

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET
TUESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2014**

Held At 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Pavilion Road, West Bridgford

PRESENT:

Councillors J N Clarke (Chairman), D G Bell, J A Cranswick, J E Fearon and N C Lawrence

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors D Boote, S J Boote, R M Jones, A MacInnes and G R Mallender

OFFICERS PRESENT:

A Graham	Chief Executive
P Linfield	Service Manager - Finance and Commercial
V Nightingale	Senior Member Support Officer
P Steed	Executive Manager – Finance and Commercial
D Swaine	Executive Manager - Operations and Corporate Governance

APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE:

Councillor D J Mason

45. Declarations of Interest

There were none declared.

46. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 14 January 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

47. Community Governance Review Edwalton – Final Recommendation

Councillor Cranswick presented a report which detailed the work undertaken as part of the Community Governance Review for Edwalton. He explained that, following Cabinet's decision on 15 October 2013, a second consultation had been undertaken and 1,800 leaflets had been sent out to the Ward's residents. People from across the Borough had also been able to respond to the consultation via a survey on the Council's website. The consultation asked residents if they agreed with the Council's decision not to form a parish council for Edwalton Village Ward.

Commenting further Councillor Cranswick confirmed that the Community Governance Review Member Group had met on 23 January 2014 to consider responses to the second round of consultation. He stated that of the 399 responses received 297 (74.4%) agreed with the Council's recommendation and 102 (25.6%) disagreed. Taking the electorate as a whole, 9.4% (297) of respondents agreed with the Council's recommendation, 3.2% (102) disagreed and 87.3% (2,746) did not respond. In addition, there were 119 comments received which had been included as an appendix to the report. He informed

Members that the Group had also considered whether a parish council would secure convenient and effective local governance. Having considered this and the responses from the Stage 2 consultation the Group had therefore recommended that the initial decision should be upheld.

Councillor Bell stated that it was clear from the responses that the overwhelming majority were in favour of the Council's recommendation.

Councillor Fearon agreed that this had been a thorough process.

Following a question Councillor Cranswick informed Cabinet that it had been a cross party Member Group that had considered the consultation responses and that both councillors for Edwalton Village Ward had been members.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) accept the results of Stage 2 of the consultation, which, following Stage 1 of the consultation, asked residents of Edwalton Village Ward to vote on the recommendation of the Member Group **not** to establish a parish council in Edwalton
- b) endorse the recommendation of the Community Governance Review Member Group **not** to establish a parish council in Edwalton, and forwarded to Council for approval.

48. Community Governance Review Shelford and Newton – Draft Proposals for Further Consultation

Councillor Cranswick presented a report which detailed the work undertaken as part of the Community Governance Review for Shelford and Newton. He reminded Members that a valid petition had been presented to Council on 20 June 2013 requesting that the current parish should be split into two parishes, one for each village, and that the current parish council should cease. Following Cabinet's decision on 10 September 2013 the Stage 1 consultation had been undertaken with 400 leaflets being distributed.

Councillor Cranswick informed Members that 48% of the electorate had signed the petition and 31.6% had responded to the consultation exercise. Of the 197 responses 180 had agreed with the proposal, which equated to 28.8% of the electorate, and 17, or 2.7%, disagreed. Shelford and Newton Parish Council had also responded positively.

He stated that the Member Group had considered whether this would ensure that there would be convenient and effective local governance within the area. The Member Group were recommending that the Stage 2 consultation should be undertaken to ascertain if the residents agreed with the Council's proposals. He explained that the proposals were that there should be two parishes established named Shelford parish and Newton parish, that these should not be warded and that there should be 5 and 9 parish councillors respectively. As part of the consultation it was proposed that there should be a map included as the original petition had omitted an area of the present parish. The new boundaries would be within the 2015 boundaries for East Bridgford Ward.

Councillor Fearon supported the recommendation by stating that the two villages were now very different. He said that there had been new houses built at Newton and that the area would grow due to future developments, whereas Shelford had remained fairly static. He was concerned that the parishes might not be able to recruit sufficient parish councillors. Councillor Cranswick stated that all parishes had that concern, however people could be co-opted or the parish could operate with a vacancy.

