
POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**DRAFT MINUTES**

of the meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on 9 March 2020 between 7.30pm and 8.15pm.

Councillors present:

Sara Bedford (Chairman) (Local Plan)
Matthew Bedford (Resources and Shared Services)
Alex Hayward
Marilyn Butler (for Cllr David Sansom)
Sarah Nelmes (for Cllr Stephen Giles-Medhurst)

Chris Lloyd (Vice-Chairman) (Leisure)
Andrew Scarth (Housing)
Reena Ranger
Roger Seabourne (Community Safety and Partnerships)
Phil Williams (Lead Member for Environmental Services & Sustainability)

Officers Present: Joanne Wagstaffe, Chief Executive
Geof Muggerridge, Director of Community and Environmental Services
Alison Scott, Interim Director of Finance
Andy Stovold, Head of Community Partnerships
Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager

PR78/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stephen Giles-Medhurst (with the substitute being Councillor Sarah Nelmes), David Sansom (with the substitute being Councillor Marilyn Butler), Stephen Cox and Alison Wall.

PR79/19 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 21 January 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

PR80/19 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

None received.

PR81/19 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None received.

PR82/19 REVIEW OF SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS AT RISK POLICY

The report recommended changes to the Council's Safeguarding Children Young People and Adults at Risk Policy in order to bring it up to date and in line with the requirements of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board.

A Member said the report was very good. They asked about the referral process and how teachers and doctors make referrals. The Head of Community Partnerships advised that these procedures were just for the Council Officers and that doctors and teachers had their own referral process.

On being put to the Committee the recommendations were declared CARRIED by the Chairman the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

Agreed the revised Safeguarding Children Young People and Adults at Risk Policy; and

That Officers review this policy by 2023.

PR83/19 EXEMPTION FROM PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE RULES – COMMITTEE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The report advised Members that an exemption to the Procurement process was approved by the Director of Finance under the Limited Market exemption as permitted by the Council's Constitution.

In response to Members question on the exemption it was confirmed the exemption was approved by the Director of Finance to award the contract to one supplier as there is a very limited market of companies who can provide this type software and functionality. In addition, it was understood that the proposed supplier provided the software and support to around 75-80% of the Councils in England making it unique to the functions that local authorities require for their Council meetings.

In response to a Member question on past meeting data, including reports and agendas, and whether the information would still be available the Principal Committee Manager advised that the information would be. The new software would make it easier for Members to find past reports, put meeting dates in their calendars and review Member attendance at meetings.

The Director of Finance advised that a best value for money exercise had been undertaken.

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

RESOLVED:

Noted the action taken.

PR84/19 BUDGET MONITORING – MONTH 10 (January)

The budget monitoring report is a key tool in scrutinising the Council's financial performance. It is designed to provide an overview to all relevant stakeholders. It is essential that the council monitors its budgets throughout the year to ensure that it is meeting its strategic objectives and that corrective action is taken where necessary.

The report seeks approval to a change in the Committee's 2019 - 2023 medium-term revenue financial plan. The report shows the Council's overall consolidated medium term financial plan for both revenue and capital.

Councillor Matthew Bedford moved, duly seconded, the recommendation.

Members raised the following points and the following responses were provided:

On Page 6 – the Shops when would the number of self-repairing leases reduce to 20 – the Director of Community and Environmental Services replied that Phase 1 of the South Oxhey Initiative had been completed and the shops were all occupied. The shopping parade was part of Phase 2 and Phase 3 was at the planning application stage and was awaiting approval and would progressed, if approved, over the next couple of years. The budget had therefore been phased accordingly.

On Page 10 - licenses why had there been a reduction in income. The Director of Community and Environmental Services advised this was due to there being less applications received and having more safeguards in place on the checking processes for the licences. Officers were not aware that the Council was losing out to Uber but would check with Officers and advise Members.

