

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 10 July 2019

Time: 2.00pm

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: Sharon Taylor OBE CC (Chair), Mrs Joan Lloyd (Vice-Chair), Lloyd Briscoe, Rob Broom, John Gardner, Richard Henry, Jackie Hollywell and Jeannette Thomas.

Start / End Time: Start Time: 2.00pm
End Time: 3.56pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no apologies for absence.

Councillor Jeanette Thomas declared a personal interest in Item 4 - 4th Quarter Capital Monitoring Report 2018/19: General Fund and Housing Revenue Account, in relation to the debate regarding The Oval Community Centre Boiler, in view of her role as the Chair of The Oval Community Association.

2 MINUTES - 12 JUNE 2019

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Executive held on 12 June 2019 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

3 MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES

It was noted that a Portfolio Holder Advisory Group Meeting had been arranged to consider the Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy and Housing Older Persons Strategy.

The Interim Strategic Director advised that clarification regarding the number of rough sleepers in the Town had been provided to both Executive and Overview & Scrutiny Committee Members.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the following meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees be noted –

Community Select Committee – 4 June 2019
Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 19 June 2019

4 **4TH QUARTER REVENUE MONITORING REPORT 2018/19 - GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT**

The Executive endorsed the Leader's concerns regarding the delay to completion of the Council's 2018/19 due to the capacity/resourcing issues experienced by the External Auditor, especially in the light of the close down of accounts deadline being brought forward to 31 July 2019. Members noted that the Assistant Director (Finance & Estates) had raised these concerns with Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA), and asked her to bring the PSAA's response to the Executive when received.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources presented the report and advised that the General Fund net expenditure was £127,000 underspent for 2018/19 (£719,000 services underspends, of which £592,000 was requested for carry forward to 2019/20). Following a contribution from balances of £671,000 the General Fund balance at year-end was £4.8Million.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources stated that the 2018/19 Housing Revenue Account net deficit was £282,000 less than the budget, and £36,000 had been identified and requested for carry forward. The HRA balance at year-end was £21.3Million. Total HRA balances were £42.3Million, including capital reserves of £10Million restricted use 1-4-1 receipts and £11Million restricted to capital investment in the housing stock and repayment of debt.

In response to questions, the Assistant Director (Finance & Estates) advised:

- Paragraph 4.2.7 – Investment Property income – Officers were actively pursuing the acquisition of 2 office blocks in the town that had been recently marketed. Counsel's opinion was to be sought on the feasibility of the Council acquiring investment property located outside of the Borough;
- Paragraph 4.5.3 – The one year only additional income from Commercial Property rent reviews saving of £26,790 related to the payment of backdated rent following the completion of a rent review.

It was **RESOLVED**:

General Fund

1. That the 2018/19 actual net expenditure on the General Fund of £9,263,688 be noted, subject to the 2018/19 audit of the Statement of Accounts.
2. That new carry forward requests totalling £591,770 be approved for the General Fund (Paragraph 4.3.1 of the report).
3. That the ongoing pressure from 2019/20 of £15,800 on the General Fund be approved.
4. That the 2019/20 one year only saving of £26,790 on the General Fund be approved.

Housing Revenue Account

1. That the 2018/19 actual in year deficit on the HRA of £2,812,606 be noted, subject to the 2018/19 audit of the Statement of Accounts.
2. That new carry forward requests totalling £35,740 be approved for the HRA (Paragraph 4.7.7 of the report).
3. That the ongoing saving of £30,730 on the HRA be approved, this will contribute towards the Council's Financial Security objectives for 2019/20.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

5 4TH QUARTER CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT 2018/19 - GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

The Portfolio Holder for Resources presented the report and confirmed that General Fund capital expenditure for 2018/19 was £8.057Million, which was £3,557Million lower than that estimated in the Third Quarter Monitoring report, largely due to a land assembly purchase (£2.8Million) due to be completed in March 2019 and now scheduled for the summer of 2019. The 2019/20 General Fund capital programme had been updated and was now forecast to be £34.299Million.

The Executive noted that the HRA capital expenditure for 2018/19 was £22.366Million, some £251,000 lower than that estimated in the Third Quarter Monitoring report. The 2019/20 HRA capital programme had been updated and was now forecast to be £33.725Million.

In response to a question, the Assistant Director (Finance & Estates) confirmed that the recommended figure of £591,000 for a budget for Registered Provider grants related to one specific scheme. The Executive supported the Leader's revision to this recommendation to increase this figure to £1.5million, in order to provide greater flexibility.

The Interim Chief Executive agreed to update Members on the land assembly issues relating to the slippage on regeneration schemes during 2018/19.

The Interim Strategic Director advised that the contract for the provision of Sprinkler systems had experienced difficulties was being re-procured. He undertook to provide Members with an indicative timeframe for the contract.

