

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the EXECUTIVE held at the Brynsworthy Environment Centre, Barnstaple on Monday 5th February 2018 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Members:

Councillor Brailey (Leader)

Councillors Barker, R. Cann, Edgell, Jones, Lane, Luggar, Moores and Yabsley.

Also Present:

Councillors Biederman, Edmunds, Greenslade, Moore, Patrinos and Tucker.

Sue Southwell Devon Rural Housing Partnership Enabler.

Officers:

Chief Executive, Head of Resources, Head of Corporate and Community, Procurement and Service Delivery Manager, Parking Supervisor, Accountancy Services Manager, Service Lead – Housing Market Balance, Contracts Delivery Manager, Project and Procurement Officer and Senior Corporate and Community Services Officer (BT).

106 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

107 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th January 2018 (circulated previously) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

108 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Housekeeping procedure rules

The Leader reminded the Executive and those attending of the housekeeping procedure rules.

(b) Housing Infrastructure Fund

The Leader on behalf of the Executive thanked the Planning and Regeneration Teams on the outcomes of the successful bid for funding from the Housing Infrastructure Fund totalling £8.5m. The money was split into two

elements: one for the Southern Extension at Ilfracombe £6.5 million; the other £2.08 million for the Westacott development to help with the junction on the A361 near Landkey. He also thanked Peter Heaton-Jones MP who had worked tirelessly on behalf of the Council to support the bid for funding.

(c) Bicclescombe Nursery site

The Leader advised the Executive that the Council had successfully exchanged contracts with the developer for the sale of the former Bicclescombe Nursery site in Ilfracombe. The Council had received a capital receipt of £50,000 as 10% deposit, which was non-refundable.

Executive thanked the Council's Property team in achieving the sale of this site and gaining a capital receipt for the Council which had taken a number of years to achieve.

109 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest announced.

**110 DEVON RURAL HOUSING PARTNERSHIP IN NORTH
 DEVON**

In pursuance to minute 22(d) of the meeting of the Executive held on 5th June 2017, the Executive considered a report by the Devon Rural Housing Partnership (circulated previously) and a presentation by Sue Southwell regarding the work of the Devon Rural Housing Partnership in North Devon; the need for affordable housing in rural communities; the make-up and how the Partnership operated; the affordable housing process; working with communities; challenges; work supporting the Council; initial agreed programme; funding for community led housing and what it was; community land trusts; expanded rural housing enabler programme from 2017; and a changing local approach in relation to community led housing.

The Executive requested that a copy of the presentation be circulated to the Executive for information.

**111 PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
 QUARTER 3 OF 2017/18**

The Team considered a report by the Leader and the Executive Team (circulated previously), the options and/or alternatives and other relevant facts set out in the report regarding the Performance and Financial Management for Quarter 3 of 2017/18.

The Accountancy Manager highlighted the following:

- As at 31st December 2017, the latest forecast net expenditure was £12.007m which was £0.062m over budget. However, it was anticipated that there would be an increase in Business Rates

Retention income of £0.050m producing an overall forecast net budget deficit of £0.012m.

