

# CABINET



**THURSDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2019 - 2.00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor C Seaton (Chairman), Councillor D Oliver (Vice-Chairman), Councillor M Buckton, Councillor M Cornwell, Councillor A Hay, Councillor Mrs D Laws and Councillor P Murphy

**OBSERVING:** Councillor Mrs J French, Councillor W Sutton

## **CAB34/18 PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting 17 January 2019 were confirmed and signed.

## **CAB35/18 FINAL BUSINESS PLAN 2019-20**

Members considered the Final Business Plan 2019-20 presented by Councillor Seaton.

**Cabinet AGREED to recommend to Council the approval of the Final Business Plan 2019-20.**

## **CAB36/18 CORPORATE BUDGET 2019 & MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

Members considered the Corporate Budget 2019 and Medium Term Financial Strategy report presented by Councillor Hay.

Councillor Buckton proposed an amendment. He proposed that Recommendation 3(x) of the report in the Cabinet agenda be amended to read:

*3(x) one of the following two options proposed in respect of Fenland District Council's Band D Council Tax is agreed for 2019/20:*

*(a) Council Tax be set at £265.59, an increase of £5.13 (1.97%) on the current year (2018/19) requiring no contribution from General Reserves or unidentified savings to set a balanced budget;*

*or*

*(b) Council Tax be set at £260.46, the same level as the current year 2018/19 (no increase) and if the Council approves this option then a contribution of £150,720 is made from General Reserves in 2019/20 to secure a balanced Budget.*

Councillor Cornwell seconded the amendment.

Councillor Hay pointed out that should it be decided to set Council Tax at the same level as the current year, this would lead to a shortfall of £708,000 in 2020/21.

**Cabinet AGREED to the proposed amendment of Recommendation 3(x).**

**Cabinet AGREED to approve:**

- (i) The revised estimates for 2018/19 as set out in Section 7 and Appendix A showing an estimated under-spend at outturn in the region of £103,000/

and to recommend that Council approve:

- (ii) the General Fund revenue budget for 2019/20;
- (iii) the adoption of the Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- (iv) the Capital Programme and funding statement;
- (v) the adoption of the Business Rates Relief scheme;
- (vi) the expenses detailed in Section 10 to be treated as general expenses for 2019/20;
- (vii) the Port Health levy for 2019/20;
- (viii) the adoption of additional Council Tax premiums on Long Term Empty Properties as detailed in Section 12;
- (ix) the Treasury Management, Capital Strategy Minimum Revenue Provision, Investment Strategy, Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2019/20;
- (x) one of the following two options proposed in respect of Fenland District Council's Band D Council Tax for 2019/20:

(a) Council Tax be set at £265.59, an increase of £5.13 (1.97%) on the current year (2018/19) requiring no contribution from General Reserves or unidentified savings to set a balanced budget;

or

(b) Council Tax be set at £260.46, the same level as the current year 2018/19 (no increase) and if Council approves this option then a contribution of £150,720 is made from General Reserves in 2019/20 to secure a balanced budget.

*[Councillor Hay abstained from voting on the proposal to amend Recommendation 3(x)]*

#### **CAB37/18 COUNTY-WIDE HOUSING ADAPTATIONS AND REPAIRS POLICY**

Members considered the County-wide Housing Adaptations and Repairs Policy report presented by Councillor Mrs Laws.

Councillor Cornwell commented that this policy is a step forward. It gives the important message that it does not matter where you are within the county, all will receive the same level of support, and it removes the risk of any one area being treated differently.

**Cabinet APPROVED the County-wide Housing Adaptations and Repairs Policy.**

#### **CAB38/18 FENLAND LOCAL PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATE**

Members considered the Fenland Local Plan Review and Update report presented by Councillor Mrs Laws.

**Cabinet AGREED to endorse the following for consideration and agreement by Council that:**

- a full review of the local plan is commenced soon after the local elections in May 2019 but with technical reports being commissioned before then
- the Corporate Director (Growth and Infrastructure) is delegated to appoint PCC Planning Policy team via a Service Level Agreement (SLA) to carry out the required Local Plan review and to engage the relevant specialist advice related to the evidence documents within the allocated budget

- the Local Development Scheme is the timetable for the production of the new local plan, which will include the required consideration of Cabinet and Council at appropriate stages of the review.

#### **CAB39/18 DRAFT 6 MONTH CABINET FORWARD PLAN**

Councillor Seaton presented the Cabinet Forward Plan for information.

#### **CAB40/18 COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW - CUSTOMER SERVICES REVIEW MARCH AND WISBECH**

Members considered the Comprehensive Spending Review report into the relocation of the One Stop Shops in March and Wisbech presented by Councillor Hay.

Councillor Seaton advised that there needs to be a proposal for which of the available options Cabinet needs to debate. Councillor Hay proposed a debate on moving to the Boathouse in Wisbech and to Fenland Hall in March.

Councillor Buckton seconded the proposal.

Members made comments as follows:

- Councillor Oliver commented that it makes sense to move into our own properties; with decreasing footfall it would not be wise to enter into contracts with other partners.
- Councillor Seaton agreed, saying it would be best to utilise our own assets in the best possible way.
- Councillor Hay commented that moving into Fenland Hall would provide greater resilience as staff could be moved more easily between the contact centre and one stop shop area. There is not enough room at the library to house staff that currently work out of the March One Stop Shop, therefore some of these would have to be relocated to Fenland Hall anyway. She agreed with Councillor Oliver that footfall into the shops is on a downward trend and does not look likely to change; it would cost money for revisionary works in both March and Wisbech libraries, whereas any money needing to be spent at Fenland Hall or the Boathouse would be an improvement to our own properties.
- Councillor Buckton agreed with all that had been said, adding that using our own premises will give us greater flexibility to adjust the service that we provide as demand changes.

#### **Cabinet AGREED to approve:**

- relocation of the March One Stop Shop to Fenland Hall;
- relocation of the Wisbech One Stop Shop to The Boathouse;
- to delegate the delivery of the preferred options to the Corporate Director and Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.

*(Members resolved to exclude the public from the meeting for this item of business on the grounds that Appendix A of the report involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972).*