

# **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Date:** 24 February 2020

**Venue:** East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

**Time:** 7.30pm

**Present:** Councillors: Richard Lewis (Chairman)  
Glenvil Greenwood-Smith (Vice Chairman)  
Steven North (Leader of the Council)  
David Jenney (Deputy Leader of the Council)

Tony Boto  
David Brackenbury  
Wendy Brackenbury  
Val Carter  
Roger Glithero JP

Helen Harrison  
Andy Mercer  
Sarah Peacock  
Phillip Stearn

## **411. WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed Kelvin Turner, the new Interim Head of Resources, to his first meeting of the Committee.

## **412. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

## **413. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2020 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

## **414. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

## **415. QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3**

No questions were submitted under Procedure Rule 10.3.

## **416. MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES**

### **a) Personnel Sub-Committee – 20 January 2020**

The minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on 20 January 2020 were received (see pages 465 to 466).

**b) Homelessness Prevention Grants Panel – 12 February 2020**

The minutes of the meeting of the Homelessness Prevention Grants Panel held on 12 February 2020 were received (see pages 467 to 469).

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) £10,000 is awarded to East Northants Community Services towards the cost of accommodation, counselling and support at the night shelter and a further £2,000 to provide the SWEF.
- (ii) Midland Heart is awarded grants for High Street South and Shoemaker Court at £12,994 for each project.
- (iii) Mayday Trust Personal Transition Service be awarded £11,997 with consideration for a further £11,997 upon further evidence being provided by Mayday Trust. Delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairmen of the Policy and Resources Committee and Homeless Prevention Grants Panel, to award any further grant if required.
- (iv) No further funding should be allocated for ad-hoc homelessness prevention measures during the year.
- (v) The additional £991 required should be funded from the carry forward to be requested from the underspend in the current year.

**c) Finance and Performance Sub-Committee – 17 February 2020**

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Performance Sub-Committee held on 17 February 2020 were received (see pages 470 to 477).

Stanwick Lakes – Replacement of Sluice Gates

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That this Council will, in principle, act as the funder of last resort for a sum of up to £178k.
- (ii) That the funding for the project is now in place and verified.

*(Reason – To support Stanwick Lakes and its future sustainability.)*

**417. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE REDUCING GANG-RELATED VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION STRATEGY**

The Community Partnerships Manager presented a report which asked the Committee to consider and adopt the Northamptonshire Reducing Gang-Related Violence and Exploitation Strategy 2019 to 2022.

Gangs and serious organised crime groups were expanding across the UK and central to it was a rapidly increasing class A drug market. This drug market was both volatile and lucrative, meaning that gangs competed against each other for market share with extreme violence with gun and knife crime a part of it. A fundamental part of tackling this area of crime was collaboration and partnership working and much more was needed from a range of partner agencies around preventing vulnerable people from being drawn into gangs, combined with the right type of interventions and arrangements to protect people from harm.

The Northamptonshire Reducing Gang-Related Violence and Exploitation Strategy aimed to bring a co-ordinated partnership approach to tackling the problems. It would enable everyone to understand the contribution they needed to make to improve the life chances of our children, young people, vulnerable adults and their families affected by gang-related violence and exploitation. The strategy followed the '4 P' framework and would ensure that our approach to reducing gang-related violence and exploitation was based around:-

**Prepare** – Ensuring we had clear picture of the problem and a strong partnership-based approach for tackling the issues we are facing.

**Prevent** – Acting quickly to stop vulnerable people being drawn into gangs and the work of county lines.

**Protect** – Having the right things in place to safeguard vulnerable people from being exploited, and

**Pursue** – Disrupting the activities of criminals making it difficult for them to succeed in this county.

Overall ownership of the strategy rested with the Northamptonshire Community Safety Board (NCSB). However, much of the delivery would be through the local community safety partnerships and their working arrangements. The Chief Executive of ENC was the NCSB lead for the strategy and the partnership lead for serious organised crime.

In response to questions about what resources may be needed in the future to help deliver the strategy, Officers advised that all councils had a responsibility and at ENC an Early Intervention Hub had been established to encourage and harness partnership working. External funding was also available for some of the work included in the strategy.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the Northamptonshire Reducing Gang-Related Violence and Exploitation Strategy 2019-2022 be adopted.

