

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET
TUESDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2012**

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

PRESENT:

Councillors J N Clarke (Chairman), J A Cranswick, D G Bell, J E Fearon, D J Mason, Mrs J A Smith

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

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

OFFICERS PRESENT:

C Bullett	Deputy Chief Executive (CB)
P Randle	Deputy Chief Executive (PR)
L Reid Jones	Democratic Services Manager
P Sutton	Interim Head of Financial Services
D Swaine	Head of Corporate Services

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

There were no apologies for absence.

47. Declarations of Interest

There were none declared.

48. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10 January 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

49. Budget 2012/13 and Medium Term Financial Strategy

Councillor Clarke presented the report of the Interim Head of Financial Services outlining the budget for 2012/13 and the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. He explained that the report set out in detail the Council's financial position and had been completed following comments made by Councillors through the budget setting process. He thanked officers and Councillors for their hard work in identifying savings, particularly in the current financial climate and recognised that everyone was facing financial pressures, including customers, council tax payers and the Council's partners.

Councillor Clarke drew Members' attention to council tax options set out in paragraph 56 of the report. He stated that there were three options, these being to accept the Government's Council Tax Freeze Incentive Grant, or implement a council tax increase of 2.5% or a council tax increase of 3.5%. He reminded Cabinet that the Grant was for one year only which would require

the Council to find further savings in future years. He said that if Council chose to increase the council tax by 2.5% or 3.5% this would result in more income for the Council, however in the current climate it may not be the most appropriate way to proceed. He therefore stated that Cabinet should recommend to Council the council tax freeze option, thereby not placing additional pressures on tax payers at this difficult time.

Councillor Cranswick explained that the budget workshops for Members had been an opportunity to summarise the work that had been carried out in the previous year, including that on the Environment and Waste Management service, and to identify where further efficiencies and savings could be made in future years. He stated that the savings initiatives identified in the report amounted to almost £1.7 million, which added to the savings of £2.3 million in the previous two years made a total of £4 million over a four year period. He said this was a substantial amount when set against the overall budget. He reminded Members that the £1.7 million achieved in the previous year was a considerable sum towards the £2.8 million savings required.

Commenting further Councillor Cranswick referred to paragraph 57 of the report and stated that if Council accepted a tax freeze then they would have to manage a further saving of £136,000 in the next three years over and above the current savings identified. He added that the comments received from Members on the budget workshops showed that there were no items which required significant attention, therefore he was confident that most of the budget proposals were acceptable to the majority of Members. By referring to appendix A and appendix B of the report he drew Cabinet's attention to the revenue and capital monitoring which set out areas of variances.

In conclusion Councillor Cranswick stated that Cabinet should recommend a council tax freeze to Council as residents would expect this. He said it was sensible to take the grant that was available and manage the consequences in future years. He believed this was the best way forward for the Council and its residents.

Councillor Mason supported the council tax freeze and said that Members recognised the hardship some residents were facing. She stated she was pleased the Council was able to make savings, and that this demonstrated a frugal and well run Council. This, she said, was a tribute to officers and Members who had made difficult decisions over the last two years. She added that she recognised this option required the Council to make further savings in future but this was the right course of action Council to take.

RESOLVED that Cabinet: -

- i. Notes the current revenue and capital monitoring position for 2011/12;
- ii. Notes the comments received from members on the Budget 2012/13 and medium term financial strategy outlined in **Appendix D**;
- iii. Approves the Medium Term Financial Forecast as set out in paragraph 47;
- iv. Notes the scenario and risk analysis illustrated in **Appendix G**;

- v. Approves the treasury management strategy 2012/13 including prudential borrowing indicators as set out in **Appendix H**;
- vi. Recommends to Council:
 - a. the Revised Budget 2011/12 and Budget 2012/13 as set out in **Appendix E**;
 - b. the Capital Programme 2012/13 – 2015/16 as set out in **Appendix F**;
 - c. the special expenses for West Bridgford, Ruddington and Keyworth as set out at paragraph 27;
 - d. accepting the Council Tax Freeze Incentive Grant resulting in no change to council tax levels for 2012/13.