- The “Recycle More” service changes were introduced on 5th June 2017; the take up of the new garden waste service had exceeded expectations, equating to over 4,200 additional properties i.e. 17,200 properties in total.
- The implementation of the “Recycle More” project had been a challenge and had resulted in some one-off additional costs this year; however the quarter three position had seen a reduction of £0.034m in the overspend reported at quarter two. Across the authority, some one off savings had been identified which had offset the majority of the additional costs.
- Work had been carried out with the Waste and Recycling software supplier “Webaspx” who provided support and training to enable the Council in-house to streamline, remodel and reduce the current number of rounds needed; the results of this have been fed into the 2018/19 budget report.
- The Business Rates retention scheme was introduced in April 2013 which sees Billing Authorities receiving a “baseline” funding but in addition they were exposed to the risk and rewards of retaining a proportion of the income collected. This exposure was mitigated by participation in the Devon wide pool that collated all of the Business Rate growth and decline and returns a share of the impact to each local authority. In 2016/17, the Council achieved additional income of £0.742m over and above the “baseline” funding and this year’s projections were indicating a net gain of £1.257m for 2017/18, which reflected the share of additional income growth anticipated for 2017/18. Prudently only £1.220m had been built in as additional income growth into the base budget as these figures can fluctuate during the year. As at 31 December 2017, it was assumed an additional £0.050m income would be achieved over and above the base budget.
- The Council took on £1.5m of external borrowing in November 2014 and a further £0.5m in August 2016. The timing of any future borrowing was dependant on how the authority managed its treasury activity and due to current low interest rates and reduced returns on investments it was prudent for the Council to “internally borrow” and use these monies to fund the Capital Programme.
- The Movement in Reserves and Balances as detailed in Appendix 2 which detailed the movements to and from earmarked reserves in 2017/18.
- The Executive Contingency Reserve movements and commitments as detailed in Appendix 3.
- The Capital Programme for 2017/18 to 2019/20 as detailed in Appendix 4. The total spend as at the end of quarter three was £1.782m.
- In relation to paragraphs 4.4.3 and 4.4.6 it was noted that the Executive had approved the provision of temporary accommodation at its meeting on 8th January 2018 (not 4th December 2017 as stated in the report).

- The total Capital Programme of £8.109m was funded by Capital Receipts (£1.342m), External Grants and Contributions (£4.900m) and Reserves (£1.867m).
- The recommended release of funds from the 2017/18 and 2018/19 Capital Programme for projects as detailed in paragraph 4.4.12 of the report.
- Treasury Management which detailed the total external borrowing and interest as detailed in paragraph 4.5 of the report.
- The performance information as detailed in paragraphs 5 to 9 of the report.
- In relation to paragraph 6.2, it was noted that the third sentence should read “The current leisure centre site and existing long-stay car park **could** be used for housing,
- Service plan performance indicators as detailed in Appendix 5.

In response to questions from Councillor Greenslade, the Leader advised that the Capital Programme could be delivered but the timing and delivery of projects can vary and roll forward into next year. In relation to the recent major flooding incident officers from the Council had reacted very quickly to the situation. An officer was located within the Barnstaple Police Station and liaised with all Partner Authorities on behalf of the Council. In relation to the proposed establishment of the new Health and Wellbeing management organisations, this was a matter for Devon County Council and the Government. The Council would continue to pursue the matter where appropriate.

The Chief Executive advised that in relation to the recent flooding incident, it had been called as a major incident and Silver Control had been activated. The Council's Silver Control duty officer acted as a co-ordinator via the telephone. An officer had attended the Barnstaple Police Station where the incident was co-ordinated and assisted the Police with access to the various community response plans in place. The housing team was on standby to provide emergency accommodation if required. There had been no call for evacuation or provision of temporary accommodation. Schools and village halls had been identified as respite centres if required. This information had not been included within the quarter three report, as the incident occurred within quarter four.

In response to a question from Councillor Patrinos in relation to the small increase in percentage of recyclable materials collated and the reasons why this had not increased further in comparison to the percentage of residual waste collected having reduced by 15%, Councillor Cann advised that he believed that the percentage of recyclable materials collected would increase further dependent upon future initiatives agreed by the Council and the reduction in residual waste collected was a result of the introduction of the weekly food waste collection service.

The Head of Resources advised that the 40% target for recycling materials collected was a historical target and would be reviewed taking into account the actual figures achieved following the introduction of the Recycle More

project in June 2017. This would be highlighted in the quarter four report. The annual target needed to be reviewed to reflect the full year effect of the changes.

In response to a question from Councillor Biederman regarding temporary accommodation, Councillor Moores advised that officers worked with those individuals in temporary accommodation to secure alternative accommodation and provide appropriate support to them. Officers worked with individuals closely to ensure that they moved out of temporary accommodation as quickly as possible.

In response to a question from Councillor Biederman, Councillor Cann advised that the remodelling of waste and recycling rounds was being undertaken in-house. The number of complaints received regarding the service had decreased to the same level as prior to the implementation of the changes in June 2017. He believed that the new rounds would be robust. Due to the implementation of changes to the Waste and Recycling Service improvements to the Trade Waste collection had not been made. However, work would be undertaken to improve the service to make it more competitive.

