

## PLANNING & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2015

PRESENT: Councillors Leo Walters (Chairman), Malcolm Alexander (Vice-Chairman), David Evans, David Hilton, Samantha Rayner and Malcolm Beer

Also in attendance: Councillors Christine Bateson and Derek Wilson.

Officers: Chris Hilton, Mark Lampard, Tanya Leftwich and Hilary Oliver.

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Gerry Clark.

The Chairman informed everyone present that the meeting was being recorded.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

### MINUTES

The minutes from the meeting held on the 23 July 2015 were agreed as a correct record subject to it being recorded on page i that Councillor MJ Saunders had abstained from voting when Councillor Leo Walters had been appointed Chairman.

It was agreed that on page iv under 'Public Consultation for Windsor' that a suggestion that a bond be used to other railway stations be added and 'Old Windsor' be added to the last bullet point and corresponding section of the resolution.

### S106 INCOME / EXPENDITURE REPORT 2014-2015

Members considered the report that was being submitted to the 24 September 2015 Cabinet.

The S106 Special Projects Officer, Hilary Oliver, referred Members to the report which gave details of the S106 income of £6,664,806 and expenditure of £4,504,285 during 2014-2015 and projected spend in 2015/2016. Members were informed that details of the income sources and specific projects could be found in Appendix 1.

It was noted that of the balances of unspent funds the highest amounts were held by Education (£6,129,354), Highways (£4,405,872), Affordable Housing (£2,380,161), Open Space (£1,977,884) and Libraries (£1,049,225). Members were informed that plans existed for the utilisation of 34% of held funds.

The S106 Special Projects Officer explained that the Supplementary Planning Document was not included with the report this time.

In the ensuing discussion the following points / questions were noted:

- That projects for capital spend were identified in the capital programme.
- That Developer Contributions identified for particular services (e.g. affordable housing) would be used strategically across the Royal Borough.
- That the £508,375.36 White Waltham Developer Contributions for Highways was considered a very large amount.

- That the Council needed to be able to demonstrate that contributions from developers were needed either for strategic projects or directly related to a development (e.g. Chapel Arches required improvements to the Waitrose junction).
- That the CIL 123 list (the list of infrastructure that the Council will partly or wholly fund from CIL receipts) could be changed subject to the Council going out to consultation.
- That it would be a challenge to explain to residents why the Maidenhead Area Action Plan area had zero viability.
- That parishes did pay revenue costs and had had the legal agreements explained to them with regard to devolution to parishes.
- That para 5.2.6 in Appendix 1 should read Eton rather than Windsor.
- That there needed to be a clear policy on how projects were put forward that could be funded from S106 receipts, especially for education and highway.
- That education papers referred to regular demographic trends, rather than emerging trends from the Local Plan.
- How many dwellings were likely to be built with the approximate £1million affordable housing funds?
- That no elected Members sat on the S106 Project Board although it was expressed that conflicts of interest could arise.
- That a methodology was needed to inform all Members what funds were available and a monitoring mechanism for officers reporting to Cabinet.
- That Housing Solutions would look at affordable housing within the Royal Borough across the board.
- The S106 Special Projects Officer hoped to do training sessions with Parish Council on the CIL.
- That a presentation about the CIL be brought to a future meeting.

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: The Planning & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel unanimously agreed to recommend the following:**

- a) **The financial report in Appendix 1 is noted.**
- b) **The relevant Strategic Directors are responsible for ensuring that S106 income received is utilised in a timely manner to ensure the infrastructure required to support new development is provided**
- c) **The relevant Strategic Directors will ensure that funds are utilised in compliance with the purpose of the legal agreement and in support of the council's priority infrastructure projects where appropriate**

### BUDGET 2016-17 INITIAL SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Members considered the report that was being submitted to the 24 September 2015 Cabinet.

The Finance Partner - Corporate Services & Operations, Mark Lampard, referred Members to the report on pages 1-8 in the agenda which explained that the Medium Term Financial Plan presented to Council in February 2015 identified the need to make budget savings of £7.2m in 2016-17. Work carried out on the budget to date had reduced the target for services to £5.7m. The targets for the Comprehensive Spending Review 2015 announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in July 2015 indicated further spending reductions would be required over the next three years.

Members were informed that the funding settlement for 2016-17 would be the first of the current Parliament. The new national Administration clearly had a number of important policy decisions to work through. Whilst some forecasters indicated that the 2016-17 settlement might not be as challenging as feared, significant uncertainty remained. It was noted that the Council was continuing, therefore, to work to the grant reduction assumptions that were included in the published MTFP until more clarity emerges with the provisional settlement, which was expected in December 2015.

It was noted that the report recommended that managers were authorised to implement the proposals as soon as practicable so that measures were in place by 1st April or earlier. Early implementation would help mitigate some of the service overspends currently being projected.

Members were informed that the report also recommended to Council that these proposals were included in the Budget for 2016-17 when it was discussed in February 2016.

In the ensuing discussion the following points / questions were noted:

#### Appendix A – 2016-17 Savings

##### 1. Adults & Community Services

###### a. Housing

- Line number 6, 'Restructure of Housing options functions' – whether by blending the services expertise from the Housing Options team with the CSC to provide a Maidenhead presence would dilute and undermine the service to the public?
  - o It was requested that information about what was planned and the expected outcome be emailed to the Panel via the Clerk.
- Line number 7, 'Continuation of policy to meet homelessness obligations by use of private rented accommodation' – further detail was requested particularly with regard to efficiencies.
- Line number 8, 'Review Supporting People contracts' – what is the current amount of the Government 'Supporting People' grant provided for people in supported living, and how much of £1.525m budget is funded corporately?

##### 2. Corporate Services

###### a. Development & Regeneration

- Line number 29 'Savings to Revenue arising from the restructure of the team' – Discussion of the Planning team; how a resolution could be found for residents who were finding it difficult to get hold of the service, particularly in the mornings. It was noted that the team was felt to have enough staff subject to the outcome of the process review being undertaken by the Interim Borough Planning Manager, Simon Rowbury.
- That since these restructure savings had arisen from an appropriate capitalisation of relevant staff salaries, the borough should move to provide full development accounting, including a development balance sheet. This is needed to clearly show the difference between revenue and capital accounting.
  
- Leisure Services: Line number 33 'Joint procurement of grounds maintenance contract with Wokingham BC' – it was questioned whether Wokingham were getting the same savings as the Royal Borough?

General - It was noted that where savings were proposed the Panel had expected to see the rationale behind them.

The Finance Partner - Corporate Services & Operations agreed to request the above information from the relevant Heads of Service and distribute it to the Panel with the assistance of the Clerk.

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: The Planning & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel unanimously agreed to recommend the following:**

- (i) **Recommends the savings listed in Appendix A to Council for inclusion in the 2016-17 budgets.**
- (ii) **Authorises Directors to implement savings plans as soon as possible.**

#### DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted the following future meeting dates (7pm in Maidenhead):

- Monday 19 October 2015.
- Monday 16 November 2015.
- Tuesday 26 January 2016.
- Monday 18 April 2016.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

To consider passing the following resolution:-

“That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion takes place on item 7 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act”.

The meeting, which began at 5.30 pm, finished at 6.55 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....