RESOLVED that Cabinet

- a) endorse the recommendation of the Community Governance Review Member Group to establish separate parish councils for Shelford and Newton; and
- b) confirm its support for the arrangements for the second stage of the consultation.

49. **2014/15 Budget and Financial Strategy**

Councillor Cranswick presented the report which detailed the 2014/15 budget and the 5 year Medium Term Financial Strategy. He stated that these contained the revenue budget, the proposed capital programme, the Transformation Strategy and the Treasury Management Strategy. He was pleased to announce that the proposal was to freeze the Council Tax for 2014/15 at £117.99 for a Band D property and also for 2015/16 and then it would increase by 2% for the next three years. Included within the document were two further options for increasing the Council Tax by 1.45% and 1.98%. He said that the 1% government grant that would be payable if the Authority chose to freeze the council tax would be included in the Revenue Settlement Grant in future years. The Council would be able to take this decision as there was an increase in the Council Tax base due to the Council's decision regarding the allowances available for empty properties.

With regard to the proposed levels of Council Tax in the Special Expenses areas these had only been increased in Ruddington and this was due to the maintenance expenses incurred during 2013/14. He informed Members that the financial settlement had been reduced from £3.13m to £2.37m and that it was anticipated to reduce to £2.2m by 2018/19.

He stated that the Council's Capital Programme demonstrated the Council's commitment to deliver more efficient services, improve its leisure facilities and facilitate economic development. This would, however, see the Council's capital reserves diminish from £13.1m to £3.8m by 2018/19. To assist with these aims a new Transformation Strategy had been formulated, which set out changes to follow on from the Council's current 4 year Plan. Councillor Cranswick reminded Members that the Chief Executive had presented the Transformation Strategy to all Members at the recent budget workshops.

With reference to the Treasury Management Strategy the Executive Manager – Finance and Commercial explained that this document had been considered, and recommended for approval, by the Corporate Governance Group on 6 February 2014.

Councillor Clarke stated that the Transformation Strategy was a very good example of officers and members of all political parties working together to create proposals that would meet the present and future needs of the Council in these constrained times. The Strategy would allow the Council to meet future challenges whilst operating a value for money service. The Chief Executive concurred with Councillor Clarke regarding the joint working. He also stated that this was the first budget since the appointment of his new Executive Management Team and Service Managers. He thanked Members for endorsing the Transformation Strategy, which was linked to the Council's Corporate Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Councillor Fearon, in support of the recommendation, noted that the capital reserves were diminishing over the next four years, however this identified that the Council was using its resources wisely. The Executive Manager – Finance and Commercial explained that if there were no additional capital receipts in future years the Council might have to consider borrowing in the 2020's.

Councillor Lawrence welcomed the freeze to the Council Tax. He also stated that the report clarified the original discussions regarding the Transformation Strategy at the budget workshops. With reference to the projects he was pleased to note that these had commenced.

In conclusion, Councillor Clarke stated that the Council's financial state was stable and that this would allow the Council to consider any future opportunities calmly and rationally. He was confident that the Council had a management team that would continue to consider, wherever possible, any future savings that could be made.

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends to Council:

- a) the budget setting report and associated financial strategies 2014/15 to 2018/19 (attached Annex) including a Transformation Strategy to deliver efficiencies over the five year period (**Appendix 3**).
- b) the Capital Programme as set out in **Appendix 4**.
- c) Rushcliffe's 2014/15 Council Tax for a Band D property is set at £117.99 (no increase from 2013/14).
- d) the Special Expenses for West Bridgford, Ruddington and Keyworth (as set out in Appendix 1) resulting in the following Band D Council tax levels for the Special Expense Areas:
 - i) West Bridgford £54.41 (£54.68 in 2013/14)
 - ii) Keyworth £1.46 (£1.47 in 2013/14)
 - iii) Ruddington £3.55 (£2.21 in 2013/14)

The meeting closed at 7.40 pm.

CHAIRMAN