In response to a question from Councillor Edmunds in relation to minute 98 (d) of the meeting of the Executive held on 8th January 2018 regarding the provision of temporary accommodation, Councillor Brailey advised that consultation had taken place with the Ward Members regarding the use of section 106 funds and an agreement had been reached that the section 106 funds be used for the provision of temporary accommodation and that at such times when Morteheo Parish Council was in a position to deliver an affordable housing scheme in the parish, that the Council would provide appropriate support.

In response to a question from Councillor Edmunds, Councillor Yabsley advised that following the Local Plan hearing the Inspector had requested that the Council go out for consultation on the methodology for the delivery of the five year housing supply and on one small development. The Council had not yet received the letter from the Inspector. Once this had been received the Council would go out to public consultation.

Councillor Brailey advised that an urgent decision may be required to enable the Council to go out for public consultation.

DECISIONS

- (a) That the actions being taken to ensure that performance is at the desired level be noted;
- (b) That the contributions to/from earmarked reserves be approved as detailed in section 4.2 of the report;
- (c) That the movements on the Executive Contingency Reserve as detailed in section 4.3 be noted;

- (d) That funds be released for the capital schemes listed in section 4.4.12 of the report;
- (e) That the sections dealing with Treasury Management (section 4.5), and Debt Management (sections 4.6 and 4.7) be noted.

RECOMMENDED

- (f) That the variations to the Capital Programme 2017/18 to 2020/21 (as detailed in sections 4.4.3 and 4.4.6) be approved.

REASONS FOR DECISION/RECOMMENDATION

- (a) To ensure that appropriate action is taken to allow the council to meet its objectives.
- (b) To inform the Executive of actual results compared to the approved Corporate Plan, as well as progress in delivering service within the revenue budget and Capital Programme.

112 REVIEW OF CHARGES AND FEES FOR SERVICES 2018/19

The Team considered a report by the Head of Resources (circulated previously), the options and/or alternatives and other relevant facts set out in the report regarding the review of charges and fees for services for the financial year 2018/19.

The Head of Resources reported that it was recommended that fees for 2018/19 financial year be increased by 3% for services with exception of the Land Charges, Environmental Health and Pannier Market fees where their increases were detailed in paragraphs 5.3 to 5.5.

Councillor Brailey advised that the Pannier Market traders had accepted proposals to increase fees by 3% with the proposal that the additional income received was earmarked to be spent on the Pannier Market.

Councillor Luggar stated that he considered the charging of a fee for the burial of a child age 2 to 16 years was inappropriate and suggested that there should be no charge which was in line with Torridge District Council and other Local Authorities.

The Procurement and Service Delivery Manager advised that a full review of cemeteries and the crematorium would be undertaken shortly with a report being presented to the Executive. This review would also include a review of charges for cemeteries, costs, options and comparisons with other Local Authorities. The review had been due to take place prior to this meeting,

however it had been delayed due to the issues that had arisen regarding memorials in the Bear Street cemetery. He advised that until 2017 Torridge District Council had charged for the burial of children. There were only a few burials each year. He highlighted the differences between interment and exclusive rights. He advised that the outcomes of the review would be presented to the Executive within the next two months.

Councillor Edmunds expressed concern regarding the number of stall holders reducing within the Pannier Market which was a key area for Barnstaple that attracted visitors to the town. He was concerned that the increase of charges would result in a loss of further traders from the market.

Councillor Brailey advised that the Council was considering options to enhance the Pannier Market.

RECOMMENDED

- (a) That a 3% increase in fees for 2018/19 financial year be recommended, for the following services:
 - Allotments – Appendix 1
 - Building Control Charges – Appendix 2
 - Trade Waste – Appendix 3
 - Cemetery fees – Appendix 6
 - Sports pitches – Appendix 7
 - Pannier Market Charges – Appendix 8
 - Bulky Collections – Appendix 9
- (b) That it be recommended that the remaining fees be varied by the elements outlined in section 5.3 to 5.5 in the report;
- (c) That pending the outcome of the review of the cemeteries and crematorium that in the interim period the costs of the burial of a child between the ages of 2 to 16 years be free of charge.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) The change in fees charged for services provided by the Council is in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- (b) Some fees are set by statute and these will be set nationally.

