

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting held: 13th November 2019

Present: Councillor Russell Roberts (Chair)

Councillors Lloyd Bunday, Mark Dearing, Scott Edwards, David Howes, Ian Jelley, Mark Rowley and Lesley Thurland

Also Present Councillors James Burton (Deputy Mayor), John Currall, Ash Davies, Maggie Don, Mick Scrimshaw, Shirley Stanton, Mike Tebbutt and Greg Titcombe

19.EX.31 APOLOGIES

None.

19.EX.32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

19.EX.33 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16th October 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.

19.EX.34 WORK PROGRAMME

The Council's draft work programme to be published on 15th November 2019 was noted.

19.EX.35 MAINTAINING A DURABLE BUDGET

A report was submitted which:-

- a) Reminded Members of the context/background to the council's budget and medium-term financial strategy;

- b) Illustrated the latest budget model, the delivery of efficiency savings for 2020/21 and the estimated level of budget savings that may be required over the next few years;
- c) Provided an outline Budget Timetable for 2020/21
- d) Provided a summary of the Local Government Finance Settlement Technical Consultation and the Council's responses to this consultation.

The meeting was advised that the Council's General Fund budget was currently projected to come in around £300,000 below budget. The Medium-Term Financial Forecast required an additional £1.464m of ongoing savings to achieve a balanced budget for 2020/21, with £998,000 of these efficiency savings already identified, leaving a further £466,000 to be found.

An outline budget timetable was provided to the meeting, with the formal consultation period due to commence on 15th January 2020 with the Executive Committee receiving the draft budget proposals and concluding on 26th February once Council set the Council Tax levels for 2020/21.

The meeting heard that comments received from the Budget Consultation meeting, the scrutiny committees and the geographic and tenants' forums would be reported to the Executive Committee at its meeting of 19th February, with recommendations then made to Council. It was noted that the A6 Towns Forum meeting had been moved to 29th January to take place after the Budget Consultation meeting.

Councillor Scrimshaw addressed the committee and asked questions in relation to the forecast £200,000 increase in Business Rates Retention and details of the Council's latest commercial investment. It was noted that in relation to Business Rates, the additional income forecast was as a result of an increase in the number of businesses paying rates in the Borough. It was further noted that variations shown in table 3 of the report were the result of delivering commercial investment early.

RESOLVED That the Executive Committee noted;

- a) The Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy and associated guiding principles;
- b) The Council's current Medium-Term Financial Forecast and the progress being made in identifying efficiency savings for 2020/21;

- c) The summary budget timetable for 2020/21 as outlined in Appendix D to the report.
- d) The key points and the Council's response to the Local Government Finance Settlement Technical Consultation.

19.EX.36 VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANT AGREEMENT OPTIONS

The Committee received a report that sought Member agreement on the best option going forward for delivering the Voluntary Sector Grant Agreements in the Borough.

Two options were presented to the meeting as follows:-

- Option A – Short-term extension to current grant allocations ending on 31st March 2023
- Option B – Grant agreements end on 31st March 2021

Key risks and potential benefits for each option were outlined in the light of the Public Sector Reform timetable.

Cllr Scrimshaw addressed the Committee and stated that the input of scrutiny into this matter may have been beneficial and offered a potential third option for a four-year extension. A request was made to refer the matter to the Monitoring and Audit Committee for consideration.

In response to the third option offered by Cllr Scrimshaw, it was noted that the timetable to achieve this process would make this option unfeasible.

RESOLVED that the Executive Committee:

- a) Agreed to extend the current Grant Agreements as set out in Option A, table of paragraph 2.8 to the report
- b) That Members delegated authority to the Head of Public Services in consultation with the Chief Legal Officer and Head of Resources to make the necessary contractual changes.

19.EX.37 KETTERING TOWN CENTRE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Committee received a report that requested that Members note the findings of the Town Centre Task and Finish Group

following the completion of stakeholder engagement, Town Centre visits and the public survey results and to present the Research and Development Committees recommendations for consideration.

Cllr Scrimshaw addressed the Committee as a member of the Task and Finish Group and thanked his colleagues and officers for their work in undertaking a good example of scrutiny. He requested that an action plan be drawn up containing timescales and expectations to allow the public to better understand the vision for the future of the town centre. Reference was also made to a new £250m government fund for cultural projects that was seeking bids.

The Deputy Mayor, Cllr James Burton attended and spoke as a market trader with a request that Wednesday traders be allowed vehicle access to pack down their stalls from 12.00pm in the wintertime. He also asked that market traders receive feedback on the findings of the group.

Cllr Titcombe, Chair of the Task and Finish Group addressed the meeting and thanked all those involved in the work of the group, including businesses and members of the public that had given their time to

Cllr Davies, also a member of the Task and Finish Group spoke and stated that communicating the business, heritage and leisure offer in the town centre was key. Working alongside the business community a town map detailing the town's offer could be produced.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration thanks the group for their work and reaffirmed the need for increased communication in relation to Town Centre improvements. It was heard that a number of the recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group were already underway or planned for implementation in the near future.

It was noted that the financial implications of certain recommendations (B2, E1, E2 and E3) required assessment before they were actioned. As such the report recommendation was amended to reflect this.

RESOLVED that the Executive Committee:

- a) Accepted and agreed all of the recommendations as set out in paragraph 3.6 of the report with officers requested to bring back reports with further information on the financial implications of recommendations B2, E1, E2

and E3 and a timeline for all of the recommendations to a future Executive meeting; and

- b) that Members recognised that, on conclusion the Kettering Town Centre Task & Finish Group be disbanded

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 7.24pm)

Signed

Chair

DJP