

CABINET EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Offices, Narborough

MONDAY, 15 JANUARY 2024

Present:

Councillor Terry Richardson (Leader of the Council) (Leader)
Councillor Maggie Wright (Finance, People & Performance Portfolio Holder) (Deputy Leader)

Cllr. Nigel Grundy	- Neighbourhood Services & Assets Portfolio Holder
Cllr. Les Phillimore	- Housing, Community & Environmental Services Portfolio Holder
Cllr. Ben Taylor	- Planning Delivery and Enforcement & Corporate Transformation Portfolio Holder

Also in attendance:

Cllr. Nick Brown (Scrutiny Commissioner)

Officers present:-

Julia Smith	- Chief Executive
Sarah Pennelli	- Executive Director - S.151 Officer
Louisa Horton	- Executive Director - Communities and Monitoring Officer
Gill Callingham	- Executive Director
Nick Brown	- Finance Group Manager
Caroline Harbour	- Environmental Health, Housing, Net Zero & Community Services Group Manager
Taranjeet Bhaur	- Lightbulb Service Manager
Sarabjit Khangura	- Council Tax Income and Debt Manager
Jonathan Hodge	- Planning Enforcement Manager
Nicole Cramp	- Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer
Isaac Thomas	- Democracy Support Officer

1. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

No disclosures were received.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2023, as circulated, were approved and signed as a correct record.

3. **PUBLIC SPEAKING PROTOCOL**

No requests were received.

4. **QUARTER 3 TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE 2023-24**

Considered – Report of the Finance Group Manager.

Other options considered:

None, this report is a requirement of the 2023/24 Prudential Code.

DECISION

That the latest position in respect of treasury activities, and the prudential indicators, be accepted.

Reason:

The 2023/24 edition of the Prudential Code has added a requirement for quarterly reporting of treasury management activities and prudential indicators. Whilst quarters 1 and 3 do not need to be formally reported to full Council, there is an implicit understanding that they should be adequately scrutinised by Cabinet Executive.

5. NATIONAL NON DOMESTIC RATES BASE 2024-25

Considered – Report of the Finance Group Manager.

Other options considered:

None. The setting of the NNDR Base is a statutory requirement.

DECISIONS

1. That the amount calculated by Blaby District Council as its National Non-Domestic Rate Base for the financial year 2024/25 shall be £52,121,644.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Executive Director (Section 151) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to make amendments, if required, to the draft National Non-Domestic Rate Base prior to submission of the NNDR1 return by 31st January 2024.

Reasons:

1. The Council has a statutory obligation to set its National Non-Domestic Rate NNDR) Base for 2024/25 by 31st January 2024.
2. It is appropriate for the Executive Director (Section 151) to have authority to amend the National Non-Domestic Rate Base in line with the finalised NNDR1 submission, to ensure that all known factors are considered.

6. ESTABLISHMENT 2023-24 AND 2024-25

Considered – Report of the Accountancy Services Manager, presented by the Finance Group Manager.

Other options considered:

Not to produce a separate report on establishment costs ahead of the main budget proposals. This option is not considered appropriate given that the establishment budget constitutes such a significant proportion of core costs.

DECISIONS

1. That the latest forecast in respect of the 2023/24 establishment be accepted.
2. That the proposed establishment budget for 2024/25 be approved.
3. That additional resource requirement for 2024/25 as set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report, be approved.

Reason:

The cost of the establishment is a significant part of the council's overall budget and members are asked to consider and approve the budget for the next financial year. The final establishment costs will be incorporated into the General Fund budget for consideration in February 2024.

7. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2024-25

Considered – Report of the Council Tax Income & Debt Manager.

Other options considered:

None – the setting of the Council Tax Base is a statutory requirement.

DECISIONS

1. That the Tax Base for the year 2024/25 is set at 34,505.83
2. The amount calculated by Blaby District Council as the Council Tax Base for each of the District's Parishes for the year 2024/25 is shown at Appendix C of the report.
3. That the Tax Base is prepared without taking into account special expenses under Section 34a and 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Reasons:

1. The Council is statutorily required to set its base each year by 31st January before the subject year.
2. To enable the Tax Base to be prepared without taking into account special expenses as explained below.

8. **LIGHTBULB DELIVERY DOCUMENT 2024 TO 2029**

Considered – Report of the Business, Partnerships and Health Improvement Group Manager, presented by the Lightbulb Service Manager.

Other options considered:

Delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants is a mandatory function of Blaby District Council, there are a number of options for delivery which are being explored, delivering the service as prior to Lightbulb, would be less holistic and preventative and would provide a poorer service to Blaby residents.

DECISIONS

1. To host the Lightbulb Service for a period of up to five years.
2. That the current contracts with the other Leicestershire Authorities be extended by an initial one year period, whilst further work is undertaken to review delivery models.
3. That the cost of delivering the Lightbulb Service for 2024-25, as set out in paragraph 5 of the report, be agreed.
4. That delegated authority be given to the Environmental Health, Housing & Community Services Group Manager in consultation with the Neighbourhood Services & Assets Portfolio Holder to monitor progress, review delivery models and make any changes needed to ensure delivery.

Reasons:

1. The Lightbulb Management Board recommended that Blaby District Council continue to host the Lightbulb Service and that a review be undertaken of the delivery models.
2. Approval for up to five years is appropriate to enable future planning as well as opportunity for a review of Delivery Models and the Pilots. The service model which has been costed reflects the staffing levels and salaries recommended and approved by the Lightbulb Management Board 2024-25.

9. PARKS AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY 2024-2034

Considered – Report of the Neighbourhood Services & Assets Group Manager.

Other options considered:

Maintain the status quo however, this will not deliver robust ecological outcomes nor the efficiencies as set out in 5.1 of the report.

It was agreed that an amendment be added at page 6 of the Parks & Open Spaces Strategy 2024-2034 document, as shown at page 76 of the agenda pack, to make reference to Whistle Meadow.

DECISION

That the new Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2024 – 2034 be approved.

Reason:

To provide the Council with a strategic direction for the future of district council owned parks and open spaces; and to define how Blaby District Council open spaces are to be managed in a practical way that gives regard to emerging environmental legislation through site specific management plans.

10. PLANNING ENFORCEMENT POLICY 2024-2027

Considered – Report of the Planning Enforcement Manager.

Other options considered:

There is no legal requirement to have a Planning Enforcement Policy in place, and therefore the alternative option is to not produce and adopt one.

The Council has however always felt that it is important to the integrity of the planning process, and to its residents, to have a policy in place.

DECISION

That the new Planning Enforcement Policy be adopted.

Reason:

1. The previous Planning Enforcement Policy had reached the period previously set for review.
2. It is important to ensure that our Planning Enforcement Policy is always up-to date to enable us to deliver the best possible service.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 6.10 P.M.