

# CABINET

Meeting held on Tuesday, 9th January, 2018 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

## **Voting Members**

Cllr D.E. Clifford, Leader of the Council  
Cllr K.H. Muschamp, Deputy Leader and Business, Safety and Regulation Portfolio Holder

Cllr Barbara Hurst, Health and Housing Portfolio Holder  
Cllr G.B. Lyon, Concessions and Community Support Portfolio Holder  
Cllr M.L. Sheehan, Leisure and Youth Portfolio Holder  
Cllr P.G. Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder  
Cllr M.J. Tennant, Environment and Service Delivery Portfolio Holder

The Cabinet considered the following matters at the above-mentioned meeting. All executive decisions of the Cabinet shall become effective, subject to the call-in procedure, from **22nd January, 2018**.

### 61. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 12th December, 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

### 62. **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2018/19 AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS –** (Councillor Gareth Lyon, Concessions and Community Support Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN1801, which set out the outcome of the recent public consultation exercise and the recommendations and comments of the Council's Welfare Reform Task and Finish Group in respect of potential changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme and to the level of discounts allowed against Council Tax for certain empty properties. The Chairman welcomed Cr. A.H. Crawford, who had requested to address the Cabinet on this issue.

Members were reminded that the Council had been running its own Council Tax Support Scheme since 2013, replacing the previous national Council Tax Benefit Regulations. The recent public consultation exercise had run for six weeks, starting on 6th November, 2017, and had been carried out, primarily, using an online survey. A total of 482 responses had been received and a detailed consultation report was set out in Appendix 1 to the Report. It was noted that this level of responses was considerably higher than in previous years.

The Welfare Reform Task and Finish Group had continued to meet during 2017 and had met most recently in December 2017 to consider the consultation responses. The Group had recommended three changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme and two changes to the level of Council Tax discounts in relation to empty properties, summarised as:

- To increase the minimum amount of Council Tax that working age people would pay from 10% (90% discount) to 15% (85% discount) for 2018/19 and to hold the minimum contribution at that level for 2019/20
- To exclude the new bereavement support payment when calculating Council Tax support
- To limit the number of dependent children to two when calculating Council Tax support
- To award 50% discount for six months for homes that were having major repairs or structural alterations done to them (currently twelve months)
- To award 100% discount for two months for homes that were unoccupied and unfurnished (currently three months)

In discussing the recommendations, it was proposed that, to make any increases more affordable, it would be fairer to phase these over two years as opposed to one. It was, therefore, proposed that an increase to 12% should be implemented in 2018/19 and, subject to analysis of the impact of this increase on recipients, the contribution should be increased to 15% from 2019/20.

Cr. Crawford expressed opposition to any increase of the minimum contribution from 10% and requested that the Cabinet should delay any increase until the impact of the rollout of Universal Credit was known. He also expressed concern in relation to the content of the consultation document issued by the Council.

The Cabinet discussed the proposals and considered that it was appropriate to increase the level of contribution payable in order to protect other Council Tax payers in the Borough, especially those on low incomes. Members agreed, however, that the increase to a contribution of 15% should be phased over two years, with the impacts of the increases being closely monitored by the Council.

**The Cabinet RECOMMENDED TO THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL ON 30TH JANUARY, 2018** that the following changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme and the level of Council Tax discounts, as set out in Report No. FIN1801 and amended at the meeting, be approved:

- (i) to increase the current 10% minimum contribution (90% discount) for those of working age to 12% minimum contribution (88% discount) for 2018/19;
- (ii) to set the minimum contribution at 15% for the subsequent year (2019/20) to allow sufficient time to consider the impact of the increase on residents;
- (iii) to exclude bereavement support payments from the calculation of Council Tax Support from 2018/19;
- (iv) to limit the number of dependent children to two when calculating Council Tax Support from 2018/19;

- (v) to change the level of discounts given for homes that are empty due to undergoing major repairs or structural alterations from a 50% discount for twelve months to a 50% discount for six months; and
- (vi) to change the level of discounts given for homes that are unoccupied and unfurnished from a 100% discount for 3 months to a 100% discount for 2 months.

**63. REGENERATION PROGRAMME –**

(Councillor Martin Tennant, Environment and Service Delivery Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. CD1801, which set out the current regeneration programme for the Council, requested funding to support the delivery of the programme and sought delegated authority to move forward with processes to secure investment, development and delivery partners as required.

It was reported that a supplementary estimate of £50,100 was required to support the regeneration programme for the remainder of the municipal year. Members had been previously informed that the Aldershot Railway Station Project had been delayed due to a change of franchise owner and that the funding that had been secured from the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership in this respect had not, to date, been taken up. The Cabinet agreed that, in the event that the project could not proceed, the Local Enterprise Partnership should be requested to divert this funding to other Aldershot projects in the programme.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the Council had identified consultants that were well qualified to help to progress the Council's regeneration plans across the Borough. Members reaffirmed the Cabinet's commitment to regeneration as its top priority and assured that tough decisions would be taken when required.

**The Cabinet RESOLVED that**

- (i) the update and funding allocations, as set out in Report No. CD1801, be noted;
- (ii) a supplementary estimate of £50,100, to support the delivery of the regeneration programme for the remainder of the 2017/18 financial year, be approved;
- (iii) in the event that it was not possible to proceed with the Aldershot Railway Station Project, the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership be requested to divert funding for the scheme to other Aldershot projects in the programme and the Council's own current capital allocation for the project be released for other projects within the programme for 2018/19 onwards; and
- (iv) the Corporate Director, in consultation with the Leader, the Environment and Service Delivery Portfolio Holder, the Corporate Services Portfolio Holder and the Chief Executive, be authorised to agree the selection criteria and undertake the appropriate selection or procurement processes to select an investment or development partner or partners, to enable the delivery of sites

within the regeneration programme, for recommendation to the Cabinet and the Council in due course.

64. **FARNBOROUGH AIRPORT COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL FUND –**  
(Councillor Martin Tennant, Environment and Service Delivery Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. COMM1801, which sought approval to award grants from the Farnborough Airport Community Environmental Fund to assist local projects.

The Environment and Service Delivery Portfolio Holder had considered two applications and had recommended that both awards should be made.

**The Cabinet RESOLVED** that grants be awarded from the Farnborough Airport Community Environmental Fund to the following organisations:

Pinewood Park Infant School	£6,583
Fernhill Primary School	£2,000

The Meeting closed at 7.59 pm.

CLLR D.E. CLIFFORD, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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