

Cabinet
12 July 2016

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the CABINET held on Tuesday, 12th July, 2016 at 7.30 pm in the Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE

PRESENT: Councillors J.W.Dean (Leader of the Council) (Chairman)

D.Bell (Executive Member, Resources)

H.Bromley (Executive Member, Environment)

T.Kingsbury (Executive Member, Policy and Culture)

A.L.Perkins (Executive Member, Planning, Housing and
Community)

B.Sarson (Executive Member, Business, Partnerships and
Public Health)

OFFICIALS Chief Executive (M.Saminaden)

PRESENT: Director (Finance and Operations) (P.Kettle)

Director (Governance) (R.Baldock)

Head of Law and Administration (M.Martinus)

Governance Services Manager (G.R.Seal)

Senior Communications Officer (L.Bertram)

Communications Officer (T.Underwood)

22. APOLOGY:

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R.Trigg (Executive Member, Governance, Community Safety, Police and Crime Commissioner and Corporate Property).

23. MINUTES:

The Minutes of the meetings held on 13 and 14 June 2016 were approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

24. ACTIONS STATUS REPORT:

The status of actions agreed at the Cabinet meetings on 13 and 14 June 2016 in the report of the Director (Governance) was noted.

25. ITEMS RELATING TO THE BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

There were no recommendations to be considered.

26. ITEMS REQUIRING KEY DECISION:

The following items for decision in the current Forward Plan were considered:-

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26.1. Revenue Budget Outturn Report for the Financial Year 2015/16 (Forward Plan Reference FP757)

Report of the Director (Finance and Operations) presenting the revenue outturn for the financial year 2015/16 and outlining main variances from the approved budget at period 9 (31 December 2015) for both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account.

Minor updates to the report had been made to the corporate projects budget and the overview which did not impact on the overall budget.

The outturn showed a significant improvement to the current budget position and both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account balances had been added to by £1.649M and £1.626M respectively.

Within the General Fund account there had been an overall increase in net income of £798,000 across a range of services, a net underspend across employee budgets of £379,000, a reduction in spending on supplies and services of £297,000 and the successful recovery of benefits overpayments of £285,000. Offsetting this were adjustments to provisions, the largest being a new provision for non-recovery of benefits overpayments.

In terms of growth and savings programmes, 89% of savings and efficiencies had been achieved and almost 61% of growth delivered.

Debtor days at the end of the year stood at 36.5 with debts totalling £1.327M and this was actively addressed on a monthly basis with the Portfolio Holder.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the outturn for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account as at 31 March 2016 as updated be noted.
- (2) That the position on debts and rechargeable works be noted.
- (3) That movements on all reserves including ring-fenced and strategic reserves be noted.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The revenue outturn set out the end of financial year position for 2015/16 and explained the main variances from the approved budget at period 9 (31 December 2015) for both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account.

(Note: There were no declarations of interests by a Member(s) in respect of the matter decided.)

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26.2. 2015/16 Capital Outturn and Funding Position (Forward Plan Reference FP757)

Report of the Director (Finance and Operations) providing information on the capital expenditure outturn for the financial year 2015/16, the funding details for capital spending and the year – end capital funds position.

Minor updates to the report had been made to the adjustments for re-profiled budgets and the capital funding and reserves which had no impact on the overall budget.

During the year total spend was £23.5M representing 99% of the current budget.

Some of the larger amounts spent on projects were £11.2M on a range of housing schemes, £6M on affordable housing schemes, £1.7M on Hatfield Town Centre Redevelopment and £1.5M on Campus East Offices.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

(1) That the capital expenditure outturn for 2015/16 of £23.501M be noted.

(2) That the funding of capital expenditure for 2015/16, as updated, be approved.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The capital outturn set out the end of financial year position for 2015/16 and explained the funding details for capital spending and capital funds.

(Note: There were no declarations of interests by a Member(s) in respect of the matter decided.)

26.3. Treasury Management Annual Report 2015/16 (Forward Plan Reference FP759)

Report of the Director (Finance and Operations) reviewing treasury management activity for the 2015/16 financial year.

An economic review of the year by Arlingclose, Treasury Consultants was included. The overall message was that at this time the economy was slowing. The recent Brexit vote created uncertainty and low interest rates continued to have an impact on the level of interest generated from investments.

Overall interest earned on investments totalled £569,000 with an average investment rate of 0.83%.

(1) The Decision Taken

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RESOLVED:

That the report and actual treasury management prudential indicators for 2015/16 be noted.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The Cabinet reviewed the activity which had taken place in the 2015/16 financial year in accordance with the annual treasury management strategy which was approved before the start of the financial year.

27. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES:

There were no recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committees to be considered.

28. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET PANELS:

There were no recommendations from Cabinet Panels to be considered.

29. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEES:

There were no recommendations from Scrutiny Sub-Committees to be considered.

30. AUTHORISATION OF OFFICERS TO REPRESENT THE COUNCIL IN PROCEEDING AT THE MAGISTRATES' AND COUNTY COURTS:

Report of the Director (Governance) on the authorisation of Officers to represent the Council in these courts.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the following Officers be authorised to prosecute or defend or appear in any proceedings and to conduct any such proceedings on the Council's behalf before a Magistrates' Court and to appear before a district judge in a County Court in any housing related proceedings:
 - Teresa Campion, Senior Litigation Officer
 - Noucha Blackman, Litigation Officer
- (2) That delegated authority be given to the Head of Law and Administration to appoint suitably experienced and qualified staff to appear in appropriate proceedings on behalf of this Council, before a Magistrates' Court and a County Court (in any housing related proceedings) with the Portfolio Holder to be informed.

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31. CAMPUS WEST CABINET PANEL:

RESOLVED:

That the Campus West Cabinet Panel (Constitution: 4 Members) (ratio 3:1) be appointed comprising Councillors T.Kingsbury, M.Larkins, S.Markiewicz (Chairman) and B.Sarson.

32. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC:

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A)(2) and (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting for Agenda item 16 (Minute 33 refers) on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in Section 100A(3) and paragraphs 3 (private financial or business information) and 5 (legal and professional privilege) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).

In resolving to exclude the public in respect of the exempt information, it was considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

33. ITEM OF AN EXEMPT NATURE REQUIRING KEY DECISION:

The following item of an exempt nature for decision in the current Forward Plan was considered:-

33.1. Award of Build Contract for Furzen Crescent as part of the Council's Affordable Housing Programme (Forward Plan Reference FP762)

Exempt report of the Director (Finance and Operations) on the award of contract for the new build of houses on this site.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

That the recommendation of the Affordable Housing Programme (Build Contract) Project Board to award the contract for the new build of seven houses at Furzen Crescent, Hatfield to Mears New Homes be approved.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The Cabinet had agreed a selection process for a building contractor for the direct construction of new homes for the Council and to use suitable Council owned garage sites for this purpose as part of the Affordable Housing Programme.

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A Member Project Board was appointed to oversee the procurement of construction contracts for the new build of houses.

The bids received had been evaluated by price and quality in the procurement process.

Meeting ended at 7.55 pm
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