

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL ON 11 APRIL 2019
FROM CABINET ON 26 MARCH 2019

CAB134: REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF THE PLANNING SIFTING PANEL

Councillor Blunt presented a report which set out the details of the review of the Planning Sifting Panel which had been carried out after 12 months operation. In addition the detail of what is meant by 'exceptional circumstances' as set out in the original Cabinet report is to be reviewed. It was noted that the correspondence sent to the Chairman of the Corporate Performance Panel had been forwarded on to the Cabinet.

Under Standing Order 34, Mrs S Fraser addressed the Cabinet. She had attended the majority of the sifting meetings as an observer and whilst had started out not supporting it was now fully in support of it and considered that the views of the parishes were heard in the process.

Councillor T Parish addressed the Cabinet expressing the view that parish councils should have been consulted as they were the customers. He also had reservations about the amount of time permitted to call an item in to committee as he considered it too short.

The Assistant Director responded that the statutory consultation requirement was 21 days notice, but the Council gave 28 days from the publication of the weekly list, which was more generous than most others.

Councillor Blunt also referred to the fact that parishes were asked for planning reasons for objections but were often not given. However, if the Panel had any concerns the decision would be taken by Committee. He confirmed that further planning training was to be offered to parishes and if their objections meant the items were submitted to Committee they were encouraged to speak at the meeting.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Mrs V Spikings addressed the Cabinet in support of the sifting panel. She explained that all the statutory consultees had to be taken into account and this was checked in the sifting panel. She acknowledged that some parishes did still need further training on the issue. She drew attention to the fact that officers could concentrate on writing fewer report and the Committee could concentrate fully on a more manageable number of items being submitted to it.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor J Moriarty addressed the Cabinet and referred to the fact that the original item was called in to the Corporate Performance Panel, and to the Chief Executive's comments permitting that call in to be heard, but which was rejected by the Panel when heard. He made reference to a meeting of the sifting panel he had studied where parish views were not deemed to be planning reasons. He suggested that the parishes should be asked if they wanted the sifting process to be continued or not.

The Executive Director explained that it would have been helpful for Councillor Moriarty to have sat in on a few of the meetings as there were a number of incidences where there were valid planning reasons given and these went to committee. The number of applications being submitted to Committee was too high with the capacity to hold the attention pressed to the limit on occasions. The agendas were now more manageable. It was noted that the Chairman of the sifting panel was happy for any Councillor could attend the sifting panel to observe if they wished.

Councillor Blunt commented that the changes were better use of officers time. The Leader, in proposing the recommendations, commented that it would be for the Corporate Performance Panel to decide if they wished to monitor its progress further.

RECOMMENDED: 1) That the results of the review of the sifting panel which has been operating for 12 months and the comments of the Corporate Performance Panel be noted.

2) That the continued operation of the sifting panel be endorsed

3) That the comments made on the issue of 'exceptional circumstances' be noted.

Reason for Decision

The operation of the sifting panel has reduced the amount of applications going to Planning Committee by 19% compared to the previous year. This enables the committee to concentrate better on those applications that do go, and has also helped free up capacity within the section. It is considered that the panel has worked well over the 12 months it has been in operation.

CAB135: RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY REVIEW

Councillor Hodson presented a report which explained that the Council's Risk Management Policy and Strategy was last reviewed and approved by Council on 1 March 2016. That review split the existing document into two documents, policy and strategy, and linked risk management more closely to the achievement of the council's objectives. The risk appetite was formally recognised within the policy, and the strategy provided a means of escalating risks from service and project level to the corporate risk register where necessary.

The policy had reached its scheduled review point and a refreshed version had been considered by Audit Committee in November 2018 and January 2019.

It was also noted that the Corporate business plan would be reviewed post- election, which meant that the risks would be re-assessed at that time.

A discussion ensued on when risks should be reported to the Cabinet, it was agreed that the Audit Committee would consider those, but significant risks would be drawn to Cabinet Members attention when they arose.

RECOMMENDED: That Council approve the Risk Management Policy and Strategy.

Reason for Decision

To ensure there is a comprehensive and up to date framework for the Council's management of risk.

CAB138: TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2019/20

The Deputy Chief Executive presented a report which explained that the Council was required to receive and approve a Treasury Management Strategy Statement; Annual Investment Strategy; and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement which covered:

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

- 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 Council's Treasury Advisor, Link Asset Services, provided a template document for the Treasury Management Strategy Statement.

The Council had used this template in preparing the report.

The report looked at the period 2019-2023 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 Link Asset Services. The Deputy Chief Executive undertook to publish the latest version of the rates for members attention.

Under Standing order 34 Councillor Joyce addressed Cabinet and commented that the Strategy was to ensure that background checks were done on anyone wanting to go into partnership with the Council and be paid any money. He considered that checklist had not been followed. He commented that the Council should be in a position where it could pull back if it needed to.

The Leader thanked officers for preparing the document, acknowledged that it was a challenging programme ahead for the Council which often meant pushing the envelope and that professional advisors were relied upon.

RECOMMENDED: 1) That the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2019/2020, including treasury indicators for 2019-2023 be approved.

2) That the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy 2019/2020

3) That the Investment Strategy 2019/2020

Reason for the Decision

The council must produce a Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2019/2020 by 31 March 2019.