

## **CABINET DECISIONS ON REPORTS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY THE CORPORATE SERVICES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH OSC**

The following reports were presented to the OSC on 23 November and 4 December for comment prior to determination by the Cabinet on 12 December 2017.

The follow is an extract from those Cabinet minutes.

### **(1) Setting the Council Tax Base 2018-19**

The report advised Cabinet of the tax base calculation for 2018-19 for all domestic properties liable to pay council tax. The tax base had to be set by the statutory deadline of 31 January 2018 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A, along with the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC).

Councillor Oliver introduced the report, highlighting the main issues. Councillor Bawn presented the Scrutiny report. The Scrutiny Committee had supported the recommendations and had commended officers for their hard work.

**RESOLVED** unanimously that:-

- (a) the council tax base for 2018-19 be approved as detailed within Appendix A equating to 102,668.69 Band D equivalent dwellings. This is an increase of 1,520.99 Band D equivalents from 2017-18; and
- (b) the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC be noted.

### **(2) Estimated Year End Collection Fund Balances 2017-18 – Council Tax and Business Rates**

The report advised members of the estimated year end balances on the Collection Fund in relation to both Council Tax and Business Rates for the year ending 31 March 2018 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B, along with the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC).

Councillor Oliver introduced the report, highlighting the estimated surpluses and the Council's share of them. Councillor Bawn presented the Scrutiny report. Scrutiny had supported the report and welcomed the level of surpluses.

**RESOLVED** unanimously that:-

- (a) the overall estimated surplus on the Collection Fund for the year ending 31 March 2018 in relation to Council Tax of £3.68 million be noted; the Council's share being £3.46 million;

- (b) the overall estimated surplus on the Collection Fund for the year ending 31 March 2018 in relation to Business Rates of £2.04 million be noted; the Council's share being £1.02 million;
- (c) the distribution of the estimated Collection Fund surpluses for Council Tax and Business Rates to the relevant major precepting bodies be noted; £0.22 million to the Northumbria Police & Crime Commissioner and £1.02 million to the Secretary of State;
- (d) the inclusion of the Council's share of the estimated surpluses in the Council's budget 2018-19 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2018-22 be noted; and
- (e) the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC be noted.

### **(3) Potential Loan to Haltwhistle Social Welfare Centre**

The report provided details of a potential loan facility to Haltwhistle Social Welfare Centre of up to £150,000 for the pool plant refurbishment along with an additional £10,000 to cover remedial work following pool tile survey (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C, along with the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC).

Councillor Oliver introduced the report, highlighting the key point that the risk would be underwritten by Haltwhistle Town Council and that there would be no risk to the Authority. In presenting the Scrutiny report, Councillor Bawn advised that Scrutiny had recognised the importance of this community facility and had welcomed the nil risk to the Council.

- Councillor Sanderson referred to the proximity of Haltwhistle to assets such as the National Park and Vindolanda and welcomed the move to improve facilities in that area. Councillor Oliver advised that he would be exploring with Councillor Homer what opportunities there were for marketing this very good facility.
- Councillor Jones supported the facility as the only one in the area in which children could learn to swim.
- Councillor Homer also supported the proposal as engagement figures with Active Northumberland in the area were low, and the facility provided health and leisure benefits for local people.

**RESOLVED** unanimously that:-

(a) Cabinet approve the following:-

- a Loan Facility of up to £160,000 to Haltwhistle Social Welfare Centre subject to:
  - The Council's Legal Team finalising a legal agreement with Haltwhistle Social Welfare Centre in advance of any loan drawdown, containing the terms and conditions set out within this report.

- The Council's Legal Team finalising a legal guarantee with Haltwhistle Town Council in the event of Haltwhistle Social Welfare Centre defaulting on loan repayments, in advance of any loan drawdown.
- to approve the terms and conditions of the loan.

Only once all of these conditions have been met can the loan be drawn down; and

(b) the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC be noted.

#### **(4) Potential Loan to Alexa's Animal Charity**

The report provided details of a potential loan facility to Alexa's Animal Charity of up to £170,000 for the purchase of Patterson Cottage for use as boarding kennels (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D, along with the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC).

Councillor Oliver advised that this was a well run charity with a high demand for its services. A very strong business case had been put forward with a minimum risk because of the proposed charge on the property, and the value of the property was well in excess of the proposed loan. He referred to a typo in the legal implications section of the report which referred to Haltwhistle Town Council in error.

Councillor Bawn advised that Scrutiny had looked at the risks and benefits, and had been satisfied with the legal charge and business plan.

**RESOLVED** unanimously that:-

(a) Cabinet approve the following:

- a Loan Facility of up to £170,000 to Alexa's Animal Charity subject to:
  - The Council's Legal Team finalising a legal agreement with Alexa's Animal Charity in advance of any loan drawdown, containing the terms and conditions set out within this report.
  - The Council's Legal Team receiving signed letters of confirmation from all donors to confirm the donations highlighted in the report, which are to be used as part funding to purchase the property are non repayable and have no other conditions attached other than for usage towards the purchase of the property.
  - The Council's Legal Team receiving a copy of the valuation report and all local searches that Alexa's Animals commission on the property to confirm the value of the property being purchased and that local search results are satisfactory.
  - The Council's Legal Team place a legal charge on the assets which the Charity purchase using the loan facility in advance of any loan draw

down by the Trust.

- Approve the terms and conditions of the loan.

Only once all of these conditions have been met can the loan be drawn down; and

- (b) the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC be noted.

## **(5) Proposal to Support Nunnykirk School**

The report set out the background to a request received from Nunnykirk Centre for Dyslexia for the Council to provide a financial guarantee (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix M, coloured pink and marked not for publication, along with the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC).

Mr Johnson set out the background to the current position for members, and the ongoing work which was being done with the school.

Members felt it was important for the local authority to have a presence on the governing body going forward, and to have regular update reports on the situation.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) recommendations (1) and (2) as detailed in the report, be agreed;
- (b) discussions be held with the school regarding an appropriate representative of the Authority to sit on the Governing Body and regular update reports be received; and
- (c) the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC be noted.

Sean Nicholson  
Scrutiny Co-ordinator

[Sean.Nicholson@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Sean.Nicholson@northumberland.gov.uk)

01670 622605