

Cabinet  
1 November 2016

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the CABINET held on Tuesday 1 November 2016 at 7.30pm in the Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL8 6AE

PRESENT: Councillors J.W.Dean (Leader of the Council) (Chairman)  
A.L.Perkins (Deputy Leader and Executive Member, Planning, Housing and Community) (Vice-Chairman)

D.Bell (Executive Member, Resources)  
T.Kingsbury (Executive Member, Policy and Culture)  
B.Sarson (Executive Member, Business, Partnerships and Public Health)  
R.Trigg (Executive Member, Governance, Community Safety, Police and Crime Commissioner and Corporate Property)

OFFICIALS Chief Executive (M.Saminaden)  
PRESENT: Executive Director (N.Long)  
Executive Director (S.Russell)  
Head of Resources (T.Neill)  
Governance Services Manager (G.R.Seal)  
Communications Officer (T.Underwood)

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83. APOLOGY:

An apology for absence was received from Councillor H.Bromley (Executive Member, Environment).

84. MINUTES:

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

85. ACTIONS STATUS REPORT:

There were no further updates to report from the Cabinet meeting on 4 October 2016.

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

The following items were considered:-

86.1. Proposed Increase to Communal Facilities Charges for Sheltered Housing Residents and Life-line Charges for Council Tenants

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Report of the Executive Director proposing changes to the current charges for the communal facilities and services provided to tenants living in sheltered housing schemes.

The recommended increase of 5% equated to 45-50p per week and had not been increased since Hertfordshire County Council withdrew supporting people funding.

This included beginning to charge tenants (on a three year phased introduction) living on sheltered schemes before 2003 and therefore, due to changes in the County's funding regime, had never paid any charges towards the communal facilities at their scheme. This would result in the introduction of a change amounting to just over £3 per week each year for the next three years. After three years these tenants would be subject to an agreed annual price increase to achieve parity with other Council sheltered housing residents. This currently applied to 212 tenants.

Tenants who received housing benefits would have this charge paid by housing benefits.

It was also proposed to increase the cost of the Lifeline service (alarms) to Council tenants living in general needs properties by 12p per week to begin the process of bringing their charges in line with private residents who used the same service. Currently private tenants paid 33% more than Council tenants for this service. Private tenants currently paid £3.07 per week and Council tenants paid £2.08 per week.

As part of this service residents were visited every six weeks.

RESOLVED:

That the Council be recommended to approve these proposals to increase the communal facilities charges and the charges for the "Lifeline" alarm service.

86.2. Local Land Charges - Proposed Transfer of the Function to Her Majesty's Land Registry

Report of the Executive Director updating the Cabinet on the latest position with regards to the proposed transfer and making a request for additional funds to appoint further staff either through the temp desk or directly on a fixed term contract to enable the Council to meet its statutory obligations.

RESOLVED:

That the Council be recommended to approve a budget growth of a maximum of £60,298 to be funded from the strategic reserve to appoint additional staff to the local land charges service.

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87. CW ENTERTAINMENT:

Report of the Executive Director seeking approval to a revision of the main fees and charges at CW Entertainment to take effect from 1 January 2017, following on from the report agreed at the Council meeting on 3 October 2016 and enabling CW Entertainment to seek Cabinet approval to vary its fees and charges in year (Minute 20 refers).

At the present time these were reviewed and set once a year at the same times as all other Council fees and charges. However the increasing complexity of the business following the major refurbishment in 2014, coupled with its position in a locally competitive market place, meant a more flexible approach was needed.

By reviewing fees and charges in-year CW Entertainment could respond quickly to prevailing market conditions and to both retain and grow its customer base.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed list of fees and charges and their implementation at CW Entertainment with effect from 1 January 2017 approved.

88. CCTV CONTRACT RE-TENDER:

Report of the Executive Director recommending that a Member Procurement Board be set up to consider the future of the current CCTV contract.

RESOLVED:

That a Member Procurement Board of five Members (ratio of (3:1:1) be appointed to oversee the review and possible procurement of a new CCTV contract or service level agreement.

89. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2016 (PERIOD 6):

Report of the Executive Director presenting revenue budget monitoring information for the first half of the financial year and outlining the variances from the approved original budget for both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account.

