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CABINET

21/03/2016 at 6.00 pm



Oldham
Council

Present: Councillor Jabbar (Chair from 18.00 – 18.05)
Councillor Stretton (Chair from 18.05 – 18.15)
Councillors Akhtar, Brownridge, Harrison, Jabbar, Moores and Shah

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Jabbar opened the meeting and adjourned for 5 minutes.

Councillor Stretton reopened the meeting at 18.05.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hibbert.

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions received.

5 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2016 and 22nd February 2016 be approved.

6 **GM HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE DEVOLUTION: OLDHAM LOCALITY PLAN**

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Executive Director Health and Wellbeing, which sought endorsement of the Oldham Locality Plan as Oldham's place based response to the agreement to devolve responsibility for Health and Social Care to Greater Manchester.

It was reported that the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Devolution agreement promoted the development of an integrated health and social care strategy and the pooling of budgets across Greater Manchester to reduce the pressure of Accident and Emergency and to avoid hospital stays.

A number of work streams would be delivered at a Greater Manchester level as part of the strategy including the development of a mental health strategy and Public Sector Reform. The Oldham Locality Plan as attached at appendix 1 to the report had been developed over six months, through a multi-sectoral project team.

The Plan was aligned to the Greater Manchester Strategy which identified the actions that would be delivered at local level to transform health and social care.

Options/Alternatives considered

Option 1 – That Cabinet endorse the Oldham Locality Plan.

Option 2 - That Cabinet do not endorse the plan and seek an alternative.

RESOLVED – That the Oldham Locality Plan as Oldham’s placed based response to the agreement to devolve responsibility for Health and Social Care to Greater Manchester be endorsed.

7

CONTRACT AWARD: HOBSON STREET CAR PARK DEMOLITION AND NEW SURFACE CAR PARK

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Executive Director, Economy and Skills, which sought approval of the acceptance of a tender and award of contract for the demolition of Hobson Street car park and the construction of a new surface car park.

An open tender was advertised via the Council’s procurement portal and five submissions were received. A tender evaluation was undertaken and the outcome of the process provided a recommendation that the contract was awarded to DSR Demolition Ltd.

Options/Alternatives considered

Option 1 – Do nothing. This was not an option as Hobson Street Car Park has been closed for the last twelve months as the building has been classified as being at risk of collapse and poses health and safety risks.

Option 2 – Accept tender to demolish the building and to construct a surface car park.

Option 3 – Accept tender and undertake a further tender exercise for the construction of an additional single-storey temporary Car Park Deck. This option would provide an additional 100 (200 in total) car park spaces.

RESOLVED – That Cabinet would consider the commercially sensitive information at Item 16 of the agenda before making a decision.

8

OLDHAM COUNCIL POLICY FOR MONITORING CHALLENGE, SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION IN SCHOOLS

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director, Economy and Skills, which sought approval of a policy for monitoring challenge, support and intervention in schools. It was reported that the policy set out how Oldham Council would fulfil its statutory duties in relation to Local Authority maintained schools and provided the framework for engagement with Academies, Free schools and academy sponsors, in relation to standards and attainment.

Options/Alternatives considered

Option 1 – That Cabinet approve the policy.

Option 2 – That Cabinet suggest amendments to the policy.

Option 3 – That Cabinet do not approve the policy.

RESOLVED – That the policy for monitoring challenge, support and intervention in schools as detailed within the report be approved for immediate implementation.

9

WORKING TOGETHER TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS IN

OLDHAM 2016 - 2021

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Executive Director, Co-operatives and Neighbourhoods, which sought approval of a new Homelessness Strategy 2016-21 and Action Plan for 2016-17.

The strategy was developed around three main themes

- Access to information and accommodation
- Early Intervention and prevention
- Targeted support to those most in need

It was reported that the strategy was focused on continuing to prevent homelessness in Oldham and addressed challenges posed by welfare reform and public sector funding cuts. The action plan was based on robust evidence and used information arising from consultation with a wide range of people and stakeholders.

