

COUNCIL FORUM

Thursday, 24 January 2019

PRESENT –*The Mayor, Councillor Pat McFall, Councillors Afzal; Akhtar H, Akhtar P; Bateson; Casey; Connor; Daley; Davies; Fazal; Floyd; Gee; Groves; Gunn; Hardman; Harling; Hussain I; Hussain M; Hussain S; Jan-Virmani; Kay; Khan M; Khan Z; Khonat; Liddle; Mahmood; Marrow; Oates; Patel; Richards; Rigby C; Riley; Shorrocks; Sidat; Slater Jo; Slater Ju; Slater N; Smith D; Smith J; Talbot; Taylor and Whittle.*

RESOLUTIONS

47 Notice Convening Meeting

The Chief Executive read out the notice convening the meeting.

48 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Batan, Brookfield, Hussain F, McGurk, Pearson, Rigby J, Salton, Slater Ja and Surve.

49 Minutes Of The Previous Meeting

The Minutes of Meeting of the Policy Council held on 6th December 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

50 Declarations of Interest

Declarations of Interest were received from Councillors Akhtar H, Khonat, Harling, Hussain M and Patel in respect of Agenda Item 9: Council Tax Empty Property Premium.

51 Mayoral Communications

The Mayor encouraged all Members to attend the Mayor's Ball on 31st March 2019, advising that tickets would shortly be available from the Mayor's Office.

52 Council Forum

No questions had been submitted by Members of the Public.

53 To consider Motions submitted under Procedure Rule 12

No Motions had been submitted under Procedure Rule 12.

54 Gambling Act 2005 - Statement of Licensing Policy - 2019

A revised Statement of Licensing Policy for the Gambling Act 2005 was submitted for approval.

The Policy needed to be reviewed every three years, with the last policy

published in January 2016. The proposed changes for 2019 were very limited. The main amendment reflected legislative changes introduced in April 2016 whereby operators of gambling premises were required to carry out a local risk assessment of the impact of the provision of their gambling facilities in the area on the licensing objectives. Information regarding the public health aspect of gambling had also been included. Other changes were to update contact details and titles of legislation.

RESOLVED – That the revised Statement of Licensing Policy for Gambling Act 2005 be approved.

55 Council Tax Empty Property Premium 2019/20

Ahead of discussion of this matter, the Councillors who had declared an interest left the room.

A report was submitted which sought approval for the introduction of an increased Council Tax premium charge for long term properties from 1st April 2019.

Following the Government granting flexibility on the amount of discounts awarded to empty properties in 2013, the Council after due consultation with members and residents of the Borough, chose to introduce a premium charge of 50% on properties that had been empty for more than 2 years.

The main driver for the introduction of the premium was to incentivise owners of long term empty properties to bring them back into use. Any property that was brought back into use would provide financial benefits in the form of additional Council Tax income and new homes bonus.

With effect from 1st April 2019 councils had been given further flexibility to increase the premium charge from 50% to 100% for properties that had been empty for more than 2 years. In addition, from 2020/21 councils would also be able to increase the premium for properties which had been vacant for five years or more to 200%, and from 2021/22, increase the premium for properties which had been vacant for ten years or more to 300%.

RESOLVED -

- a) That the contents of the report are noted, and;
- b) That the Council adopts the new powers concerning empty property premiums and increases the rate from 50% to 100%.

At this point of the meeting those Councillors who had left the room re-joined the meeting.

56 Update from the Standards Committee

The Chair of the Standards Committee presented an update report from the Committee, making particular reference to proposals relating to DBS checks for Councillors, a report on which would be presented to the March Council Forum meeting.

Several Conservative Councillors stated their opposition to the potential introduction of charges for DBS charges being met by Councillors. Following debate it was noted that this matter would be discussed in detail at the next meeting where a full report containing recommendations would be presented.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

57 Updates from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Update reports from the Policy and Corporate Resources, PEOPLE and PLACE Overview and Scrutiny Committees were presented by the respective Chairs.

RESOLVED – That the update reports be noted.

58 Reports of the Executive Members with Portfolios:

The Leader and Executive Members presented their update reports to the Council Forum, providing verbal updates as appropriate,

The Executive Member for Environment requested that the Council note and express thanks to all the volunteers who had given their valuable time to assist the various Your Call community clean up events.

RESOLVED – That the reports of the Leader and Executive Members be noted and that thanks be put on record for the excellent contribution made by Your Call volunteers.

59 Draft Year Planner 2019/20

The draft Year Planner for 2019/20 was submitted for Members comments ahead of submission of the final version to the next Council Forum meeting on 29th March 2019.

Councillor Andy Kay proposed changes to the proposed dates for Call-in and Training and requested that these be incorporated in the final version of the Year Planner.

RESOLVED – That the proposed changes be included in the final version to be submitted for Council approval on 29th March 2019.

60 To consider any questions received from Members under Procedure Rule 11

No questions from Members had been submitted under Procedure Rule 11.

Signed at a meeting of the Finance Council
on Monday, 25th February 2019
(being the ensuing meeting on the Council) by

MAYOR