

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

CABINET

Minutes from the Meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 13th March, 2018 at 5.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillor B Long (Chairman)
Councillors A Beales, R Blunt, I Devereux, P Hodson, A Lawrence,
Mrs K Mellish and Mrs E Nockolds

CAB124 MINUTES

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 February 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB125 URGENT BUSINESS

None

CAB126 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CAB127 CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE

The Chairman reported receipt of a letter from the King's Lynn Coastal Rowing Club thanking the Council and Councillors Nockolds and Beales in particular for their assistance with the Club's accommodation issues in recent times.

CAB128 MEMBERS PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor D Pope attended for the Non Domestic Rates Discretionary Relief Policy Update and the Treasury Management item.

CAB129 CALLED IN MATTERS

None

CAB130 FORWARD DECISIONS

The Forward Decisions List was noted.

CAB131 MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET FROM OTHER BODIES

None

CAB132 NON DOMESTIC RATES DISCRETIONARY RELIEF POLICY UPDATE

The Revenues and Benefits Manager presented the report which invited Members to agree the refreshed wording of the Discretionary Relief policy. There were no changes to the actual criteria for receiving relief, or to any of the Discretionary Reliefs already awarded.

The Council was able to award Discretionary Relief to its ratepayers to reduce or remit their Non Domestic Rates (Business Rates) bill.

The Council must approve any awards of Discretionary Relief. This was achieved by having a Discretionary Relief Policy agreed by Members, allowing Officers to award reliefs where the policy criteria were met. For many years the Council had operated a Discretionary Relief policy that gave help to charitable, not for profit and sporting organisations, based in the Borough and whose work benefits the local community.

The Discretionary Relief Policy had been updated on an ad hoc basis over the years and now lacked a logical flow. Some government funded reliefs had also ended. The policy had been reviewed and refreshed and the report contained the updated policy and noted the changes which had been made.

Delegated authority to the Council Leader was also requested to decide any applications not meeting the criteria in the relief policy.

Under Standing Order 34 Councillor Pope asked if those categories in 3.1 that had been removed were charged business rates. The Revenues and Benefits Manager explained that if the category came below a certain Rateable Value, there were no business rates to pay.

RECOMMENDED: 1) That the changes to the refreshed policy be adopted from 1 April 2018.

2) That delegated authority be given to the Council Leader to decide any applications not meeting the criteria in the relief policy.

Reason for Decision

To ensure a current Non Domestic Rates Discretionary Relief policy is in place.

CAB133 NORFOLK STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The LDF Manager presented a report on the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF) which was an expression of the Borough Council's commitments under the 'Duty to Cooperate'. Whilst not a formal policy document (it did not form part of the statutory Development Plan), it was the intention that each of the Councils in Norfolk support the framework and in so doing agree to prepare Local Plans having regard to it. This provided Local Plan Inspectors with, amongst other mechanisms, a clear demonstration of active and ongoing engagement in the discussion of strategic planning issues under the Duty at political as well as officer level.

RESOLVED: That the document be approved and the framework endorsed as part of the Council's ongoing Duty to Cooperate activity

Reason for Decision

It is recommended that Cabinet endorse the document to provide the Council with further demonstration of a continued and active engagement in strategic planning activity under the Localism Act's Duty to Cooperate.

CAB134 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018/19

The Group Accountant presented the report which explained that the Council was required to receive and approve a Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy which covered:

- Capital plans, including prudential indicators
- A Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy
- The Treasury Management Strategy
- An Investment Strategy

The report covered the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants (CIPFA) Prudential Code, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) MRP Guidance, the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and the MHCLG Investment Guidance.

The report looked at the period 2018/2022 which fitted with the Council's Financial Plan and Capital Programme. The report was based upon the Treasury officers' views on interest rates, supplemented with leading market forecasts provided by the Council's treasury advisor, Link Asset Services.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Pope asked the following with the answers given or made the comment:

- Were Link Asset Services the old Capita – yes
- Were some of the figures achievable – such as the new homes being built if the capital receipts weren't achieved due to the housing market dropping. Councillor Beales explained that the elements of the major developments had been split into phases, each of which required approval. The Council already owned the land and it was always a possibility to stop building. The risks were mitigated. It was also commented that it was providing much needed housing for the area and the Government was now pushing Councils to build houses.
- The counter party risks still needed to be considered – short term borrowing would be better than long term. It was confirmed that short term borrowing would be cheaper than the long term, but borrowing was amended for the benefit of the Council.
- The report referred to the decision making body in 12 c – which body was that – it was confirmed it was Cabinet and Council if required.
- Was it a possibility to cancel loans mid way if not favourable (14b) – it wasn't possible to cancel loans, the risk was reflected in the interest rate paid.
- Concern was raised about the £10m in lobo loans 10 years ago – Cabinet was reminded that the loans were taken out for the Housing Transfer which could not have taken place without them, and over their lifetime the rates were acceptable.

Councillor Beales asked how the level of authorised limit of borrowing was reached, to which it was explained that it was an internal calculation of the level of internal debt and space to cover anything required.

RECOMMENDED: 1) That the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2018/2019, including treasury indicators for 2018/2022 be approved.

2) That the Investment Strategy 2018/2019 be approved.

3) That the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy 2018/2019 be approved.

Reason for the Decision

The Council must produce a Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2018/2019 by 31 March 2018.

CAB135 POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW - MARSHLAND ST JAMES

Councillor Long presented the report which presented a revised Polling District and Polling Place Review Schedule. The proposal moved the Polling station from the Jubilee Hall Marshland St James to the new Marshland Hall.

RECOMMENDED: That the Polling District and Polling Place Review Schedule attached to the report, with the change to marshland St James Polling Station be adopted.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations.

CAB136 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100(A)(4) 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 in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CAB137 CABINET REPORT HARDSHIP RELIEF REFUSAL APPEAL

Councillor Long invited the applicant to present their case to the Cabinet.

The applicant presented their appeal for a 5 minute period to Cabinet and left the meeting to enable Cabinet to debate the item.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager presented a report which explained that there was no statutory right of appeal against a decision to refuse Hardship

Relief, however the Hardship Relief guidelines stated that a ratepayer could ask for their application to be reconsidered by the Council's Cabinet.

Cabinet considered a report on the refusal of an application for Relief and the appeal for reconsideration of that decision.

RESOLVED: That the decision not to award Hardship Relief be upheld and an appropriately worded letter be sent to the applicant.

Reason for Decision

To ensure the decision regarding Hardship Relief is reviewed. The Hardship Relief guidelines state the Council's Cabinet can be asked to reconsider any decision regarding Hardship Relief.

The meeting closed at 6.37 pm