

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Record of decisions taken by the Cabinet Member Responsible for Resources at a meeting held in the Committee Room Two, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney on Wednesday 8 February 2017 at 9:20am in accordance with powers delegated by the Leader of the Council

### PRESENT

Councillor T J Morris (Cabinet Member Responsible for Resources)

Also in Attendance: N A MacRae MBE

Officers in Attendance: Mandy Fathers, Isabel Collins, Frank Wilson and Paul Cracknell

### 7. NOTICE OF DECISIONS

The record of decisions taken at the meeting held on 17 August 2016, copies of which had been circulated, was signed by the Cabinet Member Responsible for Resources.

### 8. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

**RESOLVED:** that being of the opinion that it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that if members of the public were present during the following items of business there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)), the public be excluded from the meeting.

### 9. WRITE OFFS – 2016/2017

The report of the Strategic Director and Head of Paid Service giving details of account balances written off under delegated authority and seeking approval to write off account balances of more than £300 was considered.

The Strategic Director and Head of Paid Service noted that the current Officer Delegation Rules limited his authority to write off sums due to the Council to a maximum of £300. He advised that this figure was far below that applied by the Council's partner authorities which authorised their responsible financial officers to write off sums to the value of £5,000. He invited Mr Morris to consider recommending a comparable increase.

#### **DECISIONS:**

- (a) That the debts shown in Appendix 1, which have been written off under the delegated authority be noted;
- (b) That the debts shown in Appendix 2 be written off; and
- (c) That the debts shown in Appendix 3 that had been written off due to the debtors being formally made insolvent be noted.
- (d) That the Cabinet be requested to authorise the Strategic Director and Head of Paid Service to write off sums less than £5,000 due to the Council and to recommend that the Officer Delegation Rules be amended accordingly.

**REASONS:** It was considered that the debts should be written off either because it was not economical or not in the best interests of the Council to pursue their recovery.

**OPTIONS:** The level of recommended write off was detailed in the appendices to the report. In considering the report, Mr Morris noted that a small number of low value commercial debts had been written off as unenforceable under the Limitations Act 1980 being over six years old. Officers undertook to investigate why this situation had arisen.

10. DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF

The report of the Joint Head of Revenues and Housing Support containing exempt information in respect of applications for Discretionary Rate Relief for the 2017/2018 business rates year was received.

Mr MacRae expressed his support for the application submitted by the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Trust (Application No. 1.05), indicating that the museum played an important role in preserving and promoting the County's heritage.

Mr MacRae enquired whether, if granted relief for 2016/2017, successful applicants would be reimbursed for any payments already made and if they would be required to submit a new application for 2017/2018.

Officers advised that appropriate reimbursement would be made and Mr Morris confirmed that he was content for the same level of relief to apply in both 2016/2017 and 2017/2018.

**DECISIONS:**

- (a) That the following level of Discretionary Rate Relief be awarded in respect of the applications set out below for the 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 Business Rates Years:-

Application Number	Percentage of Discretionary Rate Relief
1.02	50%
1.03	50%
1.04	20%
1.05	20%
2.01	20%
2.02	20%
2.03	50%
2.04	20%
2.05	20%
2.06	20%
2.07	20%
2.08	20%
2.09	20%
2.10	20%
2.11	20%

- (b) That no discretionary relief be awarded in respect of application No 1.01.

**REASONS:** The awards made were considered to support the Council's vision and priorities. The level of relief granted reflected the financial circumstances of the applicants and the extent to which their objectives reflected those of the Local Authority.

In respect of application I.01 it was considered that it did not appear that the business was in financial difficulty.

**OPTIONS:** The level of recommended Discretionary Rate Relief was detailed in the appendix to the report.

The meeting closed at 9.30am

Cabinet Member Responsible for Resources