



GREAT YARMOUTH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Policy and Resources Committee

Minutes

Tuesday, 17 November 2020 at 18:00

PRESENT:-

Councillor Smith (in the Chair); Councillors P Carpenter, Flaxman-Taylor, P Hammond, Myers, Plant, Wainwright, B Walker, C M Walker, Wells, Williamson & A Wright.

Councillor Candon attended as a substitute for Councillor Grant.

Mrs S Oxtoby (Chief Executive Officer), Mrs K Sly (Finance Director), Mrs P Boyce (Strategic Director), Mr S Hubbard (Strategic Planning Manager), Mrs S Tate (Head of OD), Mrs M Lee (Head of Customer Services), Mrs J Beck (Head of Property & Asset Management), Mr S Brabben (Revenue Services Manager), Ms C Whatling (Monitoring Officer) & Mrs S Wintle (Corporate Services Manager).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Grant & Myers.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors P Carpenter, Plant, Smith & C M Walker declared a personal interest in item 14, Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing Land Compensation as they were members of the Norfolk County Council Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing panel.

However, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, they were allowed to both speak and vote on the matter.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2020 were confirmed by assent.

Councillor Wainwright reported that he was pleased that the Government had agreed to provide much needed free school meals over the Christmas Holidays following the recent campaign spearheaded by Marcus Rashford.

4 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received and considered the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the Forward Plan.

5 REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Committee received and considered the report from the Strategic Planning Manager.

The Strategic Planning Manager reported that the Committee was asked to adopt the revised Statement of Community Involvement. This included an amendment to state that if the Town Hall was closed or access was restricted,

which meant that the Local Plan documents could not be inspected, the Council would send free hard copies of the documents, on request, to those who were unable to view them on the Council's website. The amendment was proposed to ensure that the examination of the Local Plan Part 2 was not interrupted by Covid19 restrictions.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee adopts the revised Statement of Community Involvement.

6 REVIEW AND UPDATE OF MATERNITY POLICY

The Committee received and considered the report from the Head of OD.

The Head of OD reported that the current maternity guidance Note had been reviewed and incorporated into the new Maternity Policy which included information and guidance for employees, managers and HR. It included current legislation, ACAS guidance, relevant information from the GYBC Handbook and provisions within the Green Book.

The Head of OD reported that feedback on the policy had been given by ELT, Unison HR and the Senior Performance and Data Protection Officer. The Joint Consultative Working Group (JCWG) reviewed the policy on 2 November and their comments had been reviewed and the policy amended as appropriate. Once the policy was approved, it would be made available to staff via the Loop and training would be given to managers.

Councillor P Carpenter thanked the head of OD for considering the views of the JCWG and updating the policy accordingly.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee approves the new Maternity Policy and agrees to carry out a review of this policy after 3 years, unless there is a significant change in legislation requiring an earlier review.

7 NEW PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT POLICY

The Committee received and considered the report from the Head of OD.

The Head of OD reported that until recently, there had been no legal obligation for employers to provide paid time-off for grieving parents. The legislation, known as Jack's Law, came into force on 6 April 2020 with the introduction of the new Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Regulations.

The Head of OD reported that the policy had been drafted to provide

information and guidance for employees, managers and HR, on the new legislation and what it entitled parents too. The new policy had been written by HR, feedback had been given by ELT, UNISON HR, and the Senior Performance and Data Protection Officer. The policy was considered by ELT in August 2020 resulting in minor changes. The policy was reviewed by Joint Consultative Working Group (JCWG) on 2 November 2020 and their comments have been reviewed and the policy amended as appropriate. Once the policy was approved, it would be made available to staff via the Loop and training would be given to managers as required.

Councillor C M Walker reported that she welcomed the new policy which was long overdue and reiterated that the Council had always been supportive of any member of staff who had sadly lost a child.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee approve the new Parental Bereavement Leave Policy and agrees to carry out a review of this policy after three years unless there is a significant change in legislation requiring earlier review.

8 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2021-22

The Committee received and considered the report from the Head of Customer Services.

The Head of Customer Services reported that this Committee had agreed at the meeting of the 21 July 2020, that consultation could commence in relation to the 2021/22 Local Council Tax Support Scheme. The consultation had run for a 12 week period and had now closed with only 12 responders taking part in the survey, and most favoured relating the existing scheme for a further year and were in favour of the additional changes.

Councillor Wainwright thanked the Head of Customer Services for her excellent report and reported that he supported the three additional clauses.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee recommend to Full Council:-

To endorse the recommendation to continue with the existing scheme for 2021/22 which is a maximum award of 91.5% of the Council Tax Liability for Working Age but including:

(i) Automatic assessment of entitlement and award of Council Tax Support based on receipt of a Universal Credit notification,

(ii) Council Tax Support claims to remain open for a period of 26 weeks from

the date that a claim becomes "nil qualifying" ; and

(iii) Exemption for customers who are entitled to the Disability premium, Enhanced Disability Premium or Severe Disability Premium to the self-employed minimum income floor calculation.

9 COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS 2021-22

The Committee received and considered the report from the Revenue Services Manager.

The Revenue Services Manager reported that for the financial year 2021/22, it was proposed that there was one change to these discounts following a change in legislation on Long-Term Empty Premiums in 2018. This would result in the increase in premium to 300% for properties which had been empty for more than ten years.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee recommend to Full Council that the council tax discounts as shown in section 3.1 of the report and which will apply for 2021/22 including the discount charge outlined in section 2.2 of the report.

10 COUNCIL TAX BASE 2021-22

The Committee received and considered the report from the Revenue Services Manager.

The Revenue Services Manager reported that the Council tax base was a technical calculation that must be formally set each year. It was the first stage of the Council Tax setting process that would be finalised once the budgets had been agreed.

The Revenue Services Manager asked the Committee to endorse the calculation of the 2021/22 tax base totalling 28,910 as this was the total number of domestic properties in the Borough using Band D as the average property band.

Councillor Wainwright asked when the estimated tax bases for the parishes would be known for the Parish Councils to set their parish precepts and budgets. The Chairman reported that this work stream would be carried out as a matter of urgency.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee recommend to Full Council that the calculation of the

2021/22 tax base totalling 28,910 and the estimated tax bases for the Borough and for each Parish, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

11 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2021-22

The Committee received and considered the report from the Finance Director.

The Finance Director reported that the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) had been refreshed and updated to reflect the latest external pressures and challenges facing the Council that would impact on the financial position of the Council moving forwards, most significantly, the impact of Covid19.

The Finance Director reported that additional feedback had been received regarding the updated Acquisition and Disposal Policy and therefore, this document had been removed for further consideration. However, the policy would be further updated and reported back to a future P & R Committee meeting.

The Finance Director reported that a small Working Group consisting of Five Members would be set up to develop and agree the Additional Restrictions Grant scheme and criteria. The Chairman reported that Councillors P Carpenter, Candon & Wells would sit on the Working Group representing his party and Councillor Wainwright reported that Councillor Williamson and himself would represent his party.

RESOLVED:-

(i) That the Committee approve the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the key themes of the business strategy outlined as section 8,

(ii) That the Committee approve the revised reserves statement as included at Appendix A of the MTFS; and

(iii) That the Committee agree to set up a small Working Group of five Members, Councillors P Carpenter, Candon, Wells, Wainwright & Williamson, to develop and agree the Additional Restrictions Grant scheme and criteria and delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer and Head of Customer Services.

That the Committee recommend to Full Council:

(i) The allocation of £1million to the Capital programme to support the Digital Strategy as outlined in section 8 of the MTFS.