- (c) To put in place an interim measure pending the outcome of the review of the cemeteries and crematorium.

113 REVENUE BUDGET 2018/19, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2018-2022

The Executive considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer (circulated previously), the options and/or alternatives and other relevant facts set out in the report regarding the Revenue Budget for 2018/19, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018-2022.

The Executive received a presentation by the Head of Resources outlining:

- Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2018/19.
- Previous Medium Term Financial Plan 2017-2021.
- New Homes Bonus proposals, current level of funding to 2017/18, provisional level of funding to 2018/19.
- Business Rates Retention 100% pilot scheme for 2018/19. The pilot programme would last for one year only. The key objective of a pilot was to promote financial sustainability and coherent decision making across functional economic areas and invest some of the additional retained income to encourage further growth.
- How the Business Rates Retention scheme worked locally and splitting the gains across Devon under the new pilot arrangements.
- How the Business Rates Retention scheme was built into the base budget for 2017/18 and draft budget for 2018/19. It was expected that the Council would receive an additional £400,000 from being in the pilot.
- Council Tax – rural Councils could increase up to 3% or £5 whichever was higher. It was recommended that the Council increase its proportion of Council Tax by 2.99%, which was less than 10p increase per week. It was anticipated that approximately 85% of the Council Tax overall bill would be increased by 6-7% due to increases from Devon County Council and the Police. The average Council Tax bill for a band D property would increase by £97 if all preceptors increased to their threshold.
- Strategic Grants – the Medium Term Financial Plan supported the principle that strategic grants be reduced in line with the Council's settlement reduction which for 2018/19 was 8% reduction. The base budget for 2018/19 assumed £175,000 subsidy for the Theatres, £20,000 for a grant to North Devon+ and no change to the Community Councillor grant allocation.
- The cost pressures and savings identified for the draft Revenue Budget for 2018/19 (totalling £343,000).
- How the draft revenue budget for 2018/19 was funded (appendix 1).
- Draft Revenue Budget for 2018/19 which demonstrated a balanced budget and the assumptions that had been made which included:
 - 2.99% increase in Council Tax
 - Strategic grants have been reduced at recommended levels.

- Parish grants reduced by 50% as outlined at two Parish Forum meetings and previously notified to Parish Councils.
- Savings from Recycling service of £340,000 being achieved following one off implementation pressures. Work had been carried out with the Waste and Recycling software supplier “Webaspx” who provided support and training to enable the Council in-house to streamline, remodel and reduce the current number of rounds needed down to 20. Crews are being engaged to ensure that the rounds were correct, robust and sustainable. Additional costs had been incurred during 2017/18 following the implementation of changes to the waste and recycling service and as a result of the procurement and late delivery of new vehicles which were one off costs. The target savings for waste and recycling to be achieved for 2018/19 were robust and achievable.
- Sharing agreement with Devon County Council on reduced waste to landfill yielding £125,000.
- Previously the Government had indicated a 1% pay rise for employees. This offer had now been increased to 2% with lower paid staff being paid a higher percentage. Therefore, overall a 2.8% increase had been assumed with a cumulative effect over the next 3 years being factored into the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- As detailed in Appendix 3, the General fund balance forecast level at 31st March 2019 was £1.161m (9.5% of the net budget). The recommended level was 5-10%. Earmarked reserves forecast level at 31st March 2019 was £3.016m. In compliance with the Local Government Act 2003, the Chief Financial Officer assured Members of the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018-2022. The model was based on a number of financial assumptions about the future including funding from Central Government, retained Business Rates income and future Council Tax levels, cost pressures and savings plans, contribution to and from reserves. Appendix 4 detailed the modelled financial projections and the budget gap to 2021-22.
- Capital Programme investment plans for 2017/18 to 2019/2020 of £8.109m. Two business cases for capital funding for Disabled Facility Grants and Works Unit vehicles had been received. The draft capital programme as detailed in Appendix 5. How the Capital Programme was funded. The Council’s borrowing position.
- Risks that could affect financial plans.
- Proposed timeline for approval of the budget and setting Council Tax.