50. **Draft Corporate Strategy 2012 – 2016**

Councillor Clarke presented the report of the Head of Corporate Services outlining the draft Corporate Strategy 2012 – 2016. He referred to the report which informed Cabinet that the current Corporate Strategy 2007-2011 and the interim Corporate Strategy Refresh 2009 were both due to expire on 31 March 2012. The current Strategy contained 13 strategic tasks based on six corporate priorities for improvement. He informed Members that the draft Corporate Strategy 2012-2016 focussed on three themes key for developing the Borough over the next four years in a simple and clear four page document. He went on to say that he recognised the hard work which had been achieved in delivering the previous Strategy and that the services provided by the Council were of an excellent nature. Furthermore this had been evidenced by surveys which had identified Rushcliffe as number one for overall customer satisfaction and value for money. He said it was important to build on the successes and maintain the positive legacy of previous Strategies.

Commenting further on the proposed Strategy Councillor Clarke stated that it was vital to ensure that the local economy improved and that the Council had a role to play in it by providing residents with assistance. He also stressed the importance of working in partnership with others. In relation to welfare reform Councillor Clarke explained that the Chief Executive was at the forefront of working with the Department of Work and Pensions in assessing how district councils could work to deliver the reforms.

Councillor Clarke continued by outlining how services to residents were important, particularly in relation to leisure, housing and facilities for young people and children. With regard to new technology Councillor Clarke said that the Council would look at every means possible to deliver efficiencies and reduce costs, by using the Council's assets to their full potential. He stated that new technology was vital, for schools, residents and businesses.

Councillor Cranswick stated that the draft Corporate Strategy was as important as the previous Strategy, although it was a slimmer version. Furthermore this did not over-ride any previous intentions and services would continue to be

provided. He proposed that the themes should be revised so that they were more easily understood by the public and other stakeholders and proposed they be amended as follows:

- *Supporting economic growth to ensure a prosperous and thriving local economy - Our economy;*
- *Maintaining and enhancing our residents' quality of life -Our residents*
- *Transforming the Council to enable the delivery of efficient high quality services - Our Council*

Councillor Clarke reiterated that the Corporate Strategy was not a complete list of the services provided by the Council, but was an indication of the Council's priorities whilst maintaining other services.

In support of the amended themes Councillor Bell stated that the document set out the overarching strategy and that there were many strategic tasks which lay below it, such as the Local Development Plan and the Cotgrave Masterplan which were vital in terms of successful delivery.

Councillor Fearon concurred with comments made and said that in 12 months the Council could be facing very different circumstances, therefore it was important that the Strategy was kept alive.

Councillor Smith supported the comments made and recognised that a key attribute of Rushcliffe Borough Council was its flexibility. She said that officers should be congratulated for their ability and imagination to make savings and deliver first rate services.

Councillor Mason recognised that there was considerable work to be achieved in order to deliver the Corporate Strategy previously and develop a new shorter more concise version.

In conclusion Councillor Clarke stated that the draft Corporate Strategy did not set numerical targets and was a living document, which could react to prevailing circumstances.

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends the Corporate Strategy 2012 – 2016 to Council for approval subject to the three key themes being amended to read:

- *Supporting economic growth to ensure a prosperous and thriving local economy;*
- *Maintaining and enhancing our residents' quality of life*
- *Transforming the Council to enable the delivery of efficient high quality services.*

51. Pay Policy Statement 2012/13

Councillor Clarke presented the report of the Head of Corporate Services detailing the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2012/13. He explained that under Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 a local authority was required to publish a Pay Policy Statement by 31 March each year. Furthermore the Statement must set out the Council's policies relating to the remuneration of its senior officers, remuneration of the lowest paid employees and the relationship between the remuneration of its senior officers and the remuneration of its employees who were not senior officers.

Commenting further Councillor Clarke said that it was important to have an open and transparent approach to the Council's pay and reminded Cabinet that the policy did not propose numbers or percentages, but related to the policies regarding pay.

Councillor Cranswick stated that he considered the policy to be a technical document which had to be produced on a regular basis and was indicative of the Council's open and transparent approach to pay setting.

In conclusion Councillor Mason commented that it was important that the Council recognised diversity and continued to attract and retain a high performing and diverse workforce.

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends the Pay Policy Statement for 2012/13 to Council for approval.

The meeting closed at 7.40 p.m.

CHAIRMAN