MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2017

Present: Mayor Mike Starkie: Councillors Peter Tyson, in the Chair; Carla Arrighi, David Banks, Martin Barbour, Jackie Bowman, John Bowman, Hugh Branney, Denise Burness, Yvonne Clarkson, Peter Connolly, Gwynneth Everett, Neil Ferguson, Allan Forster, Jeanette Forster, Raymond Gill, Michael Guest, Ian Hill, Keith Hitchen, Lena Hogg, Allan Holliday, Mark Holliday, Alan Jacob, Linda Jones-Bulman, John Kane, Bob Kelly, William Kirkbride, Jean Lewthwaite, Charles Maudling, Michael McVeigh, Sam Meteer, David Moore, Alistair Norwood, Brian O’Kane, Sam Pollen, Andy Pratt, Christopher Reay, David Riley, Gilbert Scurrah, Graham Sunderland, Paul Whalley, Doug Wilson and Felicity Wilson

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Anne Bradshaw, John Burns, Raymond Cole, John Dirom, Fred Gleaves, Joan Hully, Graham Roberts, Peter Stephenson and Gillian Troughton

C82 Minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2017

In respect of minute C76, oral questions by members, concern was expressed at the lack of detail of questions asked and answers given. Councillors Hitchen and Maudling indicated that they had questions relating to the Council’s view on the highways position at Eskmeal and the issue of social media and the code of conduct respectively and had hoped that their questions and answers would have been recorded.

RESOLVED – (a) That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2017 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record; and

(b) That, for future meetings, in respect of the item relating to oral questions by members, that a summary of the questions asked and answers provided be recorded in the minutes.

C83 Declarations of Interest in Agenda Items:

It was noted that a dispensation was in place which would enable Members present to participate fully in respect of the setting of council tax or precepts, a local council tax reduction scheme, a local scheme for payment of business rates and Members allowances.

Councillors Carla Arrighi; Dave Banks; Hugh Branney; Yvonne Clarkson; William Kirkbride; Jean Lewthwaite; Charles Maudling and Gilbert Scurrah declared an interest on issues relating to business rates.

Councillors Carla Arrighi; Yvonne Clarkson; William Kirkbride; Jean Lewthwaite and Charles Maudling declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in two projects for approval within Agenda item 7d (200 Capital programme) relating to Town Centre Regeneration and Townscape Heritage Initiative and did not participate in the vote on those two projects.
Chairman’s Announcements

The Chairman had not attended any civic engagement since the last meeting of Council on the 7 February 2017.

Questions from Members of the Public

No questions had been received from members of the public.

Questions by Members

No questions relating to items on the agenda had been received from Members of the Council.

2016-2020 Corporate Strategy Refresh, Medium Term Financial Strategy and 2017/18 Budget and Council Tax Requirement

Prior to the debate on this matter it was noted that no approach had been made to the Director of Commercial and Corporate Services, as section 151 officer, as required by the local agreement approved by Council on the 9th April 2015, regarding possible amendments to the budget proposals.

Consideration was given to the recommendations from the Executive to approve the proposals for Council’s budget 2017/18.

Prior to the Mayor presenting the Executive budget he gave thanks to the work of the Council’s elections team in running a successful parliamentary election on the 23rd February 2017.

Following presentation of the budget proposals it was moved by the Mayor, Mike Starkie and duly seconded that Council approve and agree the following recommendations:

1. **2016-2020 Corporate Strategy Refresh for 2017/18 (Item 7a)**

   (a) Note the amendments made by the Executive following Member questions and comments received at the Council meeting on 7 February 2017 in relation to the Town Centre Regeneration Ambition and links to the 2017/18 Capital Programme;

   b) In light of Recommendation a) agree to the continued relevance of the 2016-2020 Corporate Strategy and agree to the 2017/18 Corporate Strategy Delivery Plan priorities; and

   b) Note the feedback from all consultations undertaken during December 2016 up to the close of consultation on 30 January 2017 and the Executive’s responses (Appendix 1 to the report).

a) Note the key messages from the Autumn Statement 2016 and note that, wherever possible, any implications have been built into the Council’s refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2016-2020 (Section 2 refers);

b) Consider the acceptance of this flexibility for 2017/18 to assist in the setting up of any commercial activities, subject to the availability of capital receipts over and above those required to fund the existing Capital Plan and note that a Flexible Use of Receipts Strategy including project details will be presented to Council at its meeting on 21 March 2017 (Section 3 refers);

c) Note the key points of the 2017/18 Provisional and Final Local Government Finance Settlement, and in particular the impacts on Copeland Borough Council (Section 4 refers);

d) Agree the Financial Strategy Principles as set out in paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 which are applied to the 2016-2020 MTFS Projections and 2017/18 Draft Budget Proposals (Section 5 refers);