Post Meeting Note: *Officers recognise that licences across the service which includes taxis, licenced premises, temporary events, gambling and street trading have declined and certain reasons were set out within the recent licensing fee review. During the review it was highlighted that for taxi licensing, especially for Operators and Drivers, there were various factors which had led to reduced volume levels such as the market within the district being saturated over recent years, advances in technology such as Uber (mobile applications) and the additional requirements needed to become a licenced driver at Three Rivers following stricter policy changes. Whilst this is the case, numbers are still relatively high and for example over 160 drivers renewed their driver licence last financial year. With regards to vehicle licences, numbers have steadily been reducing from their peak in 2015/16. Officers consider that this drop is partly due to stricter requirements in relation to age and emissions. For premises licences, income has largely remained the same for a number of years, however there have been notable reductions in personal licences and gambling licences over recent years, the latter of which may have reduced potentially due to the decline in high street betting shops following stricter government controls on machines.*

On the reduction in parking income the Council had been reviewing on street parking with a number of consultations taken place but not all the schemes had been implemented. In addition, the number of penalty notices issued had reduced therefore reducing the amount of income received.

With regard to the Watersmeet income and the profit received on the Pantomime this had increased considerably over recent years. There had been changes made to the Pantomime which had seen a slight reduction last year on the previous year Pantomime. Attracting people to a venue like Watersmeet had its challenges. There had been no complaints received regarding the production and cost for the last Pantomime. The increase in income was also due to the range of films and other shows being offered. There were still costs to run the venue and as it was a community facility it was not possible to charge the highest commercial rates.

With regard to the Leisure income increasing in a few years' time this was because the fact that the leisure centre and swimming pool in South Oxhey was

being redeveloped but once completed the income received would increase again. In addition, not all the sports halls were open at present. SLM, the leisure service providers, would also as part of the contract be providing the Council with more income from Year 3. The Director of Community and Environmental Services said he would provide a written response to clarify this.

Post Meeting Note: *The management fee is profiled over the duration of the contract. In the first year of the contract the Council paid SLM a management fee. In the second year of the contract SLM paid the Council a management fee. By the start of year 3 i.e. 1 July 2020 it was anticipated that South Oxhey Leisure Centre was fully operational and Sir James Altham Pool was closed, with a larger management fee to the Council when compared to the previous year. With the impact of corona virus, the finishing date of the construction works has been delayed at South Oxhey Leisure Centre. All Leisure Centres are presently closed following Government guidance.*

A written reply would be provided on the cost of the Asset Management Property Services team.

Post Meeting Note: *The cost of the Asset Management Property Services team is circa £170,000. This is the cost of the staff making up the team (incl. full time interim) plus a third of the cost of the Head of Property.*

On Garden Waste the Council was making a loss so could the cost of the 2nd bin be reduced to increase the revenue received. The Director of Community and Environmental Services said that extensive modelling takes place and to reduce the cost of the 2nd bin would increase the costs of providing the service and could impact on the refuse vehicle loads and number of collections.

On the Abbots Langley Project why was there no Officer comment. It was advised that there was no variance therefore no Officer comment had been provided. The project was a Heritage project funded by the Lottery.

Clarification was requested on the Growth Bid submitted for the Climate Change Officer which indicated the likely salary cost of £36,000 + on-costs.

Post Meeting Note: *This accounts for £50,000 of the growth budget, with the remaining £30,000 being available for project work.*

It was noted that there were 20 vacancies in the Council which equated to 7% of the workforce.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation was declared carried the voting being 9 For, 0 Against and 3 Abstentions.

RECOMMEND:

That the following revenue and capital budget variations be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan:-

Variance	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £
Revenue - (Favourable)/ Unfavourable	(112,370)	0	0	0
Capital - Increase / (Decrease)	(2,562,815)	2,401,44 5	0	0

PR85/19 FINAL SERVICE PLANS 2020-2023

The Committee received the following final service plans for recommendation to Council:

Legal
Committee
Elections
Finance
Corporate Services
Customer Service Centre
Revenue and Benefits
Property Services
Economic Development and Sustainability (only with regard to the Local Plan)

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

RECOMMEND:

That the final service plans be noted and be recommended to Council for approval.

PR86/19 WORK PROGRAMME

To receive the Committee's work programme.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

PR87/19 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chairman moved the following motion and it was agreed:

“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.”

PR88/19 PROPERTY INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Committee received a report on a property Investment Opportunity. It was noted that a report had been received at the Council meeting on 25 February 2020.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation was declared CARRIED the voting being 7 For, 3 Against and 0 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That public access to the report and decision be denied subject to the Non-Disclosure Agreement.

CHAIRMAN