

CABINET

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 4 December 2014 at 1.00 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Donna Jones (in the Chair)

Councillors Luke Stubbs
Ken Ellcome
Frank Jonas
Lee Mason
Linda Symes
Steve Wemyss

95. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Councillor Young had sent his apologies for absence and Councillor New was on his way from another meeting.

96. Declarations of Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations of members' interests.

97. Record of Previous Decision Meeting - 6 November 2014 (AI 3)

DECISION: that the record of decisions of the Cabinet meeting held on 6 November 2014 be agreed as a correct record to be signed by the Leader.

98. Consideration of the option of entering the Building Control Partnership (AI 4)

The Cabinet Members were supportive of this move to a more efficient provision of service that would also attract more income, and which would give more professional development of staff by sharing resources with neighbouring authorities.

DECISIONS:

- (1) That PCC explore entering into a new partnership, working within the Fareham and Gosport Partnership as the future service delivery model on the terms outlined in the report.**
- (2) That implementation costs and ongoing revenue costs are met from within the existing City Development Service cash limit.**
- (3) The final decision was delegated to the Strategic Director for Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and Economic Development.**

99. Budget and Performance Monitoring 2014/15 2nd Quarter to end September 2014 (AI 5)

The Leader congratulated the Section 151 Officer and staff involved in the successful attraction of the non ring-fenced grants totalling £566,200 in 2014/15.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:

- (i) The contents of this report be noted, in particular the overall forecast overspend of £1,501,500 representing a variance of 0.9% against the City Council Budget (as adjusted) of £175,030,000.**
- (ii) To enable the Children's & Education Portfolio to address the deficit against the Council approved cash limit, the Children's Social Care & Safeguarding savings proposals for 2015/16 totalling £1,917,000 outlined in Table 1 be noted.**
- (iii) To remedy the historic underlying budget deficit relating to Parking within the Traffic & Transportation Portfolio, it be noted that an annual appropriation from the Parking Reserve in the amount of £400,000 per annum has been made.**
- (iv) That the Council Leader works with the relevant portfolio holder to consider measures necessary to significantly reduce or eliminate the adverse budget position presently being forecast within Children & Education and Health & Social Care Portfolios and any necessary decisions presented to a future meeting of the relevant portfolio.**

(This would be considered by Council on 20 January 2015)

100. Portsmouth City Council Revenue Budget 2015/16 - Savings Proposals (AI 6)

Deputations were made by:

- i) Tracey Jones, of Pete's Airlink, as manager of the Dial-a-ride scheme which had between 900-1000 customers a month, 80% of whom were over the age of 65, whose mobility and disability needs were wide-ranging. She explained the difference between this service and a standard taxi service, as they knew their clients and their needs and covered areas not well-served by bus routes. She was grateful for the meeting held with some of the cabinet members that morning which had been constructive in looking at a way forward so that the service would not be lost.
- ii) Karen Silman, as a user of Dial-a-ride and MS sufferer explained the value of the existing service which took her to receive physiotherapy. The drivers gave extra help and were knowledgeable in assisting wheelchair users who did not always have access to buses, depending on routes and availability of the dedicated disabled space on board. Dial-a-ride gave her independence and safety, and she found them the most professional service providers and felt it was important to keep this

service when Portsmouth was aspiring to be a Dementia Friendly City, as the drivers knew the history of their clients.

- iii) Steve Bonner, representing The Portsmouth Pensioners Association spoke in opposition to the cuts in Adult Social Care, concentrating on the removal of podiatry care and free swimming for the over 60s, both of which currently helped to promote health and mobility, and this group would be least able to pay for these services. He felt these would be false economies which could lead to a greater call on critical care later on. Portsmouth Pensioners also regretted the removal of their £2500 grant which was used for their Pompey Pensioner magazine, 25% of which promoted PCC services and events and which was important in their campaigns for their members, so hoped part of the £500,000 being made available for voluntary organisations (within the Transition Fund) could be used to help them develop the magazine and source advertising opportunities.

A written deputation had also been submitted by Mrs Cross of Farlington as a user and supporter of the Dial-a-Ride scheme, which was read out by the Leader.

The Leader explained that the initial savings proposals had been made available 4 weeks in advance gauge the strength of public feeling and to explore the alternatives with experts. Therefore a meeting had been held with Tracey Jones as the manager of the Dial-a-ride service to work on an alternative not for profit model to help the service continue, with PCC providing advice on this.

In response to the concerns of Portsmouth Pensioners, the Leader felt that there is potential for them to raise income for their magazine from other sources and offered the assistance of PCC's income generation expert. Whilst the value of swimming was acknowledged, many of those participating in the 60+ sessions would be able to afford to continue.