e) Note, in relation to the up-front Pensions Fund Deficit Payment, the absolute condition on the use of the PFI Reserve is that it must be replenished by £615k in 2018/19 and £615k in 2019/20 as part of the approval to proceed to make the up front payment (Section 5, paragraph 5.9 refers);

f) Approve the Income Generation Strategy set out in Appendix A to the report (Section 5 refers);

g) Approve the Corporate Charging Policy set out in Appendix B to the report (Section 5 refers);

h) Agree the proposals for 2017/18 Fees and Charges set out in Appendix C to the report (Section 5 refers);

i) Endorse the 2017-2020 Efficiency Plan as set out in Table 9 of the report (Section 5 refers);

j) Approve the updated Discretionary Rates Relief Policy set out in Appendix D to the report, which has been updated to ensure it reflects current guidance and supports vulnerable or individual organisations through periods of pressure (Section 5 refers);

k) Consider and agree the estimates of amounts for the 2017/18 setting of the Council Tax Requirement, based on a 1.95% increase in the Copeland Borough Council element of the Council Tax, as proposed in the Elected Mayor & Executive’s Budget Proposals and the Medium Term Financial Strategy projections (Section 5 refers);

l) Approve continuation of the current Local Council Tax Support Scheme (Section 7 refers);

m) Note the Business Rates, Collection Fund Surplus and Council Tax Base positions as carried out under current delegation to the Section 151 Officer (Appendices E, F and G refer); and

n) Note the Statement of the Responsible Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) (Section 8 refers).
3. **2017/18 Reserves and Balances Review (Item 7c)**

   a) Retain the General Fund Risk Based Reserve (Balances) at least at £2 million for 2017/18 (paragraph 2.10 refers);

   b) Agree to use £0.525 million of the General Unearmarked Reserve to support the budget in 2017/18 (paragraph 3.3 refers), noting that the Executive must continue to identify other potential efficiency and income generation opportunities in-year to minimise the need to call on this Reserve;

   c) Agree the outcome of the in-year review by the Review of Reserves Task and Finish Group (paragraph 4.4 refers); and

   d) Agree the proposed usage and contributions to the Earmarked Reserves as part of the 2017/18 budget setting process (Tables 1 and 2 refer).

4. **2017-2020 CAPITAL PROGRAMME (Item 7d)**

   (a) Agree the 2017-2020 Capital Programme;

   (b) Agree to request the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to appoint a Task and Finish Group to consider the proposed Town Centres Regeneration Scheme in detail and to make proposals to the Executive, in April 2017, to include the points listed in paragraphs 2.3 to 2.7 of the report;

   (c) Note that projects submitted are subject to further project appraisal approval at Executive on a separate occasion, before any expenditure is incurred; and

   (d) Note the forecast resources position as detailed in Section 5 of the report and note the risks associated with any under achievement of the resources forecast.

5. **2017/18 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT (TMSS), MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY (Item 7e)**

   Approve the 2017/18 Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS), Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, having due regard to the slight change in emphasis in investment strategy, compared to that for 2016/17, which is set out in Section 4.1 of the TMSS.

6. **COUNCIL TAX SETTING COMMITTEE**

   Approve the appointment of a Council Tax Setting Committee comprising of the leaders of both groups, the deputy chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee and the chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to set the council tax requirement and the council tax level prior to the 11th March 2017.

   A recorded vote was then taken
For the Motion: Councillors Peter Tyson, Carla Arrighi, David Banks, Martin Barbour, Jackie Bowman, John Bowman, Hugh Branney, Denise Burness, Yvonne Clarkson, Peter Connolly, Gwynneth Everett, Neil Ferguson, Allan Forster, Jeanette Forster, Raymond Gill, Michael Guest, Ian Hill, Keith Hitchen, Lena Hogg, Allan Holliday, Mark Holliday, Alan Jacob, Linda Jones-Bulman, John Kane, Bob Kelly, William Kirkbride, Jean Lewthwaite, Charles Maudling, Michael McVeigh, Sam Meteer, David Moore, Alistair Norwood, Brian O’Kane, Sam Pollen, Andy Pratt, Christopher Reay, David Riley, Gilbert Scurrah, Graham Sunderland, Paul Whalley, Doug Wilson and Felicity Wilson.

Note: Councillors Carla Arrighi, Yvonne Clarkson, William Kirkbride; Jean Lewthwaite and Charles Maudling had declared disclosable pecuniary interests in Agenda item 7d relating to Town Centre Regeneration and Townscape Heritage Initiative and did not participate in this part of the vote.

Against the Motion: Councillors Jackie Bowman and John Bowman.

Abstention from the Vote: Councillor Michael Guest.

On a vote of 39 For, 2 Against and 1 Abstention (34 For, 2 Against and 6 Abstentions for Agenda item 7d relating to Town Centre Regeneration and Townscape Heritage Initiative) the Motion was declared CARRIED.