*(Reason: To ensure we play a key role in the delivery of strategy and help victims and potential victims live safer lives without the fear of violence and exploitation.)*

#### **418. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND PLAN**

The Finance Manager presented a report which set out the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2020/21 to 2024/2025, outline the Revenue Budget 2020/21, Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2029/30, Reserves Forecast 2020/21, Fees and Charges 2020/21 and Commercialisation Strategy 2020/21.

A number of issues were highlighted:

- The Structural Changes Order to approve the unitary council restructure had been made in Parliament on 14 February 2020. Whilst this meant the Council would now cease to exist from 1 April 2021, the basis for the preparation of robust council and service area budgets was the same as in previous years, whilst also recognising the expected forecast costs of the move to Unitary in the reserves forecast;
- Final local government financial settlement figures had been received on 6 February 2020 which represented a 'roll-forward' of the 2019/20 settlement, with more significant reforms to be delayed until 2020/21, including significant changes to the New Homes bonus and a full reset of business rates retention baselines;

- It had been assumed within the MTFS that Council Tax would remain unchanged for 2020/21 and subsequent years.
- In terms of the capital programme, the Corporate Management Team and the Budget Working Party had reviewed and updated the capital programme and development pool in line with current and future service planning, with £416k having been brought forward from the 2021/22 development pool and £536.5k added to the development pool for 2020/21.

Members noted that this would be the last MTFS for the Council and over the last 10 years we had provided services incredibly well in a challenging environment. The Committee welcomed the work undertaken by the Finance Team in developing the MTFS.

#### **R.11 RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL:**

That the Leader of the Council be invited to propose the approval of the following as part of the budget setting process:

- Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2020/21-2024/25
- Revenue Budget 2020/21
- Approved Capital Programme for 2020/21
- Minimum level of Reserves and Earmarked Reserves 2020/21-2024/25
- Fees and Charges 2020/21
- Commercialisation Strategy 2020/21

*(Reason: To ensure that in due course the Council complies with its Constitution in setting its budget.)*

#### **RESOLVED:**

To delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officer, after further consideration by the Budget Working Party and following consultation with the Chairman of the Finance and Performance Sub-Committee, to vire additional budget from the corporately held contingency totalling £331k to Economic and Commercial Development and/or ICT as required to manage the risks as set out in paragraphs 10.6 and 10.7 of this report.

*(Reason: To ensure that the Council complies with its Financial Regulations.)*

#### **419. CAPITAL STRATEGY 2020/2021**

The Finance Manager presented a report which set out the Capital Strategy 2020/21.

#### **R.12 RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL:**

That the Leader of the Council be invited to propose the approval of the Capital Strategy for 2020/21.

*(Reason: In accordance with CIPFA guidance and best practice in Treasury Management.)*

#### **420. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2020/21**

The Finance Manager presented a report which set out the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2020/21.

#### **R.13 RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL:**

That the Leader of the Council be invited to propose the approval of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2020/21.

*(Reason: In accordance with CIPFA guidance and best practice in Treasury Management.)*

#### **421. ROBUSTNESS OF BUDGET ESTIMATES AND ADEQUACY OF RESERVES**

The Chief Finance Officer presented a report which advised the Council on the robustness of the estimates in the budget and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves before recommending to Council the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/25, Capital Strategy, the Revenue Budget for 2020/21, Capital Programme 2020/30, Reserves levels, Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2020/21.

The Chief Finance Officer concluded that based on the assumptions made in its Budget 2020/21 and MTFS 2020/25 for income and expenditure, the Council could set a balanced budget for 2020/21. However, there were a number of risks, the most significant being local government reorganisation in Northamptonshire, local government funding levels and the Enterprise Centre. Provided the Council carefully considered and acted upon the report and officers robustly managed the implementation of the Revenue and Capital Budgets, a positive opinion could be given under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 on the robustness of budget estimates and the level of reserves.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the Committee has noted the S151 Officer's opinion set out in Section 11 of the report and has carefully considered the contents of this report prior to recommending the approval of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/25, the Revenue Budget for 2020/21, Capital Strategy, Capital Programme 2020/30 and Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21.

*(Reason: To ensure that the Council complies with statute in setting its Budget.)*

- (ii) That the Committee recognises the work undertaken over recent years to ensure the Council has a balanced budget and is in a good financial position to face the medium term uncertainties.

*(Reason: To ensure the Council has a stable and sustainable Medium Term Financial Strategy and Plan.)*

**Chairman**