

BOROUGH OF REIGATE AND BANSTEAD

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held virtually on 17 December 2020 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors M. A. Brunt (Leader), T. Schofield (Deputy Leader), T. Archer, R. H. Ashford, R. Biggs, N. J. Bramhall, A. C. J. Horwood, E. Humphreys and V. H. Lewanski.

Also present: Councillors M. S. Blacker, J. C. S. Essex, N. D. Harrison and S. A. Kulka.

52. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 19 November 2020 be approved.

53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Horwood.

Clerk's note: Councillor Horwood joined the meeting at 8:02 pm during item 6.

54. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

55. OBSERVATIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2021/22

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance and Governance, Councillor Schofield, introduced the report by thanking Councillor Harrison and the Budget Scrutiny Panel for their hard work in considering the 2021/22 budget proposals, and officers for their contributions to the process.

Councillor Schofield explained that the Budget Scrutiny Panel had conducted a thorough review of the proposals. The report and recommendations of the Panel were considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee who made six recommendations for consideration by the Executive.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Harrison, thanked members of the Executive and officers who attended the meeting of the Committee. The Committee had looked at revenue savings, additional income, forecasts, capital budget and reserves. The Committee considered that the proposals were achievable, realistic and based on sound financial practices and reasonable assumptions.

The Committee had also considered the impact that growth and savings were expected to have on service delivery. The impact was considered minimal and the Council is managing its finances well.

Councillor Harrison explained that the Committee was of the opinion that, in view of uncertainties around covid, the drawing of reserves of £0.5million was modest and

reasonable. The Committee also noted the commercial strategy and that there were modest growths expected from the Council's investments.

The Committee noted that there were a number of items still to be finalised in the revenue budget and capital projects, including the settlement from Government. For this reason, the Committee would review the overall budget at its meeting in January in order that it can give a final conclusion.

The Interim Head of Finance explained that the Government had just released the provisional settlement which set out the remaining parameters that the Council needed sight of in order to finalise the budget. The settlement confirmed the referendum limit for Council Tax, that there would be funding to help authorities meet covid-19 expenditure pressures in 2021/22 and that authorities would be able to submit a claim for covid-19 income losses in Quarter 1 of 2021/22. There were some technical adjustments in the provisional settlement which would need further consideration. Modelling would now be completed in order to present the final budget proposals in January.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Brunt, expressed his thanks to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for his work in scrutinising the budget proposals. The Leader also thanked the finance team for their hard work in documenting all costs and impacts relating to covid-19 and submitting claims on time and the Executive Member for Finance and Governance for his support in that work.

RESOLVED to note the following observations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in response to the Service and Financial Planning 2021/22 report:

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee thanks the Executive Member for Finance, Executive and Officers for preparing initial revenue and capital budget proposals for 2021/22
2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the following to be achievable, realistic and based on sound financial practices and reasonable assumptions:
 - a) Revenue Budget Savings and Additional Income proposals totalling £2.094m.
 - b) Revenue Budget Growth proposals totalling £0.812m
 - c) Forecast ongoing income budget pressures in 2021/22 as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic totalling £1.610m (to be met by one-off funding from the Government Funding Risk Reserve)
 - d) Capital Programme Growth and Reprofiling proposals resulting in a net reduction in the five-year Capital Programme of (£0.286m)
 - e) Revenue Reserve Balances at 1 April 2020 of £35.391m
3. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the potential negative impact of the savings and growth proposals on service delivery to be minimal and concluded that the Council was managing its finances well on behalf of its residents.
4. That the budget proposals for 2020/21 included an allowance of £1.256m for the use of reserves including £1m to fund the headroom contingency budget,

or a net increase of £256k excluding the headroom contingency budget. For 2021/22 no headroom budget has been established, and a drawing of £539k from reserves is planned. Any overspending will require further drawings from reserves.

5. That implementation of the Council's Commercial Strategy is vital to meeting the budget gaps in future years, as government funding is further reduced. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes that no substantial additional commercial income from investments is included in the 2021/22 budgets.
6. That some capital budgets for investment are yet to be finalised, as well as a number of revenue budget items, and for this reason the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has yet to draw a conclusion on the overall budget proposals for 2021/22.