It was therefore:

RESOLVED – That

1. **2016-2020 Corporate Strategy Refresh for 2017/18 (Item 7a)**

   a) the amendments made by the Executive following Member questions and comments received at the Council meeting on 7 February 2017 in relation to the Town Centre Regeneration Ambition and links to the 2017/18 Capital Programme be noted;

   b) in light of Recommendation a) the continued relevance of the 2016-2020 Corporate Strategy and agree to the 2017/18 Corporate Strategy Delivery Plan priorities be agreed; and

   b) the feedback from all consultations undertaken during December 2016 up to the close of consultation on 30 January 2017 and the Executive’s responses (Appendix 1 to the report) be noted.


   a) the key messages from the Autumn Statement 2016 and note that, wherever possible, any implications have been built into the Council’s refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2016-2020 (Section 2 refers) be noted;

   b) this flexibility for 2017/18 to assist in the setting up of any commercial activities, subject to the availability of capital receipts over and above those required to fund the existing Capital Plan be accepted and that a Flexible Use of Receipts Strategy including project details being presented to Council at its meeting on 21 March 2017 (Section 3 refers) be noted;
c) the key points of the 2017/18 Provisional and Final Local Government Finance Settlement, and in particular the impacts on Copeland Borough Council (Section 4 refers) be noted;

d) the Financial Strategy Principles as set out in paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 which are applied to the 2016-2020 MTFS Projections and 2017/18 Draft Budget Proposals (Section 5 refers) be agreed;

e) it be noted that in relation to the up-front Pensions Fund Deficit Payment, the absolute condition on the use of the PFI Reserve is that it must be replenished by £615k in 2018/19 and £615k in 2019/20 as part of the approval to proceed to make the up front payment (Section 5, paragraph 5.9 refers);

f) the Income Generation Strategy set out in Appendix A to the report (Section 5 refers) be approved;

g) the Corporate Charging Policy set out in Appendix B to the report (Section 5 refers) be agreed;

h) the proposals for 2017/18 Fees and Charges set out in Appendix C to the report (Section 5 refers) be approved;

i) the 2017-2020 Efficiency Plan as set out in Table 9 of the report (Section 5 refers) be endorsed;

j) the updated Discretionary Rates Relief Policy set out in Appendix D to the report, which has been updated to ensure it reflects current guidance and supports vulnerable or individual organisations through periods of pressure (Section 5 refers) be approved;

k) the estimates of amounts for the 2017/18 setting of the Council Tax Requirement, based on a 1.95% increase in the Copeland Borough Council element of the Council Tax, as proposed in the Elected Mayor & Executive’s Budget Proposals and the Medium Term Financial Strategy projections (Section 5 refers) be agreed;

l) continuation of the current Local Council Tax Support Scheme (Section 7 refers) be approved;

m) the Business Rates, Collection Fund Surplus and Council Tax Base positions as carried out under current delegation to the Section 151 Officer (Appendices E, F and G refer) be noted; and

n) the Statement of the Responsible Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) (Section 8 refers) be noted.

3. **2017/18 Reserves and Balances Review (Item 7c)**

   a) the General Fund Risk Based Reserve (Balances) at least at £2 million for 2017/18 (paragraph 2.10 refers) be retained;
b) it be agreed to use £0.525 million of the General Unearmarked Reserve to support the budget in 2017/18 (paragraph 3.3 refers), noting that the Executive must continue to identify other potential efficiency and income generation opportunities in-year to minimise the need to call on this Reserve;

c) the outcome of the in-year review by the Review of Reserves Task and Finish Group (paragraph 4.4 refers) be agreed; and

d) the proposed usage and contributions to the Earmarked Reserves as part of the 2017/18 budget setting process (Tables 1 and 2 refer) be agreed.

4. 2017-2020 CAPITAL PROGRAMME (Item 7d)

(a) the 2017-2020 Capital Programme be agreed;

(b) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to appoint a Task and Finish Group to consider the proposed Town Centres Regeneration Scheme in detail and to make proposals to the Executive, in April 2017, to include the points listed in paragraphs 2.3 to 2.7 of the report;

(c) it be noted that projects submitted are subject to further project appraisal approval at Executive on a separate occasion, before any expenditure is incurred; and

(d) the forecast resources position as detailed in Section 5 of the report be noted and the risks associated with any under achievement of the resources forecast be noted.

5. 2017/18 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT (TMSS), MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY (Item 7e)

the 2017/18 Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS), Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved, having due regard to the slight change in emphasis in investment strategy, compared to that for 2016/17, which is set out in Section 4.1 of the TMSS.

6. COUNCIL TAX SETTING COMMITTEE

That the appointment of a Council Tax Setting Committee comprising of the leaders of both groups, the deputy chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee and the chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to set the council tax requirement and the council tax level prior to the 11th March 2017 be approved.

The Meeting closed at 7.10 pm

Mayor