In relation to Paragraph 4.3.7 of the report – Boiler Update, Members reported that the boilers at the Oval Community Centre and St. Nicholas Community Centre were still experiencing problems. Officer undertook to check on the current status of all the boilers listed in the report and advise Executive Members and relevant Ward Members of the expected timescales for rectification of any outstanding problems.

In respect of Paragraph 4.4.4 of the report – New build and acquisitions programme, officers were requested to ensure that the branding signage for the Ditchmore Lane

development clearly stated that the site was being developed by Stevenage Borough Council.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the 2018/19 General Fund capital expenditure outturn of £8,057,387 be noted (subject to the completion of the 2018/19 external audit of accounts).
2. That the 2018/19 HRA capital expenditure outturn of £22,365,948 be noted (subject to the completion of the 2018/19 external audit of accounts).
3. That the funding applied to the 2018/19 General Fund capital programme be approved, as summarised in Paragraph 4.2.4. of the report.
4. That the funding applied to the 2018/19 HRA capital programme be approved as summarised in Paragraph 4.5.1. of the report.
5. That the 2019/20 General Fund capital programme net changes of £934,040 reduction be approved comprising of £3,252,450 slippage from 2018/19 (as detailed in Paragraph 4.3.8 of the report), £4,905,630 re-profiled into 2020/21, £60,610 minor budget changes reduction and £779,750 funding for additional expenditure (as detailed in Appendix A to the report).
6. That the 2019/20 HRA capital programme net changes of £15,084,628 comprising £736,700 slippage from 2018/19 and £15,821,328 re-profiled into 2020/21 be approved, as summarised in Paragraph 4.6.1 and detailed in Appendix B to this report.
7. That the urgent schemes requiring funding detailed in Paragraph 4.3.3 of the report be approved.
8. That Executive recommend to Council the approval of a budget of £1.5million for Registered Provider grants, in line with the reasoning in Paragraph 4.3.4. of the report.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

6 GAMBLING ACT 2005 - REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The Portfolio Holder for Communities, Community Safety and Equalities presented the report and advised that a number of additions and amendments to the existing Statement of Gambling Principles were consulted upon, to reflect the update in Guidance published by the Gambling Commission. The proposed revised Statement required new Gambling operators to prepare local premises risk assessments, and the Council would be producing a local area profile to act as a guide which operators could use when undertaking and preparing such risk assessments.

The Senior Environmental Health & Licensing Manager advised that the date of the General Purposes Committee meeting set out in the report should be 5 (not 6) June 2019. He informed the Executive of the number of gambling premises in Stevenage, and commented that gambling-related complaints were at a low level in the town.

Members noted that the Licensing Team had participated in National Licensing week in June 2019. A number of premises were visited, all of which were compliant with the rules and regulations related to gambling operators. A number of premises had installed IT systems, enabling frequent gamblers to self-exclude from gambling should they so wished.

The Executive agreed that the issues raised by the General Purposes Committee should be picked up by the Executive Member for Communities, Community Safety & Equalities and fed back to that Committee, namely:

- whether or not it would be permissible to require existing Gambling Premises Licence Holders to submit Risk assessments to the Council otherwise than in connection with a new application; and
- the powers available to the Council in the future (either as Landowner, Licensing Authority or Planning Authority) to place restrictions on the quantity of betting premises in the Borough.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the proposed Stevenage Borough Council Gambling Act Statement of Principles 2019-2022 (attached at Appendix A to the report) be noted and agreed.
2. That the Stevenage Borough Council Gambling Act Statement of Principles 2019-2022 be recommended to the Council for adoption.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

7 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration presented the report and referred to the consultation exercises carried out in the CIL Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule between September and October 2018 and the Draft Charging Schedule between April and May 2019, details of which were set out in the report. The next stage in the process was to submit the Draft Charging Schedule for independent examination, which would consider the evidence base and consultation responses, as well as the proposed CIL charging rates.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration reminded Members that Section 106 monies would still be used for site specific mitigation, particularly for the larger schemes i.e. where a whole school was required as part of a specific development (e.g. North Stevenage and West of Stevenage) or where road/cycleway improvements were required within or in close proximity to the development. Section 106 would only be allowed for infrastructure that was directly

related to the scheme and was required in order for the development to be acceptable.

