545. Disclosures of Interest

There were no Disclosures of Interest.

546. Proposed Modification to Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Prudential Indicators 2016/17

Councillor Lynda Organ – Finance and Physical Resources Portfolio

Following discussions within the Strategic Review Group The Cabinet was presented with a report proposing amendments of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2016 and the Prudential Indicators for 2016/17 to enable the Council to enter into borrowing for strategic purposes at short notice to assist with the implementation of both the Corporate and Core Strategies.

The options open to The Cabinet were to:

1. support the following amendments to the Council’s Borrowing Limits for 2016/17:

   (a) The overall borrowing limit be £20m;
   (b) The short-term borrowing limit be £10m;
   (c) The maximum proportion of interest on borrowings subject to variable rates be 100%.

   and in doing so:-

   Approve the establishment of an earmarked reserve of £750,000 from the Council’s General Fund Reserve to meet any revenue costs arising from in year borrowing;

2. support the principle of amending the Council’s borrowing limits; however, propose an alternative level, along with associated amendments to the value of the earmarked reserve required; or
3. reject the proposal to amend the Council’s borrowing limits for 2016/17.

In considering the options The Cabinet noted that:

- each potential case of borrowing would need to be assessed in its own right to determine the specific risks;
- the Council had been debt free since 1996, at which point there had been benefits of being in such a position, but those circumstances no longer existed;
- it was for the Council to determine through the Prudential Indicators the cost to the Council of the potential borrowing against the strategic benefits that such opportunities presented;
- the Treasury Management Strategy Statement detailed the expected activities of the Treasury Management function for the financial year 2016/17; and
- the report asked the Council to consider amending the position for the current year to enable the Council (if required, and subject to a business case to The Cabinet) to move swiftly for strategic purposes if required.

Having regard to the foregoing, it was

**RECOMMENDED to Council:**

(1) That the 2016/17 Treasury Strategy Statement be amended to reflect the revised borrowing limits:

   (a) The overall borrowing limit be £20m;
   (b) The short-term borrowing limit be £10m;
   (c) The maximum proportion of interest on borrowings subject to variable rates be 100%.

(2) That an earmarked reserve of £750,000 be created from the Council’s General Fund Reserve to meet any revenue costs arising from borrowing for strategic purposes.

**NOTE:** This item is not subject to call-in to the OSC as it is a recommendation to Council

**Urgent Business**

The Chairman had agreed, in accordance with Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, to allow the following two items of business to be considered at the meeting in view of the timing of meetings and urgency of the matters in question.

547. **Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) Sustainability & Transformation Plan (STP)**

_Councillor Mike Brain – Community and Technical Services Portfolio Holder_

Consideration was given to seek support from Council in calling for the publication of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) Sustainability & Transformation Plan (STP). Following a motion that was agreed
by Oxford City Council at its meeting of Council on Monday 5 December 2016 the report recommended that Council endorsed this motion in so far as seeking to protect the services delivered at the Horton Hospital, Banbury, used by a number of Stratford-on-Avon District Council residents.

At the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 2 November 2016, concerns were discussed regarding the services currently being delivered by the Horton Hospital, Banbury. The extract from the Minutes of OSC was as follows:

‘The Chairman discussed a presentation that had been delivered by Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) at a public meeting in October 2016 regarding Health and Care Transformation in Oxfordshire. Concerns had been raised regarding staff shortages and issues surrounding services at the Horton General Hospital in Banbury, which the closest residents from Stratford District elect to use. These issues then impact upon other hospitals, and the lack of public transport if residents have to travel, were all major concerns for the Council’.

In addition to the concerns that already existed around the current level of service at the Horton Hospital, the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) Sustainability & Transformation Plan (STP), whilst not published, identified the need to deliver savings in excess of £480m over the next five years. Of these savings, around £200m related to the Oxfordshire CCG. This issue was debated at the meeting of Oxford City Council on 5 December 2016. It was reported during the debate, that following the recent downgrading of the Paediatric and Obstetrics units at the Horton, the site may not be viable.

A motion was approved by the City Council to request further detail in the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West STP, the following action points which were approved included:

- Ask the Oxon CCG to fully disclose to the public what changes were being considered with NHS England lifting its bar on publication;
- Provide what support it could to the STP consultation;
- Ask the Oxon CCG to start a full consultation as soon as possible on all aspects of the proposed changes;
- Encourage the public to make their views on the services reductions and changes known by promoting the consultation on the Council’s website, social media and through wider media communications;
- Invite the County & District Councils to work together with the City to oppose any changes which will harm patients; and
- Write to the relevant Government Ministers to express Oxford’s grave concern about a plan which is being foisted upon NHS professionals and the public in this city without adequate or indeed any information about the change in the level of service.

