

CABINET**Tuesday, 3rd October, 2017**

Present:-

Councillor P Gilby (Chair)

Councillors T Gilby
 Bagley
 Blank
 Huckle

Councillors Brunt
 Ludlow
 Serjeant

Non Voting Catt
 Members Dickinson

J Innes

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

61 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' INTERESTS
 RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

No declarations of interest were received.

62 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

63 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 12 September, 2017, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

64 **FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan for the four month period 1 October to 31 January 2018 was reported for information.

***RESOLVED –**

That the Forward Plan be noted.

65 DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS RATE RELIEF SCHEME(S) 2017/18

The Director of Finance and Resources submitted a report recommending for approval a new discretionary business rate relief scheme, to give local effect to the national funding made available in the 2017 Budget.

The report detailed the three business rate relief schemes that were announced in the Chancellor's Budget Speech in March 2017. One scheme introduced a £1K discount for pubs that had a rateable value below £100K.

A second scheme of relief was also made available to ratepayers that faced large increases as a result of the loss of small business or rural rate relief.

Members were informed that the reliefs in respect of both of the above schemes had already been distributed to all eligible businesses in the Chesterfield area. This included 59 pubs at a cost of £72,914, and 18 businesses at a cost of £18,983.

The third scheme made available a national discretionary fund of £300m over 4 years from 2017/18, to provide support to small and medium sized businesses that faced the greatest increases in their business rate bills following the 2017 revaluation exercise.

The report detailed the annual amount of the funding that the council would receive through to 2021. The responsibility for distributing funds was delegated by the Government to local authorities, to make certain that it was properly targeted at those ratepayers in greatest need.

The council was also granted authority to exclude certain types of business that it did not deem appropriate to support, such as national chains, Government departments and other public bodies.

It was reported that the council had followed Government guidance in determining that relief would be offered to all business ratepayers where:

- The property had a rateable value for 2017/18 of less than £200K
- The 2017/18 bill had increased by more than 11.0% compared to the previous year.

*** RESOLVED –**

1. That the new policy for discretionary rate relief, as set out in Section 4 of the officer's report, be approved.
2. That the types of business listed at paragraph 5.2 of the officer's report be excluded from the approved discretionary rate relief scheme.
3. That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Finance and Resources to make final decisions on behalf of the council related to the application of the approved discretionary rate relief scheme.
4. That the proposed funding arrangements to support the administrative costs of the scheme, be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION

To devise a scheme of discretionary rate relief that is fair, simple to understand, and easy to administer.

66 UPDATE ON GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2017/18

The Director of Finance and Resources presented a report that outlined the position of the General Fund Capital Programme for 2017/18. The report detailed the updated expenditure and financing forecasts, based on the progress of current, approved schemes.

It was reported that the asbestos removal work in the Town Hall had been completed to budget, and that the next phase of refurbishment work had commenced.

Members were informed that steps were being taken to procure contractors to demolish Saltergate Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP) and build a new MSCP as part of the Northern Gateway Scheme.

The Peak Resort scheme was on target to spend to budget and time, and the Chesterfield Museum Store had been successfully relocated. In addition, the external funds acquired to carry out elements of the Waterside scheme had been returned as the proposed work would be financed through other means.

It was highlighted within Section 5 of the officer's report that the Council's use of internal borrowing had helped to reduce the additional costs incurred from external borrowing interest rates. The Council had worked closely with Arlington Close to ensure that the internal borrowing was affordable, prudent and sustainable.

Members were advised that Government legislation dictated that local authorities would only use capital receipts either to repay debt or to finance new capital expenditure. However, this rule had been relaxed for the period from April 2016 to March 2019, to give local authorities greater flexibility to use capital receipts for revenue expenditure on transformation schemes that would deliver sustainable, ongoing revenue savings.

It was noted that in order to take advantage of the flexibility, the council would need to prepare a strategy document to provide details of projects to be funded in this manner. This would include the expected impacts in terms of revenue saved or raised.

*** RESOLVED –**

That the Cabinet recommends to the full Council that:

1. The updated General Fund Capital Programme expenditure and financing arrangements, as set out in Appendix A to the officer's report, be approved.
2. The new schemes, as outlined in paragraph 6.1 of the officer's report, be noted.
3. The proposal to undertake further work to finalise the strategy document required to take advantage of the Government's capital receipts flexibility rules, be approved.
4. The proposal to defer the repayment of prudential borrowing from capital receipts, including that in respect of the Queens Park Sports Centre and Market Hall refurbishment projects, be approved.
5. That the proposed changes to the methods used to finance current schemes, be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION

To update the council's General Fund Capital Programme and ensure that it is affordable and deliverable over the medium term.

67 HOUSING SERVICES FIRE MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Housing Manager presented a report recommending for approval a revised and updated Housing Services Fire Management Policy. The Policy applied to all council-owned homes.

The revised Fire Management Policy complied with current fire safety legislation, and detailed the responsibilities of tenants, residents and visitors with respect to fire safety management, as well as that of employees.

It was reported that Savills – a firm of Chartered Surveyors with expertise in Fire Risk Assessments – had worked closely with Housing Services in undertaking the assessments and developing the updated policy.

The Housing Manager also briefed Cabinet on the steps that officers had immediately taken, following the traffic fire at Grenfell Tower, to re-assure tenants that all required safety measures were in place and up-to-date in council houses and flats.

*** RESOLVED –**

1. That the Housing Services Fire Management Policy be approved and adopted.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Housing Manager to oversee and carry out an annual review of fire safety arrangements relating to the council's housing stock.
3. That the proposal to submit an annual report to the Cabinet Member for Homes and Customers, be approved.

REASONS FOR DECISION

1. To ensure the council meets its statutory obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

2. To contribute to meeting the council's corporate priority to 'improve the quality of life for local people'.
3. To ensure improved performance against the key project to deliver the Decent Homes Standard for council Homes.