

Cabinet  
9 July 2024

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL CABINET held on Tuesday 9 July 2024 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors M.Holloway (Leader of the Council, Executive Member Climate Change)

J.Quinton (Deputy Leader of the Council, Executive Member Leisure and Community)

S.Bonfante (Executive Member for Environment)

J.Broach (Executive Member for Resources)

R.Grewal (Executive Member for Planning)

G.Moore (Executive Member for Housing)

K.Thorpe (Executive Member for Governance)

OFFICIALS K.Ng, Chief Executive  
PRESENT: R.Baker, Executive Director (Finance & Transformation)  
C Barnes, Executive Director (Place)  
S.McDaid, Executive Director (Resident Services and Climate Change)  
K Roberts, Assistant Director (Customer Services and Transformation)  
CCade, Governance Services Manger

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253. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

254. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

255. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND PETITIONS

There were no public questions or petitions.

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256. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

Councillor Thorpe declared a pecuniary interest in Item 5 in relation to the shared prosperity fund.

257. ACTIONS STATUS REPORT

The action status report was noted.

258. NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED UNDER ITEM 10

There were no items of urgent business to be discussed.

259. ITEMS REQUIRING KEY DECISION

The following items were considered for decision from the Forward Plan:

260. FP2027 HATFIELD TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDERS

Cabinet received a report on the approval of the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to be extended in Hatfield Town Centre.

A Member queried how effective the PSPO would be. The Cabinet Member for Environment confirmed that enforcement was primarily carried out by the police and the Council will continue to support the police with this.

DECISION TAKEN:

Cabinet:

- a) Noted the evidence of ongoing anti-social behaviour and its impact on the locations;
- b) Noted the results of the public consultation;
- c) Approved the extension of the Hatfield Town Centre PSPO in the proposed area for a further 3 years.

REASON FOR DECISION:

The existing Hatfield Town Centre PSPO will expire at the end of the month. Following consultation the existing PSPO will be extended to include Strockbreach Road and French Horn Lane deal with anti-social behaviour.

261. FP2065 COUNCIL PRODUCTIVITY PLAN

Cabinet received a report on the Council's Productivity Plan. Members endorsed the Council's response produced and noted it was unclear whether the new Government would still require these.

DECISION TAKEN:

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Cabinet endorsed the Productivity Plan, and delegated authority to the Leader of the Council to make any changes required prior to its submission to Government.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

In the Final Local Government Finance Settlement 2024/25, dated 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024, the Government set out its expectation that Local Authorities would be required to set out and share productivity plans.

The Council already had clear transformation plans in place for service change and improvement, and strategies for delivering sustainable budgets as set out in its medium-term financial strategy. The productivity plan contains details of the plans and strategies already in place.

262. **FP2049 MINISTER HOUSE GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION**

Cabinet received a report on the appropriation of land – Minister House.

**DECISION TAKEN:**

Cabinet approved the appropriation of land from the General Fund to the HRA at a value of £215k.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

The redevelopment of Minister House was delivered as part of the Council's Affordable Housing Programme and had provided much needed high-quality homes in Hatfield. As part of this project, a new substation was required to be built to serve the development. The land on which the substation had been built forms part of the Council's General Fund, as that land is no longer required for its previous purpose, and will remain the site of the new substation, the land is required to be appropriated from the General Fund to the council's housing revenue accounts.

The market value for this transfer had been agreed and approved by the Section 151 Officer, and this decision will ensure that the land is held in the appropriate accounts.

263. **FP2063 - HOWARD HOUSE REFURBISHMENT**

Cabinet received a report on the pre-contract agreement for Howard House.

**DECISION TAKEN:**

Cabinet agreed that the pre-contract services agreement for the development of Howard House was awarded to Equans Regeneration Limited.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

A tendering process took place with regard to the establishment of Howard House in Welwyn Garden City. There were 6 bidders, Howard House is a complex building in terms of ownership and responsibilities. The report asked for approval to the award for a pre-contract agreement to Equans for the

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design of a extensive works and to determine costings. Once a design and costings have been to determined, there will be another Cabinet report towards design and build for the refurbishments

264. APPROVAL OF HIGHVIEW (HATFIELD) PSPO

Cabinet received a report on the approval of a PSPO for the Highview are in Hatfield.

It was highlighted that the area had mixed purposes as a residential and retail area. There was a need for police support in the area to resolve the issues to ensure residents feel safe in the area.

DECISION TAKEN:

Cabinet noted the evidence of ongoing anti-social behaviour and its impact on the location, and the results of the public consultation which supported the introduction of a PSPO.

Cabinet approved the introduction of a PSPO within the proposed area for a period of 3 years commencing on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024.

REASON FOR DECISION:

The area of Highview (Hatfield) had been experiencing an increase in anti-social behaviour and residents and businesses in the area had raised concerns.

Following a consultation, the feedback showed there was support for a PSPO for the area.

The Council would always aim to help those in need and the PSPO was to be put in place to ensure residents safety.

265. REVIEW OF THE TENANCY STRATEGY AND TENANCY POLICY

Cabinet received a report on the review of the Council's Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy.

A member felt that the move to lifetime tenancies was fundamental to improve the lives of residents and tenants and provide them with stability.

DECISION TAKEN:

Cabinet recommended the Policy and Strategy to Full Council for approval.

REASON FOR DECISION:

The Tenancy Strategy set out the Council's commitment as a provider of social housing for the provision of high-quality housing, thriving

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neighbourhoods and sustainable communities and expected approach towards tenancies.

The Council were required to consult with registered providers such as Housing associations, as they are required in law to have regard to the strategy.

The consultation took place from the 2<sup>nd</sup> February to the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and included 19 registered providers in the borough and private landlords and agents as well as the Residents Panel. Responses were received from 7 registered providers with stock levels of between 25 and 700 properties locally. All of them were in support of the tenancy strategy and the move to ending the use of flexible fixed term tenancies.

100% of the registered providers use assured lifetime tenancies and 43% currently offer flexible fixed term tenancies, although of these, 50% intend to stop using them in the next five years.

Cabinet approved the ending of fixed term tenancies last year, so all tenants would have lifetime secure tenancies. The tenancy policy sets out the Council's approach to tenancy and their management.

266. ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024

Cabinet received a report on introducing the Council's Annual Report for 2023/24.

Cabinet felt that the report was an excellent document and highly informative to the boroughs residents.

DECISION TAKEN:

The Cabinet noted the Council's Annual Report.

REASON FOR DECISION:

The Annual Report provides a snapshot of the achievements and how the budget had been balanced for 2023/24. The report provided some key service statistics and summaries of the key project achievements and community events and initiatives from 2023/24.

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

There were no urgent business items.

268. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Cabinet resolved that under Section 100(A)(2) and (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the

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meeting for Item 13 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in Section 100(A)(3) and Paragraph 3 (private financial or business information) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).

269. ITEMS OF AN EXEMPT NATURE REQUIRING KEY DECISION

270. FP2063 - HOWARD HOUSE REFURBISHMENT

Following the Part 2 discussions, the recommendations were agreed.

Meeting ended at 18.55.