Options/Alternatives considered

Option 1 - All Local Authorities were required to publish a new Homelessness Strategy as a minimum every five years. The current strategy covered the period 2013-16. It was therefore possible that Oldham could continue to use the priorities and actions contained within this for a further 2 years. However given the significant improvements in performance and issues affecting households in Oldham, especially in relation to welfare benefit reform, the document no longer reflected current priorities.

Option 2 - Approve the contents of the new Homelessness Strategy 2016-2021 and Action Plan which has been developed to meet current needs and address the key challenges in relation to the prevention of homelessness in Oldham. This would fit in with statutory requirements and ensure that the strategy is 'fit for purpose'. Approve the new documents for distribution.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the Homelessness Strategy (Working Together to Prevent Homelessness in Oldham) 2016-221 and Action Plan 2016-17 be approved.

10

CREATION OF DIGITAL ENTERPRISE HUB IN OLDHAM TOWN CENTRE

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Executive Director, Economy and Skills, which sought approval for the allocation of funding from the Revenue Priorities budget to contribute towards the creation and running costs of a Digital Enterprise Hub within the Oldham Town Centre.

It was reported that as part of the Independent Quarter Programme, the Council had acquired the former Wahoo nightclub on Yorkshire Street.

The Council had been approached by Hack Oldham and Wyrá Open Future to jointly occupy the building creating a multi-functional resource aimed at developing new enterprise and business growth in the digital, technology and creative sectors. The provisional completion date for the building was September, with a potential launch in October 2016.

Options/Alternatives considered

Option 1 - Do nothing.

Option 2 - Let premises wholly or in part for commercial purposes.

Option 3 - Enter into an agreement with a private sector developer/operator of serviced/flexible work spaces.

Option 4 - That the Council refurbished the former Wahoo Bar to create an incubator space/enterprise hub and provide revenue support for its operation– this presented a meanwhile use which is in line with the Council’s wider regeneration aspirations.

RESOLVED – That Cabinet would consider the commercially sensitive information contained at Item 17 of the report before making a decision.

11

REVENUE MONITOR 2015/16 QUARTER 3 - DECEMBER 2015

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Director of Finance which provided an update on the Council’s 2015/16 revenue budget position forecast to the year-end at quarter 3. It was reported that the current forecast position for 2015/16 quarter 3 was a projected underspend of £295k following reserve transfers. This presented a change of £150k compared to the variance of £445k underspend at month 8.

The position was in accordance with the Council’s normal practice of setting the budget, Identifying subsequent issues, addressing them and moving to a balanced budget position by the year end.

Options/Alternatives considered

Option 1 - Not to approve the forecast outturn projection and use of reserves included in the report.

Option 2 - Not to approve some of the forecast outturn projection and use of reserves included in the report.

Option 3 - Approve the forecast outturn projection and use of reserves included in the report

RESOLVED – That:

1. The forecast outturn for 2015/16 at quarter 3 being a £295k underspend be approved.
2. The forecast positions for both the Housing Revenue Account and Collection Fund as detailed in the report be approved.
3. The Use of reserves as detailed in section 7 of the report be approved.

12

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2015/16

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Finance, which sought to provide the Cabinet with details of the financial position of the Capital Programme at the end on Month 9 2015/16.

It was reported that since month 8, appropriate approvals had been made under delegated powers together with other approved amendments in months 9 had increased the revised budget total by £1.041m. Further virements pending approval for month 9 reduced the forecast by a further £10.926m to a projected £68.473.

The revised budget and current project managers forecast outturn position for 2015/16 predicted expenditure of £68.473m.

In terms of forecast this represented a reduction of £9.885m from the last reported position at month 8.

Options/Alternatives considered

Option 1 - To approve all the changes included in the report.

Option 2 - To approve some of the changes included in the report.

Option 3 - Not to approve any of the changes included in the report

RESOLVED - That:

1. The revised capital budget for 2015/16 at the end of month 9 be approved.
2. The budget movements detailed in Appendix G to the report be approved.

13

DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY 2016/17

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Director of Finance which provided a review of the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy following the Government announcements in the 2015 Autumn Statement in relation to business rate reliefs and included guidance to allow the consideration of Section 44a of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 business rate relief applications.

It was reported that amendments had been made to the policy, including:

- The removal of the Retail Relief due to the cessation of Government funding to continue the scheme beyond 31st March 2016.
- The removal of Reoccupation relief due the cessation of Government funding to continue the scheme beyond 31st March 2016.
- The removal of New Build Empty Property Relief effective from the 30th September 2016 due to the cessation of Government Funding to continue the scheme.
- The inclusion of Section 44a of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 relief applications to provide guidance to Council officers in the consideration of applications and making the process transparent to ratepayers.

It was further reported that the proposed policy document as attached at appendix 1 to the report outlined the areas of local discretion and the Council's approach to the various discretionary awards.

Options/Alternatives considered

Option 1 – Do nothing. If the Council chose not to adopt the revised policy, the Council would continue using the current policy in place. However this would mean that the Council would need to find funding for the Retail Relief, New Build Empty Property Relief and Reoccupation Relief from its own budget. This Council also would not have a clear transparent process in place for Section 44a Local Government Finance Act 1988 applications and any subsequent appeals.

Option 2 – Approve the amendments the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy

This would ensure that the Council has a clear, transparent procedure is in place to process Section 44a Local Government

Finance Act 1988 applications and appeals. This option will also take into account the ceasing of Government compensatory funding for new awards of Retail Relief, New Build Empty Property Relief and Reoccupation Relief.

RESOLVED – That the proposed Discretionary Rate Relief Policy for 2016/17 at appendix 1 to the report be approved.

14

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT GRANT SCHEMES FOR SHAW, LEES AND A62 CORRIDOR - VARIATION TO GRANT AMOUNTS

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Economic Development which sought approval to allow a variation to the maximum grant that could be offered to independent businesses in Shaw, Lees and the A62 Corridor.

It was reported that independent business were important to the Borough District Centres and improvement to the exterior of key buildings could both uplift an area and improve visitor perceptions of the District Centre attracting new independent business.

The proposal was to increase the maximum grant from £3,000 to £8,000 in Shaw, Lees and the A62 corridor, subject to the match funding criteria.

Options/Alternatives considered

Option 1 - Do nothing and leave the grants as they are. This would enable the grants to continue to operate as they are but not enable some of the more expensive alterations to take place.

Option 2 – Increase the maximum grant that can be applied for to £8,000 as requested. Thus would enable the grants to operate in exactly the same way as they currently do, but allow flexibility to applicants to consider and apply for more expensive improvements and potentially receive a greater amount of funding. The grant conditions and rates would remain as currently.

RESOLVED – That the proposal to increase the maximum grant that could be offered to independent businesses in Shaw, Lees and the A62 Corridor from £3,000 to £8,000 (subject to the existing conditions and grant criteria already established) be approved.

15

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they contain exempt information under paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and it would not, on balance, be in the public interest to disclose the reports.

16

CONTRACT AWARD: HOBSON STREET CAR PARK DEMOLITION AND NEW SURFACE CAR PARK

The Cabinet gave consideration to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 7 – Contract Award, Hobson Street Car Park Demolition and New Surface Car Park.

RESOLVED –That:

1. The tender from DSR Demolition Ltd be accepted and a contract be entered into to demolish Hobson Street Car and to construct a new surface car park.
2. The internal scheme of delegation as outlined within the report at Section 2.7.4. be approved.

17

CREATION OF DIGITAL ENTERPRISE HUB IN OLDHAM TOWN CENTRE

The Cabinet gave consideration to the commercially sensitive information in relation Item 10 – Creation of Digital Enterprise Hub in Oldham Town Centre.

RESOLVED – That:

1. The allocation of up to 200k from the revenue priorities budget to contribute towards the creation and running costs of an Enterprise Hub within the Town centre be approved.
2. That all further recommendations within the report be agreed.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and finished at 6.15pm

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