

## **COUNCIL – 18 December 2014**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

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48/234

**EXECUTIVE: 13 NOVEMBER 2014**

#### **LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME**

The Executive noted that the Welfare Reform Act required local authorities to introduce a local reduction scheme each year to replace Council Tax Benefit. The scheme affected residents of working age and receiving benefits, or on low levels of income or earnings. The initial scheme established in 2013/14 was continued into 2014/15 and the proposal was to extend it for a third year.

The Executive Member for Housing and Welfare, Councillor Mrs R. Renton, informed the Executive that the total expenditure on Council Tax Support in the current year was around £6.7m. The government funded around 90% of this cost, with the remainder shared between the Council, Surrey County Council and Surrey Police.

It was noted that the Council had committed to providing support to those who need it, but believed that most residents should make a contribution towards their Council Tax and for using services within the borough. Important elements of the scheme were to ensure that residents did not lose out on support when they entered work and to ensure that disabled residents or those providing care were protected from any reduction in the support they received.

The scheme included a cost of living increase for households in line with other national benefits schemes.

It was noted that discretionary funding had been allocated to provide further protection for those residents who faced severe financial hardship.

The Executive received the results of a public consultation exercise that was undertaken, which concluded that the Council should continue with its support scheme for 2015/16.

#### **RECOMMENDED that:**

**(i) the local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2015/16 be adopted, on the basis that it is a continuation of the scheme approved for 2013/14 and 2014/15; and**

**(ii) it be noted that the Scheme will include some changes that will uprate allowances for working age claimants in line with those increases set nationally to reflect cost of living increases.**

**Reasons for decision:** To consider adopting a Council Tax Support Scheme for the period 2015/16 that took account of the 2014/15 scheme.

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**Alternative options:**

- (i) To further reduce the level of support payable; or
- (ii) To adopt the criteria of the former Council Tax Benefit scheme and increase the level of support payable.

50/235

**HALF YEARLY TREASURY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR 2014/15**

The Executive received a report on treasury management performance for the first half of the financial year. The report set out background information, relevant statutory powers and issues for the Executive to consider (the current treasury position, economic conditions and expected movements in interest rates, investment, borrowing and cash management strategy, prudential indicators, capital programme and financing, and capital financing requirement). The report also set out legal, financial and equalities implications, consultation undertaken and policy framework considerations.

The current projections for 2014/15 treasury management performance were projected to be in line with the budget.

It was noted that from the 3 Prudential Indicators the Capital Programme had been updated to take account of carry forwards and other proposed changes; the Capital Financing requirement had been updated to reflect changes made to the capital programme; and the Borrowing Limits were unchanged from the current Strategy adopted earlier in the year.

The Executive also received an update on the Economic Conditions and Expected Movements in Interest Rates provided by the Council's advisors, Capita Asset Services.

**RECOMMENDED that the Treasury Management performance for the year to date and the relevant prudential indicators be noted.**

**Reasons for decision:** To comply with the requirements of the regulatory framework for treasury management and meet the Council's reporting requirements.

**Alternative option:** Accept the report, but ask Officers to provide more detail on some specific issues contained within the report.

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**EXECUTIVE: 4 DECEMBER 2014**

60/255

**OUR 5 YEAR PLAN (CORPORATE PLAN) 2015-20**

The Executive was invited to approve the Council's 5-Year Plan for 2015-20.

The draft Plan was issued for public consultation in September 2014. The Leader, Councillor Broad, reported that the consultation exercise had been extensive, including an online survey and stakeholder workshop. Residents Associations were invited to participate in the process and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was also consulted.

The Plan now before the Executive drew upon all the comments received and set out clear priorities for the Council. The coming years were likely to be challenging and the Plan would be instrumental in facing up to this and helping the Council to realise its ambitions.

**RESOLVED:**

(i) that the consultation feedback on the proposals for the 5 Year Plan, as attached in Annexes 1 and 2, be noted.

**RECOMMENDED:**

**(i) that the revised 5 Year Plan (Corporate Plan) 2015-20 as attached in Annex 3 to the report, be adopted.**

**Reasons for decision:** To ensure that the Council has an adopted 5 year plan for the 2015-20 period, which sets out a clear vision and priorities to guide its service and financial plans

**Alternative option:** To reject the 5 year Plan and to ask for more work to be undertaken.

61/256

**CONSTRUCTION OF RETAIL AND RESIDENTIAL PREMISES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES ON THE MERSTHAM ESTATE**

The Executive received a report advising it of the outcome of the tendering process, and seeking authority to enter into contracts for the design and construction of:

- retail and residential premises on the former Iron Horse Public House, and
- retail units and a community hub on the Triangle site.

The contracts would be contingent upon legal agreements being concluded with Raven Housing Trust and Surrey County Council, respectively, on a full indemnity basis.

Details of the tender prices were included in a report in the exempt part of the agenda, and Council's approval for a revised budget to cover all costs was also being sought.

Councillor Mrs Bramhall, Executive Member for Property and Regeneration, reported that the Merstham estate was one of the principal regeneration areas in the borough and that these developments were key towards the provision of residential and retail units for when the Portland Road site is demolished.

The Executive expressed its thanks to Councillor Mrs Bramhall, the Ward Members and all the officers for their hard work and commitment over several years in taking this major regeneration project forward.

It was noted that there would be a mix of tenancy for the retail units, including both high street names and existing premises operating from Portland Drive. Details of occupancy would be released when the agreements had been finalised.

**RESOLVED:**

(i) that the Executive accepts the successful tender has been selected on a Strategic Procurement basis as referred to and detailed in the report;

(ii) that the Property Services Manager, in consultation with the Executive Members for Finance and Property & Regeneration, be authorised to agree terms and enter into design and build construction contracts for the design and construction of:

- retail and residential premises on the former Iron Horse Public House site, and
- retail units and a new community hub on the Triangle site; subject to Raven Housing Trust and Surrey County Council entering into contractual obligations to refund, on a full indemnity basis, expenditure in respect of the residential accommodation on the Iron Horse site and community facilities on the Triangle site, respectively; and

(iii) that the Property Services Manager, in consultation with the Executive Members for Finance and Property & Regeneration, be authorised to select and appoint consultants and necessary contractors complying with the Council's procurement requirements and enter into all necessary agreements and appointments to complete the project subject to all project, construction and professional fee costs being within the approved budget.

**RECOMMENDED:**

(i) that full Council approve a revised budget to include

**all project, construction and professional fee costs in the amounts of the tender prices detailed in Part 2 of the report.**

**Reasons for decision:** To provide enhanced community facilities.

**Alternative option:** Not to agree the recommendations.