

Present: Councillor Ric Metcalfe (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Donald Nannestad, Councillor Chris Burke,
Councillor Bob Bushell, Councillor Rosanne Kirk and
Councillor Neil Murray

Apologies for Absence: None.

51. Confirmation of Minutes - 23 September 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2019 be confirmed.

52. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

53. Setting the 2020/21 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 - 2024/25

Purpose of Report

To inform the Executive of the likely challenges ahead in preparing for the 2020/21 and future years budget, to set out parameters within which the Council would prepare these budgets and to confirm the Council's approach to development of the budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Decision

That the Executive:

- (1) Notes the significant financial challenges that the Council faces.
- (2) Notes the projected budget parameters for 2020/21 and future years and notes the planning assumptions as set out in Appendix A.
- (3) Notes the budget, strategic and service planning preparation programme, as set out in Appendix B.

Alternation Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

The financial landscape for local government over the medium term period posed significant challenge to the Council due to the volatility, complexity and uncertainty about future funding. Significant national reforms about future departmental spending through the spending review, the allocation of this funding to local government through the Fair Funding Review and the implementation of the 75% business rates scheme, all of which would affect the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, had been delayed beyond 2020/21. In addition, the

impact of Brexit and the consequent impact on the economic and political landscapes posed significant uncertainty for central and local government.

The Council continued to face budget pressures due to changes in use and demand for services as well as escalating costs. It was these escalating pressures which, if they could not be mitigated against or contained within existing budgets, may require an increase in the level of savings in the medium term to be delivered through the Towards Financial Sustainability Programme.

In the short term, and as a direct result of the delay in national reforms, the Council was likely to have a one off gain in budgeted resources as it had previously assumed that the full negative impact of the changes in funding levels and mechanisms would impact in 2020/21. These had now been deferred until 2021/22.

Although the potential of further increases in the level of the Council's funding gap would require further reductions in expenditure and/or an increase in income, this was not unprecedented and the Council should have some confidence that it had a track record of delivering strong financial discipline and that it could continue to rise to the challenge.

The successful financial planning to date had enabled the protection of core services for the people of Lincoln, whilst at the same time allowing for significant investment in the city, and its economy, and delivery of the Council's Vision 2020. The Council would continue to adopt this approach, carefully balancing the allocation of resources to its strategic priorities, through its emerging Vision 2025, whilst ensuring it maintains a sustainable financial position.

54. Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2020/21

Purpose of Report

To provide the Executive with an update to the current Council Tax Support Scheme for 2019/20 and to propose effectively a 'no change' 2020/21 Council Tax Support Scheme that Council would need to approve by 31 January 2020.

Proposals were also made in relation to an Exceptional Hardship Scheme as well as regarding Council Tax changes.

The Executive was requested to consider the proposals that should be put to public consultation.

Decision

That the Executive:

- (1) Supports the proposed 'no change' Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21 for public consultation and scrutiny.
- (2) Supports continuation of the £20,000 Exceptional Hardship Fund for 2020/21 to top up Council Tax Support awards in appropriate cases for public consultation and scrutiny.

- (3) Supports the Council Tax proposed changes for public consultation and scrutiny for 2020/21 with regard to the Care Leavers exemption and Council Tax empty homes premium.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Alternative options considered and rejected were set out in the body of the report.

Reason for Decision

Based on the current core elements of the existing scheme, a caseload reduction of 1% had been modelled, along with an increase in Council Tax, ranging from 2% to 4%. These were summarised in Appendix 1 of the report, giving an indication of the potential cost and savings to the Council. Also included was the potential value for non-collection, based on projected collection in the taxbase of 98.75%.

As a billing authority the Council could decide whether or not to amend core elements of its scheme each year. Officers were not proposing any changes to the core elements of the scheme for 2020/21. It was noted, however, that there would be some technical changes that would still need to be applied to ensure that the Council's scheme complied with the Prescribed Scheme Regulations, which covered Universal Credit, premiums and discounts. These details were still awaited from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Alongside a proposed 'no change' scheme, it was also suggested that continuation of £20,000 for an Exceptional Hardship Scheme continued.

Further proposed changes to Council Tax in respect of care leavers Council Tax exemption and Council Tax empty homes premium were set out in paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 of the report respectively.

55. Lincoln City Profile 2018/19

Purpose of Report

To present the updated Lincoln City Profile for 2018/19 to Executive.

Decision

That the findings of the Lincoln City Profile 2018/19 be noted and the document be approved.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

The Lincoln City Profile 2018/19 focussed on the key demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of, and challenges to, the city of Lincoln. It provided an evidence base to inform the continued development and implementation of the City of Lincoln Council's Vision 2025 and would help the authority to target resources where they would have the greatest impact, as well

as providing information to support funding bids by both the Council and its partners.

A copy of the document was attached to the report at Appendix 1 which was separated into the following chapters summarising the key facts, with further data and detail provided in subsequent pages:

- population;
- economy;
- welfare;
- health;
- education;
- housing;
- crime;
- environment and climate.

The report set out key opportunities and key challenges identified in the document at appendices 2.3 and 2.4 respectively, with key facts emerging from the profile for each chapter outlined at paragraphs 3.5 to 3.12.

56. Safeguarding Policy

Purpose of Report

To seek Executive approval to implement a new Safeguarding Policy.

Decision

That the Safeguarding Policy be approved.

Alternative Options

None.

Reason for Decision

Within Lincolnshire there were multi-agency safeguarding partnerships operating but until now there had not been a joint safeguarding policy that all district councils had agreed to work to.

The proposed Safeguarding Policy would ensure that all districts operated in the same way which would ensure consistency across the county and also enable the districts to support on another and assist each other should changes to working practices require amending.

The City Council current had a Safeguarding Policy that was developed for its own use, however, for the past two years there had been several discussions between all of the district councils in Lincolnshire to develop a policy and procedures that all districts could use.

It was proposed that the Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures would be implemented with immediate effect and would be due for review in 2022. The Policy was made up of the following chapters:

- Chapter 1 – safeguarding is everyone’s business – roles and responsibilities;
- Chapter 2 – safeguarding children and young people;
- Chapter 3 – safeguarding adults at risk;
- Chapter 4 – domestic abuse;
- Chapter 5 – preventing violent extremism;
- Chapter 6 – hate crime and mate crime;
- Chapter 7 – modern slavery and human trafficking;
- Chapter 8 – county lines and cuckooing;
- Chapter 9 – stalking.

The Policy Scrutiny Committee had considered this document and outlined its support.

57. Transfer of Land at Jasmin Green to Birchwood Community Land Trust

Purpose of Report

To update the Executive on progress of Birchwood Area Community Land Trust in their objectives of redeveloping land at Jasmin Green in Birchwood for residential use and open space.

Decision

- (1) That the decision to reaffirm the decisions at the 17 July 2017 meeting of the Executive to transfer the freehold interest of land at the Jasmin Green open space to Birchwood Area Community Lane Trust Limited at the nominal value of £1 for the purpose of residential development be deferred until Spring 2020.
- (2) That the decision to reaffirm the decisions at the 17 July 2017 meeting of the Executive to lease land at Jasmin Green open space to Birchwood Area Community Land Trust Limited for a period of ten years at a nominal sum of £1 be deferred until Spring 2020.
- (3) That any decision to reaffirm the decision to transfer the freehold and lease of land be subject to business cases detailing the financial ability of Birchwood Area Community Land Trust Limited to deliver a housing scheme which can demonstrate it is meeting strategic housing need.
- (4) That the housing scheme be required to demonstrate to the Council its viability in terms of management in order to maintain the housing development for the purpose agreed in terms of governance by a suitable accountable body.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

Birchwood Big Local was allocated £1 million funding in 2012 through the National Lottery’s Big Local programme to make a lasting difference to their community. Birchwood Big Local had identified Jasmin Green as a key area for enhanced open space and in 2015 it set up Birchwood Area Community Land

Trust Limited which was a body that could own and lease land and buildings on behalf of Birchwood Big Local and the Birchwood Community. Their proposal was to develop new housing on a portion of Jasmin Green which would create a surplus revenue stream to maintain the enhanced open space, with capital works for the open space being funded from the Big Local funding.