56. RISK MANAGEMENT - QUARTER 2 2020/21

The Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources, Councillor Lewanski, introduced a report which provided an update on risk management in Quarter 2 of 2020/21.

Councillor Lewanski explained that annex 1 of the report provided an update on all strategic risks. During the Quarter, one new strategic risk had been identified in relation to the proposed reform of the planning system. No strategic risks had been identified for closure during the Quarter. In terms of operational risks, Councillor Lewanski explained that there was one red rated operational risk as detailed in the exempt annex.

The Audit Committee considered the Quarter 2 risk management report at their meeting on 26 November 2020 and had made no formal observations or recommendations to the Executive.

In response to a question from a Visiting Member, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Brunt, confirmed that the amber rating given to SR10, Marketfield Way, was a balanced view of the risk considering the timescale and interests in the development.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Executive note the Q2 update on risk management provided by the report and in the report and accompanying annexes.
2. That the Executive approve the new strategic risk identified in Q2, and as detailed in annex 3, for inclusion on the strategic risk register.

57. QUARTER 2 2020/21 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources, Councillor Lewanski, introduced a report outlining the Council's performance up to the end of Quarter 2.

Councillor Lewanski explained that seven out of the ten Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were on target or within the agreed tolerance. Two were red rated and one had been unable to report.

Councillor Lewanski explained that one of the red rated KPI tracked the number of affordable housing completions. The low rating was reflective of the slowdown in construction earlier in the year. It was expected that affordable units at several sites were to be completed later in the year.

The other red rated KPI tracked the Council's recycling performance. The tonnage and composition of household waste had changed significantly due to the covid-19 pandemic, with 520 tonnes of additional refuse collected in Quarter 1 of 2020/21 compared to last year. A shortfall of around 2,000 tonnes of garden waste also weighed on recycling performance. Councillor Lewanski explained that the planned rollout of full kerbside recycling services to flats and properties with communal bin areas would recommence in the New Year and would deliver the opportunity to recycle more to around 8,000 properties. A communications campaign would be undertaken with Surrey Environment Partnership to encourage further participation in the Council's food recycling service.

Councillor Lewanski explained that the KPI unable to report tracked the Council's performance in Local Environment Quality Surveys, which measure the cleanliness of places. The Council was unable to report on this indicator due to resources being focused on responding to the pandemic. The indicator will be picked up in future quarters.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance and Governance, Councillor Schofield, presented the report which provided the Council's Revenue and Capital Budget position for Quarter 2 to 30 September.

In terms of the Revenue Budget, the projected full year outturn at the end of Quarter 2 was £23.02m against a management budget of £24.60m. This resulted in a forecast underspend for the year of £1.58m.

In terms of the Capital Programme, Councillor Schofield explained that the forecast at the end of Quarter 2 was £36.81m below the approved Programme for the year. The variance was as a result of £46.76m slippage and £0.40m net underspend. Councillor Schofield highlighted the recommendation to Council in the report to increase the capital programme allocation for the Horley Car Park project by £54k following confirmation of the final project costs.

Councillor Schofield explained that he had continued to monitor the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on the Council's finance with the officer Incident Management Team and the Leader. The forecasts in the report were the latest forecasts, not a cut off at 30 September as the position changed rapidly. There had been more clarity on the extent to which Government would help fund the extra costs incurred and reimburse the Council for income losses. However, it was a challenge to form a complete picture, particularly in relation to the impact on the Collection Fund. The longer-term impacts on council tax and business rates income streams would not be confirmed until well into the next financial year.

Councillor Schofield explained that any unfunded costs and income losses would have to be borne by this Council through the use of contingency budgets or reserves. The Executive would do everything possible to minimise these impacts.

In response to a question from a Visiting Member, Councillor Schofield confirmed that the council tax collection rate was running at 1.3% under what would have been expected. This was being monitored on a weekly basis and there were a number of mechanisms in place to help people to pay.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Harrison, confirmed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered the performance report. There were no recommendations to the Executive. The Committee commented favourably on the substantial underspend. The covid related costs were well under the favourable routine variances.