There were fears that the site may be under threat, therefore The Cabinet were asked to consider whether they wished to support the action points listed above, obviously in relation to the final point which made specific reference to the residents of Stratford-on-Avon District Council area.

Following discussion, The Cabinet concluded that it was appropriate for the Council to support the calling for the publication of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) Sustainability & Transformation Plan.
Having regard to the foregoing, it was

**RECOMMENDED to Council:**

1) That the Council confirms its strong support for the retention of all services at the Horton as a considerable number of Stratford District residents value and rely upon the Horton Hospital Services; and

2) That the action points included within the motion approved by Oxford City Council in relation to the publication of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Sustainability & Transformation Plan, identified at paragraph 1.4, be supported.

*NOTE: This item is not subject to call-in to the OSC as it is a recommendation to Council*

**548. Wellesbourne Mountford Airfield**

*Councillor Chris Saint – Leader of the Council*

At this juncture, Councillor Riches, disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in that as he was a well-known member and long-term user of Wellesbourne Mountford Airfield he would take no further part in the deliberation or decision of this item.

Consideration was given to a report which sought to request that Council support the possible compulsory purchase of Wellesbourne Mountford Airfield. Wellesbourne Mountford Airfield was an important employment site within the District, supporting up to 200 local jobs. The airfield was also used as a popular recreational activity. In addition, the Council’s approved Core Strategy sought to preserve the existing uses of the site.

The Council was aware that the owners, the Littler family, had entered an arrangement with Gladman Developments, who wished to lose the airfield and redevelop the land predominantly for housing purposes, with the provision of circa 1,800 houses. It was noted that the site was not allocated for this purpose within the approved Core Strategy and the proposals could lead to the potential loss of local jobs and removal of the recreational activity.

It had become evident that the current owners were wishing to progress the plans, referred to above, in the near future and the Council had become aware that eviction notices had been served on all of the current tenants on the site.

In addition, an application had been submitted to the Building Control department of the Council, under Section 80 of the Building Act1984, to undertake the demolition of a building on the site. Legislation would then require a local authority Building Control department to respond with a Section 81 Demolition Notice. There was no provision under legislation for the Council to refuse this application, as demolition could take place using permitted development rights.

The Cabinet had reviewed options for preventing the closure of the airfield to preserve the existing use of the site for the promotion of the economic and social wellbeing of the area. In the absence of cooperation from the owners for the purchase of the site, the Council had the potential of making an application to a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to purchase the airfield. However, this
would be a lengthy process and there was the risk that the owners of the site would progress with plans to demolish the existing facilities, thereby making it unlikely that the asset would ever be reopened as an airfield.

Following legal advice, there were two routes the Council could progress in order to protect the airfield;

1) Council could consider making an Article 4 direction under General Permitted Development Order 2015. This would mean that the permitted development rights that currently existed for demolition would not apply and Littler Investments would need planning permission in order to demolish the Airfield infrastructure;

2) Alternatively, should The Cabinet approve the principle of progressing a CPO for the Wellesbourne Mountford Airfield that, in parallel, an injunction be sought, if necessary, to prevent the demolition until the CPO has been considered.

Given the clear evidence of an imminent threat of demolition the Council had a strong case for making such an Article 4 direction, especially as reference was made to the economic importance of the airfield in the Core Strategy 2011-2031. *

It was further noted that as Council had already approved the report on this agenda (Minute 546 refers) in relation to allowing the borrowing of funds for strategic purposes, this funding could be used to fund the CPO. Any ongoing income from tenants would reduce or eliminate the cost of borrowing for this purpose; however, this would be subject to a further report to The Cabinet.

Having regard to the above, The Cabinet considered it was reasonable and appropriate that the airfield should be retained to assist in delivering an increase in economic prosperity in helping to maintain jobs for residents, and supporting businesses to grow and expand.

Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED:

1) That a Direction be made with immediate effect under Article 4 of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 to remove the permitted development rights over Wellesbourne Mountford Airfield (The Site) (which includes the provision for demolition) and that the Head of Governance and Democracy be authorised to draft and implement the Direction immediately; and

2) That subject to Council approving an appropriate amendment to the Policy and Budgetary Framework as identified on this agenda (Minute 546), authority be given to the Head of Community and Technical Services, in consultation with the Leader and the Head of Governance and Democracy to:

(a) Enter into negotiations and take any necessary further steps with the owners of the Site to agree the purchase of the Site; and

(b) In the event that (a) is not achievable, to commence and take any necessary further steps to compulsorily
purchase the Site, in accordance s226 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

*In respect of the Article 4 Direction, the Leader of the Council sought agreement from the Chairman of the OSC to endorse the recommendation under urgency procedures, so this element would not be subject to call-in.

Note:    Resolution (1) is not subject to call-in to the OSC
          Resolution (2) is subject to call-in to the OSC

CHAIRMAN