Councillor Ellcome, as Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation, was pleased that discussions were taking place for a continuity of a Dial-a-ride type service to ensure continuity for the users. Councillor Wemyss also supported the continuity of this service which was valued by many residents in Drayton & Farlington, and the Leader thanked Councillor Potter for his involvement for Paulsgrove users of the service, as well as Tracey and Keiran for meeting with her and Councillors Ellcome, Stubbs and Jonas to seek a way forward.

A commitment was given by the Administration to work with the current providers to deliver an alternative, not-for-profit service for the existing users of Dial-a-Ride.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:

- (1) **That the following be approved:**

- (a) That the Council's Budget for 2015/16 be prepared on the basis of a Council Tax freeze**
- (b) The savings proposals for each Portfolio amounting, in total, to £13.1m for 2015/16, £13.1m for 2016/17 and £13.1m in 2017/18 as set out in Appendix A to enable appropriate consultation and notice periods to be given to affected parties**
- (c) Given the capital investment needs of the City, the funding gap between need and available resources and the importance of the Capital programme in delivering the Medium Term Financial Strategy, that £3.0m of the overall £5.2m financial improvement in the City Council's financial position be transferred to the Revenue Reserve for Capital in order to supplement the capital resources available for new Capital Investment (see paragraphs 8.11 and 8.12)**
- (d) Given the current uncommitted balance on the MTRS Reserve of £2.1m is very modest in the context of the £37m of savings that the Council is required to make over the next 3 years and that it is also the Council's primary vehicle for providing funding for redundancies and Spend to Save initiatives, that the remaining £2.2m of the overall £5.2m financial improvement in the City Council's financial position be transferred to the Medium Term Resource Strategy Reserve (see paragraph 8.14)**
- (e) That £500,000 be released from the MTRS Reserve to create a Voluntary Sector Capacity & Transition Fund to enable the voluntary sector to reconfigure their service or enhance their capacity / infrastructure in order to support / provide council services as set out in paragraph 10.16**
- (f) In the event that the Voluntary Sector Capacity & Transition Fund is created, that the use of those funds be released on the same spend to save criteria adopted for other MTRS funds and that the allocation of these funds be delegated to the Head of Financial Services & S151 Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council**
- (g) To undertake the necessary business intervention work described in paragraphs 10.17 and 10.18 at the necessary scale and pace to deliver significant change and cost reduction, it is recommended that a Business Intervention Fund be created in the sum of £500,000 to be used flexibly across years and funded from the MTRS Reserve**
- (h) In the event that the Business Intervention Fund is created, that the use of those funds be used both, independently of, and in synergy with, the Voluntary Sector Capacity & Transition Fund and that the allocation of these funds be delegated to the Head of**

Financial Services & S151 Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council

- (i) That the funds released under recommendations (e) and (g) be used flexibly across the 2014/15 and future financial years and that the S151 Officer be given delegated authority to determine the annual allocations as necessary**

- (2) That the Council note:**
 - (a) The Budget Savings Requirement for 2015/16 approved by the City Council and based on a Council Tax increase of 1.95% is £12.5m; based on a Council Tax freeze, that savings requirement increases to £13.1m**

 - (b) The key themes arising from the budget consultation**

 - (c) The indicative savings proposals set out in Appendix B which are provided for the purpose of demonstrating to the Council that the Portfolio savings as recommended in paragraph 3.1(b) above are robust and deliverable**

 - (d) The likely impact of savings as set out in Appendix B based on the scale of the Portfolio savings as recommended in paragraph 3.1(b)**

 - (e) That the responsibility of the City Council is to approve the overall Budget and the associated cash limits of its Portfolios and Committees; it is not the responsibility of the City Council to approve any individual savings within those Portfolios / Committees**

 - (f) That it is the responsibility of the individual Portfolio Holders (not the City Council) to approve the individual savings proposals and the Portfolio Holder can therefore, in response to any consultation, alter, amend or substitute any of the indicative savings proposal(s) set out in Appendix B with alternative proposal(s) amounting to the same value within their Portfolio**

 - (g) Managers will commence any necessary consultation process or notice process necessary to implement the approved Portfolio / Committee savings**

 - (h) That there is no general provision for Budget Pressures and that it is the responsibility of the Portfolio Holder to manage any Budget Pressures which arise from the overall resources available to the Portfolio (which includes their Portfolio Reserve)**

 - (i) In accordance with the approved financial framework, it is the responsibility of the Portfolio Holder, in consultation with the**

Head of Finance & S151 Officer, to release funds from the Portfolio Reserve in accordance with the provisions set out in paragraph 10.10

- (j) The MTRS Reserve held to fund the upfront costs associated with Spend to Save Schemes, Invest to Save Schemes and redundancies holds a very modest uncommitted balance of £3.3m (see footnote 2 of the report, page 8) and will only be replenished from an approval to the transfer of any non-Portfolio underspends at year end into this reserve.**

The meeting concluded at 1.37 pm.

Councillor Donna Jones
Leader of the Council