

Minutes

Policy, Finance and Resources Committee Wednesday, 15th February, 2017

Attendance

Cllr Mrs McKinlay (Chair)	Cllr Kendall
Cllr Kerlake (Vice-Chair)	Cllr McCheyne
Cllr Barrett	Cllr Mynott
Cllr Faragher	Cllr Parker

Apologies

Cllr Hossack

Substitute Present

Cllr Ms Sanders

Also Present

Cllr Aspinell
Cllr Hirst
Cllr Mrs Pound

Officers Present

John Chance	-	Finance Director (Section 151 Officer)
Ramesh Prashar	-	Financial Services Manager
Philip Ruck	-	Chief Executive
Jean Sharp	-	Governance and Member Support Officer
Lorne Spicer	-	Business Development and PR Manager
Steve Summers	-	Group Manager In House Services
Daniel Toohey	-	Monitoring Officer

279. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Hossack. Cllr Ms Sanders substituted for him.

280. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on 31st January 2017 were approved as a true record.

281. General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2017/2018

The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) considered by Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on 29 November 2016 gave Members an update on the various significant changes that would impact on the Council's financial position. Particular issues highlighted, relevant to the General Fund & HRA, included the phasing out of the Revenue Support Grant (RSG), changes to the New Homes Bonus and the Business Retention schemes.

The fundamental principles of the Council's MTFP were to:

- (i) Maintain a sustainable financial position against a background of unprecedented financial uncertainty and reduced government funding, including the delivery of efficiency targets.
- (ii) Support the vision of our Borough through appropriate identification of resources required to deliver the key priorities outlined in the 'Vision for Brentwood'.
- (iii) Maximise opportunities and mitigate risks associated with the fundamental change to the way in which key local government is financed.

The report considered:

- (i) The General Fund budget proposals for 2017/18 to 2019/20.
- (ii) The Housing Revenue Account (HRS) budget proposals for 2017/18 onwards.
- (iii) The Capital Programme 2017/18 to 2019/2020.
- (iv) The Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2017/18.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Kerlake **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report and a vote was taken by a show of hands and is was

RESOLVED

That the Committee recommends to Council on 1 March 2017:

General Fund:

- 1. To approve the General Fund – Revised MTFP for 2017/18 as shown in Table 7.1 at paragraph 8.2 which includes the proposed savings target envelope as shown in Table 8 at paragraph 8.7 of this report.**

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- 2. To approve the HRA Business Plan for 2017/18 and beyond as shown in Appendix B of the report.**
- 3. To approve a 1% decrease in rents for 2017/18 and for the following 2 years.**

4. To recommend to apply the formula rent to all new tenancies from April 2017/18.

Capital Programme

5. To approve the proposed Capital Programme and Funding totalling £33.9 million for 2017/18 to 2019/20 as set out in Tables 15 and 16 of this report.
6. To approve the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy as set out in Section 12 of the report.
7. To note the Section 151 Officer's Assurance Statement as set out in Section 13 of the report.

(Cllr Barrett declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of being a Council leaseholder).

Reason for recommendations

The Council is required to approve the Budget as part of the Budget and Policy Framework.

282. Revenues & Benefits Shared Service Agreement

The report recommended to enter into a new sharing agreement for the provision of the Revenues and Benefits Service with Basildon Borough Council including the formal co-location of Brentwood Borough Council Revenues and Benefits staff within one merged site located within Basildon Council offices.

This would allow the services to merge formally through TUPE arrangements, building upon the existing Revenue and Benefits shared service that commenced in April 2015, where Brentwood Borough Council entered into a partnership with Basildon Borough Council which provided a managed service and hosted IT platform for the Council's Revenue and Benefits service, located in Brentwood's Town Hall.

The approval would formalise the partnership between Brentwood Borough Council and Basildon Borough Council – supporting the Councils partnership aspirations to deliver quality front and back office services in partnership.

In order for the proposed collaboration to achieve maximum success, it was recommended that the committee grant approval for the council to enter a new sharing agreement for Revenue and Benefits. This would also set a framework for any future shared service arrangements.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Kerlake **SECONDED** the slightly amended recommendation in the report, a vote was taken by a show of hands and it was

RESOLVED :

That the Committee recommend approval, subject to the appropriate delegated authority, of the Revenues & Benefits Shared Service Agreement to the Ordinary Council on the 1st March 2017 as a related proposal to the Budget.

Reason for recommendation

To enable the Council to deliver effective and efficient Revenues and Benefits services for the benefit of the Council and its customers.

283. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 8.00pm.