

Report to	-	Council
Date	-	17 September 2018
Report of the	-	Cabinet
Subject	-	References from Cabinet Meetings

The Council is asked to consider recommendations arising from the Cabinet meetings held on 30 July and 3 September 2018, as set out below.

CABINET – 30 July 2018

CB18/13. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – BATTLE

In February 2018, full Council agreed the Terms of Reference for a Community Governance Review (CGR) of Battle Town Council (BTC) (Minute C17/63 refers).

BTC had requested Rother District Council to undertake a CGR to consider their electoral arrangements, specifically in terms of the number of Town Councillors and were looking for a reduction from 17 to 13. BTC was also keen to maintain four parish wards and not reduce to two as had been proposed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) as part of their East Sussex wide review in 2015 and which was due to take effect from May 2019. A minor amendment to the boundary of an existing ward had also been requested.

Due to a lack of staff resources, the CGR had been administered by Surrey Hills Solicitors, overseen by the Executive Director and with input from the local District Ward Councillors. It was noted that the cost would be no more than £5,000, however, RDC was not able to re-charge any costs to BTC as CGRs were a function of principal councils and should be conducted routinely in any event, as part of good governance of their areas.

The consultation process commenced on Friday 22 June and ran until Friday 27 July 2018 and was conducted by way of the Council's website, social media, Citizens' Panel, My Alerts and targeted emails to organisations in Battle as well as the local press. At the time of preparing the report, two responses had been received which broadly supported the proposals put forward. At the close of the consultation, a total of three responses had been received and these were tabled at the meeting in their entirety (subject to the redaction of personal details).

Given the number and nature of responses received, it was proposed that the Council did not proceed to a second stage consultation as originally planned, and Cabinet were therefore requested to recommend to Council the proposed changes. The proposals would

take effect from May 2019, to coincide with the four yearly election cycle of the district and Parish and Town Councils.

The proposals, if agreed would require the making of a Community Governance Order as well as seeking the consent of the LGBCE as the boundary and the number of councillors was currently protected electoral arrangements, following their recent review.

RECOMMENDED: That:

- 1) the outcome of the consultation exercise be noted;
- 2) the number of Councillors elected to serve on Battle Town Council be reduced from 17 to 13;
- 3) the boundary between the Netherfield and Watch Oak Parish Wards be amended as per Map 1 in Appendix A;
- 4) the new District Council Wards of North Battle, Netherfield and Whatlington and South Battle and Telham be broadly split along the current Parish boundaries to form four parish wards, namely Netherfield, Watch Oak (within the Rother District Council Ward of North Battle, Netherfield and Whatlington), Marley and Telham (within the Rother District Council Ward of South Battle and Telham);
- 5) the Executive Director be authorised to undertake the required steps to implement the recommendations arising from the Community Governance Review, including the making of a Community Governance Order; and
- 6) consent be obtained from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England prior to the making of any Community Governance Order.

(Councillor Lord Ampthill declared a personal interest in this matter as President of the East Sussex Association of Local Councils and in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct remained in the room during the consideration thereof).

(Cabinet Agenda Item 7.1)

CABINET – 3 September 2018

CB18/18. PROVISIONAL REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING QUARTER 1 2018/19

Cabinet received and considered the report of the Executive Director on the Provisional Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring Quarter 1 2018/19 which detailed changes to the Revenue Budget.

There had been a number of reportable virements relating to the restructure which totalled £842,000k. The significant areas of variations to the Net Cost of services were detailed within the report

and overall the cost of services showed an underspend of £0.509m which was attributed to underspends/savings across the service areas.

The Assistant Director Resources highlighted the following key items:

Strategy and Planning: £28,000 deficit – planning fee and land charges income was slightly lower than expected at this stage of the year and reflected the slowdown in construction in the area.

Housing and Community Services: Surplus £205,000 – Bexhill Promenade and Foreshore – the erection and sale of 43 new beach huts had generated income of £250,000.

Housing Needs: £185,000 shortfall relating to costs of temporary accommodation. Housing Administration account – £20,000 shortfall due to agency staff used to manage the increased workload.

Interest from Investments: £35,000 Deficit – income of £327,000 was expected compared to the annual budget of £362,000, a shortfall of £35,000.

The Council Tax element of the Collection Fund was expected to be in surplus by £1,163,337 as at 30 June 2018, with the majority of the surplus accruing to East Sussex County Council as the major preceptor.

The performance of Business Rates collection as at 30 June 2018 was slightly better than the same period last year, however there was predicted to be a deficit of £1,044,092 as at 30 June 2018 due to adjustments to prior year debt and settlements of appeals.

The provisional outturn for the 2018/19 Capital Programme was £8.347 million spend against a £10.552 million budget, an under spend of (£2.205) million. The estimated outturn for the Programme was shown at Appendix A to the report with a revised Capital Programme at Appendix B and the following variations were brought to Members' attention:

East Parade – Project A – Bexhill East Beach: £287,000 slippage – whilst the planning application costs had fallen into 2018/19, it was anticipated that the rest of the project spend would slip into future years. A new Heritage Lottery Fund application for £400,000 of grant had been made which required match funding of £42,000. A further detailed report on the proposals would be made to Members, should the application be successful.

Blackfriars Development: associated consultants/surveys would need to be appointed to carry out a master-planning exercise to work up a holistic, whole site solution which secures the principal of residential development in line with the Council's local plan and Corporate Plan. The anticipated total cost of this work was in the region of £50,000.

It was concluded that overall the Council under spend was projected to be £1.855 million by the end of 2018/19. Of this £1.225 million related

to slippage of capital programme items that were intended to be funded from revenue.

RECOMMENDED: That:

- 1) the revised Capital Programme set out in Appendix B to the report be approved; and
- 2) an architect and other associated consultants be appointed to carry out the master-planning exercise for the Blackfriars development site at Battle, at a cost of up to £50,000.

(Cabinet Agenda Item 6.3)

Councillor C.R. Maynard
Leader of the Council