The Assistant Director referred to Paragraph 5.12 of the report, relating to funding for the creation of a proposed CIL Officer to manage and administer the CIL process, the cost of which would be refunded from CIL receipts when received. On this basis, the Executive supported an additional recommendation regarding the creation of this post and a supplementary estimate of £15,000 (in 2019/20) and £21,000 (in 2020/21-2021/22) to fund it.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the outcomes of the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (PDCS) consultation be noted (responses summary attached as Appendix A to the report).
2. That the outcomes of the Draft Charging Schedule (DCS) consultation be noted (responses summary attached as Appendix B to the report).
3. That officers put together options relating to the governance of spending CIL monies, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration and Planning and Development Committee, and bring a recommendation to Executive within the next report on CIL.
4. That the Draft Charging Schedule (attached as Appendix C to the report) be submitted for independent examination.
5. That a supplementary estimate is approved for £15,000 (in 2019/20) and £21,000 (in 2020/21-2021/22) for a CIL Officer, which will be refunded from CIL receipts when received.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report; and 5. To manage and administer the CIL process

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

8 2018/19 ANNUAL REPORT AND PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

The Interim Chief Executive introduced the report with the assistance of a slide presentation. In terms of Corporate Performance for 2018/19, he advised that, at Quarter 4, 44 performance measures were at Green status, 3 at Amber, 5 at Red and 3 with statistics not available.

The Interim Chief Executive commented that the areas of Improvement focus for the fourth quarter concerned Health and Safety Compliance of Assets; Customer Service Centre; Major Voids Works; and Sickness absence. Performance against these measures had already improved during Quarter 1 of 2019/20, and it was anticipated that Sickness absence rate would lessen following the imminent appointment of First Care. The 3 performance measures with statistics not available related to community safety indicators monitored by the Police. However, it was hoped that the Police “Athena” system would be improved to allow for the monitoring

of these indicators going forward.

The Executive supported the style and content of the Annual Report set out at Appendix 2 to the report.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the progress on the delivery of the Future Town Future Council (FTFC) programme, together with the overall performance and achievements of the Council during 2018/19, be noted.
2. That the content of the Council's draft Annual Report 2018/19, attached at Appendix 2 to the report, be agreed.
3. That delegated authority be given to the Interim Strategic Director (Communities), following consultation with the Leader, to approve any final changes to the Annual Report prior to its publication.
4. That the suite of 2019/20 performance measures set out at Appendices 3a and 3b to the report be noted.
5. That improvement activity in the Customer Service Centre is noted and future plans to improve performance during 2019/20 are endorsed (outlined in Paragraphs 3.121 to 3.123 of the report).
6. That the steps that were carried out during 2018/19 to improve management of sickness absence across the Council are built upon for 2019/20 (outlined in Paragraphs 3.124 to 3.128 of the report).
7. That improvements to ensure the Council's Health and Safety compliance tasks are completed and certified on time are noted, with the view that this is continued throughout 2019/20 with the new contractor (outlined in Paragraphs 3.82 to 3.84 of the report).
8. That it be noted that improvements to the Housing Repairs service have been implemented and further works to enhance this function are in progress (outlined in Paragraphs 3.98 to 3.101 of the report).

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

9 PROCUREMENT OF A PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR AT SYMONDS GREEN

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Older People presented the report which outlined the progress in the construction of 29 apartments that would be made available for Council ownership and made available at social rents for the affordable housing scheme on the site of the former Symonds Green Annex.

The Housing Development Officer stated that the report sought delegated authority for the Deputy Chief Executive to award a contract following a successful

procurement exercise, after consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Older People. This would enable an early start on site that would help to deliver the scheme quickly, but also utilise more 1 for 1 funds that were available to the Council on a time limited basis.

It was agreed that further consideration be given to the idea of a bid relating to Community Co-operative funding in respect of the long term management of the development should be given by the Housing Development & Regeneration Executive Committee.

It was further agreed that a Member Group should be convened to provide guidance to the approved developer on the street name of the development.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the Symonds Green scheme concept objectives, as developed by the Council's Housing Development team in consultation with the Executive Housing Development Committee throughout 2018/19, be noted
2. That the Deputy Chief Executive be given delegated authority to award and finalise the terms of the contract with the winning bidder, after an officer panel has concluded an evaluation of tenders received and having consulted the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Older People.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other options considered: As contained in report.

10 URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None.

11 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That, under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraphs 1 to 7 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by SI 2006 No. 88.
2. That, having considered the reasons for the following items being in Part II, it be determined that maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

12 PART II MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 12 JUNE 2019

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 12 June 2019 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

13 PROCUREMENT OF A PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR AT NORTH ROAD

The Executive considered a report in respect of the procurement of a principal contractor for the housing scheme at North Road.

The Housing Development Officer answered a number of Members' questions regarding the report.

It was **RESOLVED** that recommendations contained in the report be approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

14 PROCUREMENT APPROACH TO THE REGENERATION SCHEME AT KENILWORTH CLOSE

The Executive considered a report in respect of the procurement approach with regard to the proposed regeneration scheme at Kenilworth Close.

The Housing Development Officer answered a number of Members' questions regarding the report.

It was **RESOLVED** that recommendations contained in the report, including an addition to recommendation 2.5, be approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

15 URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR