



## **Lewes District Council**

### **Cabinet**

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held in the **Ditchling Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes** on **Monday 5 February 2018** at 2.30pm

#### **Present:**

Councillor A Smith (Chair)

Councillors P Franklin, B Giles, T Jones, I Linington, R Maskell, E Merry and T Nicholson

#### **In attendance:**

Councillor M Chartier (Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee)

Councillor P Gardiner (Chair of the Scrutiny Committee)

Ms D Twitchen (Tenants' Representative)

Mr J Langley (Tenants' Representative)

### **Minutes**

#### **69 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 January 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

#### **70 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were reported from visiting member, Councillor Osborne.

#### **71 Declarations of interest**

None were declared.

#### **72 Matters referred to the Cabinet**

There were none.

**73 Reporting back on meetings of outside bodies**

There were none.

**74 Housing revenue account budget 2018/2019**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Service Delivery, presenting the housing revenue account budget for 2018/2019.

The housing revenue account was a self-financing system, allowing all income generated to be kept locally and available to fund the maintenance and management of the housing stock, service debt and acquire and provide additional social housing.

The budget, set out at appendix 1 to the report reflected the organisational change that was taking place within the Council, the Government's policy on dwelling rents and the review of priorities for capital and maintenance works.

Ms D Twitchen, Chair of Tenants of Lewes District (TOLD), addressed the Cabinet and advised that several items, contained in the report would be monitored and picked up in dialogue at a later date with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Director of Service Delivery.

In response to a comment by visiting member, Councillor Gardiner, it was confirmed that the Council would be applying for an increase in its borrowing cap.

Recommended to Council:

- 74.1** That the housing revenue account budgets for 2018/2019, as set out at appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
- 74.2** That a reduction in dwelling rents of 1%, effective from 2 April 2018, as set out in section 7 of the report be approved.
- 74.3** That a reduction of 1% in affordable rents, effective from 2 April 2018, as set out in section 8 of the report, be approved.
- 74.4** That an average garage rent increase of 4.1%, effective from 2 April 2018, as set out in section 9 of the report, be approved. This was in line with the business plan and current council policy on garage rentals.
- 74.5** That an increase of 4.1% in private sector leased property rents, effective from 2 April 2018, as set out in section 10 of the report, be approved.
- 74.6** That the revised service charges, effective from 2 April 2018, as set out in sections 11 to 15 of the report, be approved.
- 74.7** That the 30-year housing business plan be updated.

Reasons for the decisions:

To enable the Council to fulfil its legal obligations to produce a balanced

Housing Revenue Account for 2018/2019.

**75 General fund revenue budget 2018/2019**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive, presenting the 2018-2019 general fund revenue budget.

Councillor Smith advised that dialogue had taken place with the Green Party group and confirmed that reports on various environmental issues such as underground bins, charging points and water fountains would be placed as items on the forward plan, to be considered at a future meeting of the Cabinet.

Visiting member, Councillor Gardiner on behalf of Councillor Osborne, outlined the budget amendments that would be presented by the Liberal Democrat group at Full Council on the 19 February 2018.

Councillor Gardiner also confirmed that Scrutiny Committee had not made any specific comments to the Cabinet, in relation to the budget overview and tax base setting.

Resolved:

- 75.1** That the contributions to reserves and use of reserves as set out in appendix C to the report, be reviewed.
- 75.2** That it be noted that the Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 18 January 2018, had considered a report in relation to the 2018/2019 budget overview and tax base setting and had not made any specific comments to the Cabinet.
- 75.3** To note the Council Tax and Business Rates Collection Fund balances to be returned in 2018/2019.
- 75.4** That the statutory report of the Designated Chief Finance Officer as required by section 25(1) of the Local Government Act 2003, set out in section 13 of the report be considered.
- 75.5** To note the completion of the statutory Non Domestic Rates Return (NNDR1) and consequent retained rating income for 2018/2019, as explained in paragraph 5.2(e) of the report.

Recommended to Council:

- 75.6** That an aggregate Council Tax requirement of £7,438,000 (a Band D Council Tax increase of £5.79, 2.97% for the aggregate Lewes District Council "Council Tax Requirement") comprising:
  - a) A General Expenses Council Tax requirement of £6,793,160
  - b) A Special Expenses Council Tax requirement of £644,840.
- 75.7** That following publication of the final 2018/2019 Local Government Finance Settlement, the Deputy Chief Executive be authorised to make the necessary adjustments to maintain the general expenses council tax requirement at the above level and

to report any adjustments to the next Cabinet meeting.

Reason for the decisions:

Cabinet is required to approve the budget in accordance with the Council's Constitution. The budget report sets out the level of General Fund revenue resources needed to support the Council's priorities and services.

The Council has a statutory duty to determine its Council Tax Requirement and level of Council Tax for the coming year. Cabinet makes a recommendation to Council on this matter having taken account of the Deputy Chief Executive's statutory report on the adequacy of reserves and balances.

**76 Capital programme 2017/2018 to 2020/2021**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive regarding the 2017/2018 capital programme, outline of the 2020/2021 programme and the associated prudential indicators.

Recommend to Council:

- 76.1** To approve the revised 2017/2018 capital programme of £26.424m, as set out at appendix 1 to the report.
- 76.2** To approve the 2018/2019 capital programme of £32,407 as set out at appendix 2 to the report.
- 76.3** To approve the outline capital programme 2019/2020 to 2020/2021 of £23.663m, as set out at appendix 2 to the report.
- 76.4** To approve and adopt for 2018/2019 the prudential indicators in respect of the capital programme, detailed in section 6 of the report.

Reason for the decisions:

As part of the annual budget cycle the Cabinet considers what level of capital support to allocate to its policy programme. It also considers the medium term position in relation to likely capital needs and available resources. The Council's constitution requires Cabinet to make a recommendation to Council on the level of the capital programme budget.

Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003 introduced a framework for local authority capital expenditure and financing, the 'Prudential Capital Finance System'. The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003, which define this system, requires local authorities to follow the 'Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities' (the Prudential Code) when taking their decisions. The Prudential code requires authorities to set a number of 'Prudential Indicators' before the beginning of each financial year.

**77 Annual treasury management strategy statement and investment strategy 2018/2019 to 2020/2021**

The Cabinet considered the report of Deputy Chief Executive regarding the

proposed treasury and investment strategies for 2018/2019 to 2020/2021. The report also sought Council determination of the 2018/2019 authorised borrowing limit, the Council's 2018/2019 investment strategy and the method of calculating the Council's minimum revenue provision.

Recommended to Council:

- 77.1** That it adopts the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy 2018/2019 to 2020/2021, as set out in appendix 1 to the report.
- 77.2** That the Council's 'prudential indicators' for the year are those set out in appendix B of the strategy document.
- 77.3** That the Council's level of affordable borrowing, determined in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003, is subject to the following limits:

	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Authorised limit for external debt	£88.5m	£112.0m	£114.5m

- 77.4** That the Council's approach to allocating debt and associated costs between the housing revenue account and general fund be as set out in section 9 of the strategy statement.
- 77.5** That the Council's minimum revenue provision be calculated as set out in section 13 of the strategy statement.

Reasons for the decisions:

The Council has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management. In accordance with the Code of Practice, the Cabinet recommends to Council an Annual Treasury Strategy Statement before the start of each financial year. This includes an Investment Strategy for the year ahead (which Government guidance notes should be adopted by full Council) as well as 'Prudential Indicators' which are required to be set in order to comply with the 'Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities' (The Prudential Code). The majority of these indicators are an essential element of an integrated treasury management strategy.

The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 place a duty on local authorities to make a prudent provision for debt redemption. Guidance has been issued by the Secretary of State on determining 'Minimum Revenue Provision'.

Section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to determine and keep under review how much money it can afford to borrow. This is known as the 'affordable borrowing limit'.

**78 Lewes District Community Safety Partnership annual report**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Planning regarding the current performance of the Lewes District Community Safety Partnership (LDCSP) and sought the Cabinet's endorsement of the proposed Community Safety Plan for 2018/19 and the formal merger of the Eastbourne and Lewes District Community Safety Partnerships, subject to consultation with Partners and approval from the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) had a statutory duty to reduce crime and disorder, substance misuse and re-offending in their local authority area. CSPs also had a statutory duty to set out a partnership plan and monitor progress.

Home Office data demonstrated that Lewes District compared favourably against similar groups, set out at appendix C to the report, ending second lowest in overall crime for the year ending March 2017.

Visiting member, Councillor Gardiner addressed the Cabinet and outlined discussions by the Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on the 9 November 2017. Subject to the inclusion of a reference to stakeholders, the Committee endorsed and recommended the plan for 2018/19. Councillor Nicholson agreed to take this recommendation into consideration.

