhey and that the Chief Executive be authorised to formally revoke that delegation and to take all necessary steps in connection with the revocation.

That the Council using Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 agrees to delegate its powers under Section 50 of the Food Act 1984 to Watford Rural Parish Council to hold a market in Prestwick Road South Oxhey on the basis that the Parish Council will seek and obtain all necessary permissions licences and consents to operate a market at Prestwick Road at its own cost.

That the Chief Executive (in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Ward Councillors) be authorised to agree and approve:-

- all the specific details around the delegation including, but not limited to, the date the delegated powers can be exercised from, the actual location of the market in Prestwick Road and any decisions on the Operator of the market.
- the Business Plan to be produced by Watford Rural Parish Council.

## **PR67/19 CORPORATE FRAMEWORK 2020-23**

The report presents the proposed Corporate Framework 2020-23 and provides feedback on the consultation undertaken with stakeholders. The Framework, if agreed, would form part of the Strategic Service and Financial Planning arrangements for 2020-23. Officers were still working on the Performance Indicators for the new framework and a workshop was being held the next day to work on that.

A Member referred to the number of responses received which was quite low. The Head of Community Partnership said the Council had used two different methodologies targeting the public and our partners through our partnership structures. Often, broad corporate strategies did not get many responses but that was the nature of these types of consultation. If the Council surveyed on a specific issue we might get more feedback. On some previous online surveys we had received around a 1,000 responses. The Council found that not many people responded to general consultations as they don't have any interest in responding. A Member asked if there were other ways to do the survey including the use of survey monkey and social media postings. The Head of Community Partnerships advised that the Council already used social media and survey monkey. We could be more pro-active in promoting them but it would require a lot more resource and funding. The timetable for this consultation was dictated to by the budget setting process.

Councillor Matthew Bedford moved, duly seconded, the recommendation.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation was declared carried the voting being unanimous.

### **RECOMMEND:**

Considered the consultation feedback on the draft Corporate Framework 2020-23 and any further changes before it is presented to Council for approval.

## **PR68/19 APPOINTMENT TO THE HERTFORDSHIRE BUILDING CONTROL BOARD**

The purpose of the report was to appoint the Head of Regulatory Services as a Director on Hertfordshire Building Control Board.

A Member asked if there was any remuneration for the role and why was our new CEO not replacing the Interim CEO. The Director of Community and Environmental Services advised that there was no remuneration. As the report set out there were a number of roles and this was a way of spreading the roles. The new CEO would have a lot of new functions to deal with so for the time being it was felt the Head of Regulatory Services be appointed as she was involved in the process. The CEO could take on one of the roles in the future. The appointment also allowed the Head of Regulatory Services to take on new responsibility for her career development. The Interim Chief Executive advised that most of the other Councils appointed a Technical Director/Head of Service who had the technical knowledge for the role.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation was declared carried the voting being unanimous.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the appointment at Paragraph 3.1 (Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services) be agreed and apply the usual indemnity for this appointment.

## **PR69/19 RECOMMENDATION TO POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE FROM THE INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7 JANUARY 2020**

Councillor Stephen Giles Medhurst moved, duly seconded, the recommendation. The matter had been discussed at the IHED Committee on 7 January 2020 and had been agreed unanimously.

Since 2005 the Council had provided an additional subsidy for one extra Dial-A-Ride bus. We were the only District in the County to do so. There would continue to be one single Dial-a-Ride bus. This new service would replace the second bus which had been also been replaced in St Albans, Hertsmere and Welwyn and Hatfield. This new service which would go to various areas as was detailed in the Part II confidential papers and was a community based function providing a dedicated service for residents which was not provided as part of the second Dial-a Ride bus. In the current IHED budget there was £33k a year which may need to increase to £40k. He felt the new service would enhance the service for residents particularly those in isolated areas and which did not have ready access to other methods of sustainable transport.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation was declared carried the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

Agrees to reallocate the existing funding from the additional discretionary dial-a-ride bus to a new community shopper service and also recommends to Policy and Resources Committee that an additional budget of £6,220 be committed to the new community shopper service.

That public access to Appendix A be denied until the contract is awarded.

#### **PR70/19 FINANCIAL PLANNING 2020-2023**

This report was an introduction to the three agenda items that follow.

The Director of Finance said this was the Officer proposals around the budget which would go to Council with any relevant changes. The Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services said as in previous years the Administration would take its budget proposal to full Council. The papers did include the budget monitoring for the current year if there were any questions.

RESOLVED:

That this report be noted.

#### **PR71/19 FINANCIAL PLANNING – REVENUE SERVICES**

The purpose of this report is to enable the Policy and Resources Committee to recommend to the Council the medium term revenue budgets. This report is the first of three that are covered together under the recommendations reported at **Item 15** on this agenda.

RESOLVED:

That this report be noted.

#### **PR72/19 FINANCIAL PLANNING – CAPITAL STRATEGY AND THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The purpose of this report is to enable the Policy and Resources Committee to recommend to the Council its capital strategy and treasury management policy

over the medium term (2020-23). This report is the second of three that is covered under the recommendations report at **Item 15** on this agenda.

RESOLVED:

That this report be noted.

#### **PR73/19 FINANCIAL PLANNING – RECOMMENDATIONS**

This report enabled the Committee to make its recommendations on the Council's Revenue and Capital budgets and Treasury Management Policy for the period 2019-22 (medium term) to Council on 25 February 2020.

RECOMMEND:

Noted that the Administration will publish its final recommendations on Financial Planning 2020-2023 five working days prior to the Council meeting on 25 February 2020 and present them at this meeting

#### **PR74/19 WORK PROGRAMME**

To receive the Committee's work programme.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

#### **PR75/19 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

"that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act. It has been decided by the Council that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information."

#### **PR76/19 PROPOSAL FOR AN IMPROVED COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SERVICE**

To consider Appendix A to item 10 above.

RESOLVED:

That public access to Appendix A be denied until the contract is awarded.

#### **PR77/19 PROPERTY INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Item Deferred.

**CHAIRMAN**