Birchwood Area Community Land Trust Limited had gained experience in running and maintaining projects and now owned and operated the play area at Diamond Park, Birchwood. In terms of the Jasmin Green project, and particularly the housing development element, the Trust was now receiving support from the East Midlands Community Led Limited Housing organisation. Whilst the Trust's initial proposals set out in the Executive report of 2017 centred on open space, the current proposals saw a change in emphasis with the scheme becoming a housing provider as a primary aim. At the July 2017 meeting of the Executive, approval was given in principle to the sale of the majority of the land at Jasmin Green and the lease of the remained area of land to Birchwood Area Community Land Trust Limited in order that it could progress its proposal for recreational and housing developments, subject to review after two years. The Trust had requested that the Council extended the in principle approval until the end of 2021.

Progress since the original scheme approved in principle in 2017 was detailed at paragraph 3 of the report. Further progress would be dependent upon a viable business case being presented to Homes England as part of the bidding process for capital grant support. The business case would need to demonstrate financial viability, demand and ability to deliver not only the building development but also its ongoing management. The target for a capital bid was March 2020, with any confirmation of a successful bid in Spring 2020. The business case would also be a requirement of the Council in determining an extension to the principle of the disposal of the land to the Trust.

It was noted that a typographical error in the report at paragraph 3.2 should have read £267,000.

58. Health and Environment Enforcement Policy 2019 - 2024

Purpose of Report

To seek approval from the Executive for the proposed Health and Environment Enforcement Policy 2019 – 2024.

Decision

That the Health and Environment Enforcement Policy be approved and the introduction and use of civil penalties, penalty charge notices and charging for enforcement activity be supported.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

The Health and Environment Enforcement Policy sought to clarify the principles under which the Health and Environment service area would undertake regulatory activity in that the Council would:

- ensure that the authority enforced the law in a fair, equitable and consistent manner;
- work to assist businesses and others in meeting their legal obligations;
- maintain its focus on prevention rather than cure, where appropriate;
- take action against those who breached the law or acted irresponsibly.

The Policy clarified other principles and adoption of guidance regarding the Council's approach to good regulation and enforcement and applied the functions carried out by the following services:

- Environmental Health – Food Safety, Health and Safety, Pollution Control and Private Sector Housing;
- Licensing;
- Anti-Social Behaviour and Public Protection.

A full version of the proposed Policy was appended to the report and had been considered by the Policy Scrutiny Committee on 8 October 2019.

59. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business because it was likely that if members of the public were present there would be a disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

These items were considered in private as they were likely to disclose exempt information, as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. No representations had been received in relation to the proposal to consider these items in private.

60. Greyfriars Project

Purpose of Report

To provide the Executive with an update on progress made to secure external funding to refurbish the Greyfriars and approve an element of match funding from the City Council to the value of £200,000.

Decision

That the recommendation contained within the report be approved.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

Reason for the decision were set out in the report.

61. Financial Services: A Business Partnering Approach and Restructure

Purpose of Report

To present to the Executive a proposal for closer partnering between Finance and the rest of the Council to ensure that the achievement of the Council's vision continues to be effectively supporting, particularly in respect of the 'One Council' approach and a proposed restructure of Financial Services required to facilitate that change.

Decision

That the recommendation contained within the report be approved.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

Reasons for the decision were set out in the report.

62. Proposed Amendment to the Housing Repairs Services Establishment

Purpose of Report

To seek approval to increase the Housing Repairs Service establishment.

Decision

That the recommendation contained within the report be approved.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

Reasons for the decision were set out in the report.