Resolved:

- 78.1** To note the performance of the Lewes District Community Safety Partnership during 2016/2017.
- 78.2** To endorse the community safety plan for 2018/2019, as set out at appendix A to the report.
- 78.3** To note the completion of the Eastbourne and Lewes District Community Safety Partnership 'soft merger' and endorse the full merger of the two Partnerships.
- 78.4** To note the points raised by the Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 9 November 2017, included at appendix B to the report.

Recommended to Council:

- 78.5** To approve the community safety plan for 2018/2019.

Reason for the decisions:

For Cabinet to endorse the Community Safety Plan for 2018/2019 and merger of the Eastbourne and Lewes District Community Safety Partnership.

**79 Equality annual report**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Planning, providing an update on the council's activities in relation to equalities over the past year and seeking the Cabinet's adoption of a new equality

objectives and a new action plan for 2018.

Key areas of activity outlined in the equality action plan for 2018, set out at appendix D to the report, included the delivery of training in equality and fairness to all new staff, training in equality analysis and on Prevent, the development of wider links with representatives of groups protected under the Equality Act, and activities to mark the centenary of the Representation of the People Act 1918 which first introduced women's suffrage.

A revised set of equality objectives for 2018/2021 was considered by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 18 January 2018 and they were recommended to Cabinet for adoption.

Visiting member Councillor Gardiner, on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee, addressed the Cabinet and advised that recommendation 2 of the report should be amended to include paragraph 21 of the report for the proposed equality objectives. This was unanimously agreed by the Cabinet.

Resolved:

- 79.1** To note progress against the 2017 Equality Action Plan as set out at appendix B to the report.
- 79.2** To approve the proposed equality objectives 2018 to 2021 as set out in paragraphs 18 and 21 of the report.
- 79.3** To approve the Equality Action Plan for 2018, as set out in appendix D to the report.

Reasons for the decisions:

The Equality Act 2010 seeks to protect people from discrimination on the basis of the protected characteristics of disability, race, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership. The Act applies to employment rights, service provision, and the provision of goods and facilities.

The Act includes a general Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires public authorities to consider equality implications in all they do. This involves giving due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and harassment, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between groups of people with protected characteristics.

In addition, the Act imposes specific duties on public authorities for the purpose of enabling the better performance by the authority of the general duty referred to above. The specific duties require local authorities to set one or more Equality Objectives, publish information annually to show how they have met the provisions of the Act, and regularly review their objectives.

The report details progress against the equalities action plan during 2017 and summarises some of the equality related work undertaken. This enables Members to scrutinise the Council's work in this area, and ensures that the council fulfils its equality duties.

**80 Voluntary sector support**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Planning, regarding the performance of the voluntary organisations funded by the Council in 2017/2018. The report also sought Cabinet's agreement to the Council's policy on grants to voluntary organisations and the levels of grant funding for 2018/2019.

It was proposed that core funding for 2018/19 remain the same level as in 2017/18 with two exceptions, and these were detailed in the report. Section 20 of the report demonstrated the Council's strong commitment to the Citizen's Advice Bureau compared to neighbouring authorities.

Visiting member, Councillor Gardiner, on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee, addressed the Cabinet and gave an overview of the comments made by the Committee at its meeting on 18 January 2018.

Resolved:

- 80.1** That the comments of the Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 18 January 2018, in respect of its consideration of the report, be received and noted.
- 80.2** To approve the proposed policy on grant funding to voluntary organisations in the Lewes District as set out in paragraph 12 of the report.
- 80.3** To agree grant funding for 2018/2019 as set out in the table at paragraph 39 and note the proposed funding for 2019 to 2022 to be offered subject to performance and the availability of funds to be confirmed annually.
- 80.4** To note the arrangements for grant agreements set out in paragraph 16 and agree the proposal that these be reviewed annually to ensure the Council receives best value for the grants awarded.
- 80.5** To agree that an additional sum of £8,135 from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) be added to the annual payment to the Lewes District Citizens Advice Bureau for the provision of Specialist (Money and Benefits) Advice to Council tenants and that this form part of the grant to that organisation in future years.
- 80.6** To agree the approach set out in paragraph 38 of the report to allocate an additional £30,000 for voluntary organisations to mitigate risks raised by the roll-out of Universal Credit.

Reason for the decision:

The Council may choose to give grants to voluntary organisations subject to delivery of agreed activities and outcomes. The Council funds a small number of strategic voluntary sector organisations which provide a range of essential services to our residents which address key Council priorities. The proposed policy set out in this document is designed to make explicit the reasons for



funding these organisations and the terms on which these grants are offered.

The meeting ended at 3.09 pm.

A Smith  
Chair