In response to a question from Councillor Greenslade, the Chief Financial Officer advised that the existing Medium Term Financial Strategy assumed no increase in car park charges.

In response to questions from Councillor Greenslade, Councillor Brailey advised that the Council and Local Government Association had made

representations to the Government regarding rebalancing the Government's financial settlements to rural and urban Local Authorities. In relation to the future of RMB Chivenor, he had been assured by the Minister that no final decision had been made regarding its future, however the Council needed to consider options for the site should the Royal Marines Base close in the future. It was important that the Council continue to campaign against any planned future closure of the base. Two Member Growth Workshops had been held and the next stage was to consider different areas of growth.

In response to a question from Councillor Jones, the Chief Financial Officer advised that the Council did sell vehicles at the end of the 7 year vehicle life. If the receipt was over £10,000 then the receipt was included within the Capital funding. Any lower amounts were included within the revenue budget income.

In response to a question from Councillor Tucker regarding reconsidering the reduction of the strategic grant awarded to the Citizens Advice Bureau, Councillor Brailey advised that if the grant awarded to the Citizens Advice Bureau was not reduced, then all strategic grants would need to be reviewed. Following the implementation of Universal Credit, there would be an impact on workloads for Council officers. The impact on workloads of the Citizens Advice Bureau would be reviewed following the implementation of Universal Credit.

The Head of Resources confirmed that the planned date for the roll out of Universal Credit was July 2018. There would be an impact in workloads for officers within the finance and customer services teams. Evidence of a large increase of workloads for the Citizens Advice Bureau following the implementation of Universal Credit would need to be provided prior to consideration of any further additional financial support via a separate report to the Executive.

In response to questions from Councillor Luggar regarding imposing a penalty for the late delivery of vehicles, the Head of Resources advised that contract management would be reviewed in relation to the future purchase of vehicles. In relation to a question regarding balancing the budget, he advised that the funds yielded by increasing planning fees by 20% would be reinvested to improve efficiencies and throughput within the Planning team i.e. purchase of new IT software and employment of additional employees. He outlined the savings identified to achieve a balanced revenue budget for 2018/19.

In relation to the organisations that received strategic grant funding, Councillor Edmunds requested that a paper outlining the benefits of the work undertaken by those organisations to North Devon be reported to Council on 21st February 2018.

The Executive thanked the Head of Resources and his team for their work and for producing a comprehensive report.

DECISIONS

- (a) That the latest forecast for Budget 2017-18 and the proposed contributions to earmarked reserves be noted;
- (b) That the Chief Financial Officer's assurance on the adequacy of the reserves and the robustness of the budget in paragraph 5.1.4.5 of the report be noted;
- (c) That the Chief Financial Officer's highlighted areas of risk identified within the budget process set out in paragraphs 5.1.4.6 and 5.3 of the report be noted;
- (d) That the latest Medium Term Financial forecast for 2018-2022 as shown in paragraph 5.1.5 of the report be noted;
- (e) That subject to approval of minute (i) below, that funds are released for the capital schemes listed in paragraph 5.2.2 of the report;

RECOMMENDED

- (f) That there be an increase of 2.99% in the level of Council Tax charged by North Devon Council for 2018-19;
- (g) That the actions identified in sections 5.1.2 to 5.1.4, which are required to ensure a balanced budget is achieved and therefore recommend to Council the approval of 2018-19 General Revenue Account Budget;
- (h) That the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018-2022 in paragraph 5.1.5 of the report be adopted as part of the Policy Framework;
- (i) That the Capital Programme 2017-18 to 2020-21 as highlighted in paragraph 5.2 of the report be approved.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) The 2017-18 latest forecast is reported to ensure Executive maintain budgetary control for the rest of the financial year.
- (b) To ensure Executive has assurance on the financial standing of the Council and risks associated with the budgetary framework.

