

EXECUTIVE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY, 18 JANUARY 2018

Councillors Present: Dominic Boeck, Anthony Chadley, Jeanette Clifford, Hilary Cole, Lynne Doherty, Marcus Franks, James Fredrickson and Graham Jones

Also Present: John Ashworth (Corporate Director - Environment), Martin Dunscombe (Communications Manager), Andy Walker (Head of Finance), Rachael Wardell (Corporate Director - Communities), Claire White (Finance Manager (Schools)), Councillor Howard Bairstow, Stephen Chard (Principal Policy Officer), Councillor Lee Dillon and Gabrielle Mancini (Group Executive - Conservatives)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Graham Bridgman, Nick Carter and Councillor Rick Jones

PART I

66. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 December 2017 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Leader.

67. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Jeanette Clifford declared an interest in Agenda Item 6, but reported that, as her interest was a personal or an other registrable interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, she determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

68. Public Questions

There were no public questions submitted.

69. Petitions

Councillor Lee Dillon presented a petition containing 66 signatures which called upon the Council to improve and extend sound protection measures along the Theale Bypass. The petition sought to highlight the dramatic increase in traffic along the bypass in recent years and the resultant vehicle noise which caused great disturbance in nearby homes and gardens, particularly at night. The petition was referred to the Heads of Service for Public Protection & Culture and for Transport & Countryside for a response.

70. School Funding Formula 2018/19 (EX3394)

(Councillor Jeanette Clifford declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6 by virtue of the fact that she was a School Governor at St Bartholomew's School. As her interest was personal and not prejudicial or a disclosable pecuniary interest, she determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 6) which sought agreement of the school funding formula for primary and secondary schools for 2018/19. Councillor Lynne Doherty explained that this was an annual requirement which determined how the Schools Block Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) would be distributed.

The report proposed moving schools onto the National Funding Formula. This followed consultation held with the Schools' Forum and all schools which confirmed the preference to move to the National Funding Formula factors and rates.

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The National Funding Formula contained additional funds which would ensure that no schools would lose funding. Overall, there was £1.7m of extra funding going into schools (£1.3m when considered on a like for like basis – i.e. assuming pupil numbers remained the same). Per pupil funding rates would also increase by £72 in primary schools and £21 in secondary schools. Based on this Formula, the total Schools Block DSG for 2018/19 would be £97.905m.

Councillor Doherty proposed acceptance of the recommendations.

Councillor Lee Dillon noted, from the report's conclusions, that the gains for most schools were not significant and many would still have difficulty in balancing their individual budgets moving forward. He therefore queried what action the Council would be taking to support schools in difficulty. Councillor Doherty explained that support would continue to be provided by the Schools' Finance Team. She also referred to a report which had been produced which outlined the measures that had been put in place to help schools in deficit entitled 'Strategic Planning for Schools in Deficit'. She offered to share this with Councillor Dillon.

RESOLVED that:

- The school formula for 2018/19 is set as per the National Funding Formula factors and funding rates set out in paragraph 6.
- For schools that gain funding under the new formula, additional funding is capped at 3% per pupil (as per the National Funding Formula).
- For schools that lose funding under the new formula, a minimum funding guarantee of an additional 0.2% per pupil increase is applied (this is the maximum affordable).

Other options considered: The school formula can currently be set by using any of the formulae factors allowed for within the Schools and Early Years Finance Regulations, and at any funding rate subject to certain restrictions and affordability. These are set out in Annex B of Appendix C. This will apply for the next two years, after which every school will need to be funding according to the National Funding Formula. The only other option considered for 2018/19 was to set funding rates half way between the current rates and the national rates. However, more schools benefited from moving straight onto the national rates.

71. Consultation on proposed changes to the Street Cleansing and Litter Picking Services (EX3400)

(Councillor Marcus Franks joined the meeting at 5.05pm).

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 7) concerning the results of the public consultation on the proposed changes to the Street Cleansing and Litter Picking Services and to approve the way forward.

Councillor Dominic Boeck introduced the report by outlining the proposed changes to the current Street Cleansing and Litter Picking Services. These were specifically highlighted on the second page of the consultation document (Appendix C).

He clarified that no changes would be made to the services provided in town centres, beyond litter bins only being emptied once they were nearly full rather than on a routine basis. Outside of town centres, a more reactive approach was proposed for street cleansing and litter picking. The service provision would continue to be monitored.

Councillor Boeck also clarified that the removal of fly tipping remained a high priority and no changes would be made to this service.

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Councillor Boeck further explained that the proposals would achieve efficiency savings for both the waste contractor, Veolia, and for the Council. He felt that the savings that could be achieved were worth the relatively minimal impact on service delivery.

Councillor Boeck sought the Executive's approval of the recommendations which would enable negotiations to continue with Veolia moving forward.

Councillor Howard Bairstow queried whether, subject to their approval, the changes would initially be trialled prior to full implementation. Councillor Boeck confirmed the proposal was to implement these changes on a permanent basis in order to realise savings with immediate effect. A pilot period did not form part of the proposals.

Councillor Bairstow queried whether the impact of the changes would be monitored. Councillor Boeck reiterated that monitoring would take place.

RESOLVED that:

- The proposals set out in the consultation be progressed and that the Street Cleansing and Litter Picking Service is reduced.
- In areas other than town centres, to move away from the current scheduled programme of cleansing and litter picking, and introduce a more reactive service. This will provide an opportunity to increase efficiency and effectiveness within the service, by focusing activity in areas where it is most needed.

Other options considered: As part of the proposal the following options were considered:

- The introduction of a reactive service for the town centres, council car parks and Newbury Bus Station; however this option was discounted in favour of maintaining a more scheduled programme of work in these areas, to ensure that acceptable standards are maintained.
- It is not proposed to make any changes to the Response Crew service as the removal of fly tips, hazardous litter and drug related litter will remain a high priority.
- We are planning on the development of a parish devolution programme, where advice would be provided to town and parish councils that are interested in independently enhancing the revised service in their local area.

72. Members' Questions

There were no Member questions submitted.

73. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the under-mentioned item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as contained in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006. Rule 8.10.4 of the Constitution also refers.

74. Changes to the Street Cleansing and Litter Picking Services (EX3400)

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 10) which sought agreement of changes to the Street Cleansing and Litter Picking Services.

RESOLVED that the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

Reason for the decision: as outlined in the exempt report.

Other options considered: as outlined in the exempt report.

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(The meeting commenced at 5.00pm and closed at 5.12pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature