

Cabinet
7 November 2023

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL CABINET held on Tuesday 7 November 2023 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors P.Zukowskyj (Leader & Executive Memembr for Climate Change)
L.Chesterman (Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Housing)
S.Bonfante (Executive Member for Environment)
J.Broach (Executive Member for Governance)
M.Holloway (Executive Member for Community)
D.Jones (Executive Member for Resources)
J.Quinton (Executive Member for Planning)

ALSO PRESENT: T.Kingsbury (Leader of the Opposition)

OFFICIALS PRESENT: K.Ng, Chief Executive
R.Baker, Executive Director (Finance & Transformation)
C.Barnes, Executive Director (Place)
S.McDaid, Service Director (Resident & Neighbourhoods)
M.Sherry, Communications & Marketing Manager
C.Cade, Governance Services Manager

161. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2023 were approved as a correct record.

162. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence have been received.

163. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND PETITIONS

No questions or petitions were received.

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164. ACTIONS STATUS REPORT

Cabinet noted the Action Status Report.

165. NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED UNDER ITEM 16

No notifications for urgent business were received.

166. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

Councillor Zukowskyj declared an interest as a Hertfordshire County Councillor.

167. ITEMS REQUIRING KEY DECISION

The following item was considered for decision in the current Forward Plan:

167.1. FP1189 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

Cabinet received the report of the Executive Director of Finance on the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2024/25

DECISION TAKEN

RESOLVED:

(unanimous)

To recommend to Full Council that Welwyn Hatfield localised council tax support scheme continues in 2024/25 to help people on low/no income to receive a reduction on their council tax.

REASON FOR DECISION

The Council must provide a council tax support scheme, which is based upon statutory requirements to help people on low/no income to receive a reduction on their council tax. In addition, the Councils scheme offers additional protection to families with children under 5 and those in receipt of disability living allowance, so these vulnerable groups can continue to the same level of support as the previous Council Tax Benefits system.

168. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET PANELS

The Cabinet considered the below items which were recommended from the Cabinet Housing Panel on the 30th October 2023.

168.1. FP1999 PROPOSAL TO END THE USE OF FLEXIBLE (5 YEAR FIXED TERM) TENANCIES

DECISION TAKEN

RESOLVED:

(unanimous)

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That fixed term tenancies would end with immediate effect and that all new tenancies are granted as secure council tenancies.

REASON FOR DECISION

Reviews of flexible tenancies had found no positive outcomes for tenants and the Council. Security of tenure for was important to provide stability for social, educational, and work purposes for residents.

A consultation undertaken between 5 June and 3 July 2023 with the Council's existing tenants and also prospective tenants on the housing needs register found that ending of the fixed term tenancies and move to secure tenancy was overwhelmingly supported by the vast majority of respondents (94%).

Reviews of flexible tenancies had been difficult to administer and few tenancies had ended as a result of review.

168.2. FP2006 ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY

DECISION TAKEN

RESOLVED:

(unanimous)

Adoption of the updated Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy and adoption of the updated Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2023-2025

REASON FOR DECISION

The updated ASB Policy underpins how the ASB Strategy 2023/2025 will be delivered operationally and aligns to the four themes within the Community Safety Partnership Action Plan.

The updated ASB Policy sets out what the Council considers to be ASB with reference to legislation, what powers we have available to prevent ASB from occurring and what action we can take when it does occur.

The updated ASB Policy provides for a consistent and proportionate response to all behaviour we define as being anti-social.

The updated ASB Policy is clear on the councils' commitment to delivering a preventative and harm centred approach to tackling ASB.

168.3. FP1198 DAMP AND MOULD POLICY

Councillor Kingsbury asked for clarification on whether the amendments recommended by the Cabinet Housing Panel would be made under delegated authority by the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Housing.

DECISION TAKEN

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RESOLVED:

(unanimous)

To support the decision for the Executive Member to approve and sign the Damp and Mould Policy, and make the required amendments, under delegated authority.

REASON FOR DECISION

The Policy explains that it is the Council's approach to provide high quality homes.