- (c) Decisions on the level of Council Tax need to be taken by Executive as part of recommending next year's budgetary framework for adoption by Council.
- (d) To ensure Executive have a savings plan in place to deliver the long-term financial strategy of the Council.
- (e) To ensure Executive control the performance improvement activities of the Council.
- (f) To ensure that future capital investment is available and targeted to the Council's priorities.

**114 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT
2018/19**

The Executive considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer (circulated previously), the options and/or alternatives and other relevant facts set out in the report regarding the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2018/19.

The Chief Financial Officer outlined the additional duties and responsibilities for treasury management that had been placed on the Section 151 officer as detailed in appendix 2 of the report. A further report would be presented to the Executive early in 2018/19. He outlined the Treasury Management Practice (appendix 1), current portfolio position, limits to borrowing activity, capital and borrowing strategy. The Council's borrowing costs had been presented to the Executive as part of Revenue Budget 2018/19 report. There had been an increase in interest rates which was beneficial on investments, however it was prudent for the Council to "internally borrow" to reduce external borrowing costs. Business cases for capital projects would be presented to the Executive together with financial benefits and risks to the Council. It was anticipated that the external borrowing would not reduce below the existing £2m level.

In response to a question from Councillor Edgell, the Chief Financial Officer advised that there was an authorised limit set for external borrowing as detailed in the report, which gave authority to borrow up to that amount. However, even though he had delegated authority, any changes in external borrowing would be presented to the Executive for information.

RECOMMENDED

- (a) That the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Statement 2018/2019, including the Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators for 2018/19 to 2020/21, be approved.

- (b) That the changes in the revised CIPFA Treasury Management and Prudential Codes of Practice (December 2017) be noted;
- (c) That the additional duties and responsibilities of the Chief Financial Officer (Appendix 2) be approved.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/3146) requires the Council to have regard to the Treasury Management Code.
- (b) Under section 3(5) of the Local Government Act 2003 the Council is required to have regard to the Prudential Code when setting limits to the level of its affordable borrowing.
- (c) This Council is also required under the Code to give prior scrutiny to the treasury management reports by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee before they are reported to the full Council.
- (d) On 21st December 2017, CIPFA published revised editions of the Treasury Management and Prudential Codes. Whilst these codes will be effective for the 2018/19 financial year, CIPFA recognises that the new requirements require a longer lead-in period than afforded by the current budget reporting cycle.
- (e) The Chief Financial Officer will have additional responsibilities under the revised Codes.

115 CONTINUATION OF MEETING

RESOLVED that it being 1.00 pm that the meeting continue in order for the remaining business to be transacted.

116 DISABLED ACCESS TO CAR PARKS: FREMINGTON CAR PARK

The Executive considered a report by the Parking Manager (circulated previously), the options and/or alternatives and other relevant facts set out in the report regarding proposed works required at Fremington Car park and completion of an Equality Needs Assessment.

A copy of the Equality Needs Assessment (Appendix 1) was circulated previously and tabled.

DECISIONS

- (a) That the Equality Impact Needs Assessment (EINA) be noted and the works required for Fremington Car Park to improve the accessibility, surface and disabled bay provision at the location be approved;
- (b) That £8,500 be approved for these works to be funded from existing revenue budget.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS

- (a) Fremington Car Park has been inspected following a receipt of a 500+ signature petition regarding disabled accessibility and disabled bay provision.
- (b) Executive recommended on 2nd October 2017 that each car park be assessed and an EINA carried out as maintenance and scheduled works become due.
- (c) The inspection and assessment had highlighted that works are required to ensure a safe surface to avoid slips trips and falls. Improvement to accessibility through installation of a dropped kerb and relining to ensure compliance with recommended parking bay and disabled bay sizes.

117 EXTENSION OF THEATRES CONTRACT

The Executive considered a report by the Contracts Delivery Manager (circulated previously), the options and/or alternatives and other relevant facts set out in the report regarding the extension of the Theatres contract.