In response to a question from a Visiting Member on car parking charges, Councillor Schofield confirmed individuals and companies had cancelled their season tickets due to working from home. It was expected that season ticket numbers would not increase to previous levels and it had therefore been factored into the budget proposals for 2021/22.

A suggestion was made by a Visiting Member to install electric car charging points in the Council's car parks. The Leader confirmed that the Executive would consider and respond in due course.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the Key Performance Indicator performance for Q2 2020/21.
2. To note the revenue and capital budget position at Q2 2020/21.
3. **To RECOMMEND to Council the allocation of an additional allocation of £0.054 million in the Capital Programme for the Horley Pay-on-Exit parking to be funded through prudential borrowing.**

58. RATIONALISATION OF PUBLIC REALM CCTV

The Executive Member for Community Partnerships, Councillor Ashford, introduced a report which provided information and options for consideration in relation to the future of public realm CCTV. The recommendations were that CCTV cameras at Bancroft and Clarendon Road Car Parks and Priory Park, Memorial Park and Lady Neville Park be retained and upgraded with the remaining CCTV cameras decommissioned.

Councillor Ashford explained that it was necessary to consider the future of public realm CCTV because Surrey Police had informed Districts and Boroughs that its reliance on this type of CCTV was low and they would no longer host and staff CCTV control rooms from 2023.

The current CCTV system had been installed in 1995 and it needed upgrading to new technology and in order to be consistent with legislation. It was expensive to maintain and very expensive to replace in full. There was now a far wider proliferation of private CCTV and most images used by the Police were from privately owned CCTV or mobile phones.

Councillor Ashford explained that the recommended option achieved a balance of these considerations. The recommended option required an initial capital

investment which would be funded from existing budgets. In the medium term the proposals could deliver a capital and revenue budget saving.

The Community Safety Officer provided details of a brief survey which confirmed there was a large proliferation of private CCTV cameras in Redhil, Banstead village, Horley town centre and Reigate.

During the discussion, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Brunt, explained that the Police were not in favour of the wholesale replacement of the current cameras on the basis that images from public realm CCTV were less likely to be used during an investigation. Councillor Ashford confirmed that the Police had reassured the Council that they would initially look at privately owned CCTV cameras and not public realm CCTV. Councillor Ashford confirmed that he and officers would respond outside of the meeting to specific queries regarding the use of cameras in Tattenham Corner and Holmethorpe Industrial Estate.

RESOLVED:

1. That the CCTV cameras at Bancroft and Clarendon Road Car Parks are upgraded and replaced by:
 - a) Upgrading cameras to digital technology replacing old analogue systems
 - b) Upgrading existing connections to fibre technology and enable Wi-Fi connectivity where possible
 - c) Undertaking local recording of images
2. That the CCTV cameras within Priory Park, Memorial Park and Lady Neville Park are upgraded by:
 - a) Upgrading cameras to digital technology replacing old analogue systems
 - b) Upgrading existing connections to fibre technology and enable Wi-Fi connectivity where possible
 - c) Undertaking local recording of images
3. That all other Council owned public realm CCTV cameras be de-commissioned
4. That the Head of Community Partnerships be authorised, in consultation with the Head of Finance and the Head of Legal and Governance, to undertake procurement and enter into contracts for the upgrade and decommissioning works, and for subsequent maintenance and running costs of the remaining CCTV cameras, with any significant variation in anticipated costs as a result of the procurement process being resolved in consultation with the Executive Member for Community Partnerships and the Head of Finance and Executive Member for Finance.

59. STATEMENTS

The Interim Head of Paid Service made a statement in relation to the covid-19 pandemic. The organisation as a whole had responded phenomenally. Officers and members had worked very well together. On behalf of officers, the Interim Head of Paid Service expressed her thanks to members and wished them a good rest over the Christmas period.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Brunt, made a statement thanking the Directors who had been supported by all the Council staff. This year had demonstrated the value of local government at this level. The Leader also thanked the Executive for their support and all members for their joint effort in responding to the pandemic.

60. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

61. EXEMPT BUSINESS

There was none.

The Meeting closed at 8.25 pm