

Crawley Borough Council



Minutes of Cabinet Wednesday 6 September 2017 at 7.30pm

Present:

Councillors

P K Lamb	(Chair of Cabinet and Leader of the Council)
S J Joyce	(Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing)
M G Jones	(Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Community Engagement)
C J Mullins	(Cabinet Member for Wellbeing)
A C Skudder	(Cabinet Member for Resources)
P C Smith	(Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development)
G Thomas	(Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability)

Also in Attendance:

Councillors B J Burgess, R D Burrett, K McCarthy, M A Stone, and J Tarrant.

Officers Present:

Natalie Brahma–Pearl	Chief Executive
Kevin Carr	Legal Services Manager
Karen Hayes	Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits
Chris Pedlow	Democratic Services Manager

16. Members' Disclosure of Interests

No disclosures of interests were made by Members.

17. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 28 June 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

18. Public Question Time

The Cabinet received a question from Mr Crane from Bewbush, in relation to the financing of the proposed Town Hall redevelopment project and if the Council would be making a profit from the project? The Leader in response commented that he could not comment on the exact details of the proposed deal at the time as negotiations were still being finalised. The details were therefore exempt due to their commercially sensitive nature. However once the agreement had been signed then (subject to any continuing confidentiality obligations) the financial information would be in the public domain. The Leader confirmed that the Council would be expecting to make a profit from its investment including the acquisition of a new Town Hall.

Mr Crane asked a supplementary question over whether the Council had considered rather than investing in the Town Hall redevelopment project it used its capital instead

to fund building Council Houses. This would still provide the Council with rental income and also help to meet the housing needs of Crawley residents. In response the Leader said that unfortunately legally the Council cannot use its capital reserves to fund the building of Council houses as that was the responsibility of the Housing Revenue Account. However, the Town Hall redevelopment project would include the building of housing of which 40% would be affordable housing.

19. Matters Referred to the Cabinet

It was confirmed that no matters had been referred to the Cabinet for further consideration.

20. Report from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

The comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Commission had been circulated to all Cabinet Members. Details of those comments are provided under the minute to which the comments refer.

21. Budget Strategy 2018/19 – 2022/23

The Leader presented report FIN/417 of the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits which set out the projected financial position for 2017/18 to 2021/22 for the General Fund and the underlying assumptions. The report also set out the policy framework for the budget process. It was emphasised that the aim of the Budget Strategy was to work to a balanced budget over a three year period. It was also emphasised that all capital expenditure was focused on maintaining Council assets or fund new sources of revenue, ultimately refunding the expenditure over time.

The Cabinet noted the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's comments on the report and its comments to the Cabinet following consideration of the matter at its meeting on 5 September 2017.

Councillor Burrett was invited to speak on the item.

RESOLVED

That Full Council be recommended to approve of the Budget Strategy 2018/19 to 2022/23 and to:

- a) Note, for the purpose of projections, the current budget deficit of £84,000 for 2018/19 on the basis of a Council tax increase of £4.95 on a Band D in 2018/19.
- b) Work towards balancing this over a three year period, including putting back into reserves when the Budget is in surplus.
- c) Instruct Corporate Management Team to take action to address the long term budget gap and to identify policy options for consideration by Cabinet Members and the Budget Advisory Group, this will include areas where additional resources need to be redirected.

- d) Note that items for the Capital Programme are driven by the need for the upkeep of Council assets and environmental obligations and schemes will also be considered that are “spend to save” or “spend to earn”.

Reasons for Decision

- a) To set a Strategy for savings and income generation and work towards a balanced budget over three years. Including putting back into reserves when in surplus.
- b) To determine the criteria for capital programme bids.

22. 2017/2018 Budget Monitoring - Quarter 1

The Leader presented report FIN/418 of the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits to the Cabinet which provided a summary of the Council's actual revenue and capital spending up to the first quarter ending June 2017. It identified the main variations from the approved spending levels and any potential impact on future budgets.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet notes the projected outturn for the year 2017/2018 as summarised in report FIN/418.

Reason for Decision

To report to Members on the projected outturn for the year compared to the approved budget.

23. Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Cabinet concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.36pm.

P K LAMB
Chair