The Contracts Delivery Manager advised that the Council entered into a 12 month Theatre operating contract with Parkwood Entertainment Ltd. The Council's intention was to use the 12 month period to prepare and tender a long term contract for the future provision of theatre services. The time line for the preparation and tender of the long term theatres operating contact had now slipped. This delay was due to difficulties with financing and obtaining condition surveys for the theatres and a heavy workload for the Parks, Leisure and Culture Team. It was recommended that the existing contract with Parkwood was extended until 11th January 2019 to provide sufficient time for the team to prepare and tender the long term operational contract, whilst ensuring continuation of service at the theatres.

In response to a question from Councillor Edmunds regarding the future provision of café facilities at the Landmark Theatre, the Contracts Delivery Manager advised that the Council needed to be careful and not write a too prescriptive tender. Minimum requirements could be included within the tender for both theatres. It was not viable for the café at the Landmark

Theatre to be kept open all of the time. It was proposed that for the extended contract the terms would remain the same as those for the 2017/18 contract, but the specification would require the operator to deliver one minimum event per week at the Landmark Theatre. As the Queens Theatre was now operating again at full capacity, more effort could be invested in the Landmark programme development.

The Contracts Delivery Manger confirmed that the Landmark Theatre had facilities to show films.

DECISIONS

- (a) That subject to the steps outlined in paragraph 4.8 of the report, the contract with Parkwood Entertainment Limited (now called Parkwood Creative Limited) be extended to run from 1st April 2018 until 11th January 2019 and amendments to terms of the contract to be agreed by the Head of Corporate and Community Services in consultation with the theatres cross party working group; and
- (b) That a budget of £30,000 be approved for carrying out condition surveys of both theatres to be funded from residual balances in the All Weather Pitch and Major Sports Grants Earmarked Reserves as outlined in paragraph 5.2 of the report.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS

- (a) To ensure that the theatres continue to operate while NDC procures the long term theatres operational contract. The extended period provides Parkwood with a sufficient period of time including the pantomime season allowing them to invest more confidently in the development of a viable programme at both the Queen's and Landmark Theatre.
- (b) Condition surveys are necessary to inform the tender process, particularly when discussing life cycle and replacement costs for the future theatres contract. Procuring the theatres operational contract without this information could be detrimental to achieving best value through the contract.

118 ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF A POP UP MUSEUM

The Executive considered a report by the Contracts Delivery Manager (circulated previously), the options and/or alternatives and other relevant facts

set out in the report regarding arrangements for the provision of a pop up museum.

DECISIONS

- (a) That the Council enter into an agreement with the Barnstaple and North Devon Museum Development Trust to reflect the content of this report, with the wording of such agreement being delegated to the Head of Corporate and Community Services;
- (b) That subject to (a) above, £15,000 be paid to Barnstaple and North Devon Museum Development Trust as a funding contribution to cover the costs of renting and preparing premises at Bridge Chambers for the purposes of operating a pop up museum for a twelve month period and the £15,000 be provided using the Heritage Lottery Fund Grant awarded to the Council.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS

- (a) To formalise partnership arrangements between North Devon Council and Barnstaple and North Devon Museum Development Trust and ensure that both organisations fulfil their obligations and achieve their aim of delivering the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon Long Bridge Extension Wing Project.
- (b) Part of the Heritage Lottery Funding that North Devon Council has been awarded for the Long Bridge Extension Wing project is to rent premises for the pop up museum. Payments to the Barnstaple & North Devon Museum Development Trust for the renting and alteration of the premises are in line with the Heritage Lottery Fund grant terms and conditions accepted by North Devon Council in July 2017.
- (c) The agreement will provide a mechanism for North Devon Council to draw down a total of up to £205,100 of external funding from the Barnstaple & North Devon Museum Development Trust.

119 APPROVAL AND RELEASE OF SECTION 106 PUBLIC OPEN SPACE FUNDS – BRAUNTON BMX

The Executive considered a report by the Project, Procurement and Open Space Officer (circulated previously), the options and/or alternatives and other relevant facts set out in the report regarding the allocation of section 106 public open space funds towards Braunton BMX project.