168.4. INTRODUCTION OF A PET POLICY FOR TENANTS AND LICENSEES

DECISION TAKEN

RESOLVED:

(unanimous)

Cabinet agreed the adoption of the Pet Policy for tenants and licensees.

REASON FOR DECISION

The Neighbourhoods and Enforcement team proposed the introduction of a Pet Policy for tenants and licensees. The purpose is to give clearer guidance to tenants and licensees about their obligation to request permission to keep pets in their home and clarity of their responsibilities and circumstances where the Council might require them to rehome their pet or take enforcement action against them.

169. CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 2

Cabinet received the report of the Executive Director (Finance & Transformation) on the capital expenditure and associated capital funding as at the end of Quarter 2.

DECISION TAKEN

RESOLVED:

(unanimous)

The Cabinet noted the capital forecast outturn position and forecast position as of 30th September 2023 for funding of the capital programme and reserve balances.

REASON FOR DECISION

The report and appendices detailed the changes to the original capital programme and funding plans, as a result of programme commitments and project delivery.

170. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 2

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Cabinet received the report of the Executive Director (Finance and Transformation) on the forecast revenue outturn position as at 30 September 2023 for the financial year 2023/24 and the main variances from the original budget for the General Fund & Housing Revenue Account.

DECISION TAKEN

RESOLVED:

(unanimous)

Cabinet:

Noted the revenue forecast position as of Quarter 2 and the position on debts as set out in Section 5 of the report;

Agreed the virements set out in section 3.1.2 of the report.

REASON FOR DECISION

The report presented the forecast revenue outturn position as at 30 September 2023 for the financial year 2023-24 and outlines the main variances from the original budget for both the General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

171. TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID YEAR REPORT

The Cabinet received a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Transformation) on the mid-year update on the Council's treasury activities from 1 April to 30 September 2023.

DECISION TAKEN

RESOLVED:

(unanimous)

Cabinet noted the current treasury position and Treasury Management Indicators.

REASON FOR DECISION

In accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy the Cabinet noted the report.

172. RISK MANAGEMENT - QUARTER 2 RISK REGISTERS

The Cabinet received a report of the Executive Director (Finance & Transformation) on the current identified strategic risks facing the Council and operational risks.

DECISION TAKEN

RESOLVED:

(unanimous)

Cabinet noted the risk register for Quarter 2 and the comments & actions in respect of the strategic and serious/severe operational risks.

REASON FOR DECISION

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The risk framework are reported on a quarterly basis including all strategic risks.

173. PERFORMANCE EXCEPTION REPORT

The Cabinet received a report on the performance data following a review by Welwyn Hatfield Council's Chief Executive, Executive Directors, and Assistant Directors for the period 1 July to 30 September 2023.

DECISION TAKEN

RESOLVED:

(unanimous)

Cabinet noted the report and approved the proposed actions set out in the appendices of the report.

REASON FOR DECISION

The performance exception report is presented to the Cabinet on a quarterly basis as part of our current performance management framework.

174. VISION AND PRIORITIES 2023-26

Cabinet received a report of the Executive Director (Finance & Transformation) on the Community Survey and proposed vision and priorities for 2023-2026 (the Community Plan).

DECISION TAKEN

RESOLVED:

(unanimous)

Cabinet:

1. Noted the summary of the Community Survey; and
2. Agreed the new vision and priorities for 2023-2026 (the Community Plan) be recommended to Council.

REASON FOR DECISION

The Council reviews and re-sets its vision and priorities for the borough every three years.

175. COUNCIL ACHIEVEMENT LIST QUARTER 2

Cabinet received a report of the Executive Director (Finance & Transformation) on the Council's achievements from July to September 2023.

DECISION TAKEN

RESOLVED:

(unanimous)

The Cabinet noted the reports and contents of the Achievement List.

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REASON FOR DECISION

Appendix 1 highlighted the Council's achievements from business plan projects, committee decisions, community-based activities, events and campaigns achieved in quarter 2.

176. SUCH OTHER BUSINESS AS, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIRMAN, IS OF SUFFICIENT URGENCY TO WARRANT IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION

There were no items of urgent business.

Meeting ended at 19.10.