The Project, Procurement and Open Space Officer confirmed that the track was of regional standard.

DECISION

- (a) That £17,000 be allocated to Braunton BMX Club towards the cost of purchasing a BMX start gate;

RECOMMENDED

- (b) That subject to approval of (a) above, that the capital programme be varied by £17,000 and that funds be released, subject to a funding agreement upon such terms and conditions as may be agreed by the Head of Corporate and Community Services.

REASON FOR DECISION/RECOMMENDATION

To allocate funds in line with the requirement of the S106 agreement, which specifically references Braunton BMX project.

120 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME (2018/19)

The Executive considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer (circulated previously), the options and/or alternatives and other relevant facts set out in the report regarding the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2018/19.

The Chief Financial Officer advised the Executive that there were no proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2018/19 and it was recommended to adopt the same scheme as for 2017/18. There had been a reduction of £800,000 in the cost of the scheme since Year 1 2013/14 as detailed in paragraph 5 of the report. Approximately 10% of this reduction in costs was attributable to the Council.

RECOMMENDED

- (a) That Council adopts and continues with the same scheme for 2018/19 financial year to include the uprating of applicable amounts, premiums and non-dependant deductions, as shown in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme Policy document.
- (b) That the Equality Impact Assessment in relation to the scheme, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, and the Council Tax Support Scheme Vulnerability/Incentivising Work Statement as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be noted;

- (c) That the Exceptional Hardship Policy in relation to the Council Tax Support Scheme as set out in Appendix 3 of the report be approved.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that the Council adheres to the legislative requirements to provide a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2018-19.

121 RURAL SETTLEMENT LIST

The Executive considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer (circulated previously), the options and/or alternatives and other relevant facts set out in the report regarding the designation for the purposes of Rural Rate Relief, the rural settlements list for the financial year commencing 1st April 2018.

DECISION

That, for the purposes of Rural Rate Relief, the rural settlements listed in the appendix to the report be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION

To be eligible for Rural Rate Relief the business must be located in a qualifying rural settlement, which has a population of no more than 3,000 and falls wholly or partly in an area designated for the purpose of the Rate Relief Scheme. The Authority is required to compile a list of rural settlement areas for the purposes of the scheme.

122 COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS

The Executive considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer (circulated previously), the options and/or alternatives and other relevant facts set out in the report regarding the Council Tax Discounts relating to certain properties for the financial year commencing 1st April 2018.

RECOMMENDED

- (a) That the Council makes the following determinations in relation to the classes of dwellings set out below for the financial year commencing 1 April 2018:-
- (i) Class A and Class B
Unoccupied and furnished properties
Set a 0% discount, thereby levying full council tax.

- (ii) Classes A and B do not include any dwelling –
 - a) Which consists of a pitch occupied by a caravan or a mooring occupied by a boat
 - b) Where a qualifying person in relation to that dwelling is a qualifying person in relation to another dwelling in England, Wales or Scotland which is job related
 - c) Which for a qualifying person is job related where that person is a qualifying person in relation to another dwelling in England, Wales or Scotland

(iii) Class C

Unoccupied and substantially unfurnished properties

Set a discount of 100%, for up to three months.

- (b) For the purpose of Class C, in considering whether a dwelling has been unoccupied for any period, any one period, not exceeding six weeks, during which it was occupied shall be disregarded.
- (c) Properties which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for over two years, levy the empty home premium of 150% of the normal liability.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To approve the level of discounts to certain properties for the financial year commencing 1 April 2018.

123 GROWTH AGENDA

Executive considered the following recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14th December 2017 (circulated previously):

Minute 88: Affordable Housing Update

“RECOMMENDED that the Executive consider the closer working between the Economic Development, Planning and Housing and Environmental Health teams in relation to the growth agenda.”

The Leader advised that monthly meetings were held with the Leader, Portfolio Holders and officers from the Economic Development, Planning and Housing and Environmental Health teams in relation to the growth agenda.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 1.25 p.m.

NOTE: The above decisions shall not take effect until the five clear working days have elapsed from the date of publication: 7th February 2018.