Whilst there was a net adverse change in the forecast General Fund activity of over £300,000 this was predominately due to an amount of £431,000 as full and final payment with regard to the Council's pensions obligations to the Gosling Sports Trust. Otherwise there were a number of favourable variances with an increased level of income and lower expenditure than expected. The adverse movement could be accommodated within existing earmarked reserves and so there remained an expected net nil movement on the General Fund reserve for the year.

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There was a favourable change in the forecast Housing Revenue Account activity of £450,000 due to a review of the level of debt arrears and a reduced contribution to the provision for bad debts. Otherwise the Housing Revenue Account was forecast to remain within budget at this stage.

There had been an increase in the second quarter of the amount of budget growth delivered which was largely around the allocation of the corporate projects budget to specific projects.

Outstanding sundry debts as at the end of the quarter were relatively high, but this was due to the cyclical nature of rental invoices and 87% of the debt was less than 30 days old.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the changes to the General Fund forecast outturn as at 30 September 2016 be agreed and included in the current budget which in turn would then be used as the basis of comparison to the forecast outturn.
- (2) That the Housing Revenue Account forecast outturn as at 30 September 2016 be agreed and included in the current budget which in turn would then be used as the basis of comparison to the forecast outturn.
- (3) That the position on debts and rechargeable works be noted.

90. CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2016 (PERIOD 6):

Report of the Executive Director presenting the capital budget expenditure monitoring for the period up to 30 September 2016.

The latest forecast for expenditure in year was £40.6M and was £6.7M lower than the current budget. This was due to the re-profiling of a number of projects with more spend now expected in the following financial year 2017/18.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That a reduction of £6.713M in the 2016/17 current budget for the capital programme be agreed bringing the total budget to £40.617M.
- (2) That the revised funding of the capital programme be agreed.
- (3) That the proposed re-profiling of capital schemes totalling £6.729M into the 2017/18 capital programme be approved.
- (4) That the Prudential Indicators be noted.

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91. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT - HARDSHIP RELIEF AND DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT UPDATE:

Report of the Executive Director providing a quarterly update on the award of council tax support hardship relief and discretionary housing payments.

Halfway through the year 100 applications had been received for council tax support hardship relief and relief awarded to 96 council tax payers. This was a lower number of applications compared to the same period last year. 309 applications for discretionary housing payment had been received and awards to 232 benefit claimants had been made which was a similar amount compared to the same period made last year.

The cost of these payments was within budget.

RESOLVED:

That the half-year update be noted.

92. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY MID-YEAR REPORT:

Report of the Executive Director providing a mid-year update on the Council's treasury activity. All activity in the first half of the year had been in accordance with the Strategy and the average interest rate earned on cash balances was 1.05% lower than the rate assumed when setting the budget for the year. However, this had been offset by a higher level of cash balances than expected.

The report also sought approval to amendments to treasury management practices to reflect recent organisational changes.

RESOLVED:

That the current treasury position and Treasury Management Indicators be noted and the amendments to the Treasury Management Practice schedules to reflect recent organisational changes be approved.

93. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REFRESH:

The 2015/16 Economic Development Strategy that the Cabinet approved last November had focused on activity to set up the economic development function (Minute 72.2 refers). An Economic Development Officer had been employed since January 2016, a Business Forum made up of twelve local businesses had been established and a business support section on the Council's website had been created. It was therefore appropriate to refresh the Strategy to set out key objectives for the next three years from 2017 to 2020 as set out in the report of the Executive Director.

RESOLVED:

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- (1) That the refreshed Economic Development Strategy be approved.
- (2) That the final wording and design of the Strategy be agreed by the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Executive Member for Business and Partnerships.
- (3) That it be acknowledged that the Strategy would be supported by an action plan listing economic development activities that would be carried out by the Council and its partners to be kept up-to-date on the business pages of the Council's website.
- (4) That the refreshed Strategy be officially launched at the Welwyn Hatfield Alliance Conference on 24 November 2016.

94. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET PANELS:

Recommendations from the meeting of the Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel on 6 October 2016:-

94.1. Cranfield Crescent and Part of Bacons Drive - Proposed Resident Parking Permit Scheme and Homewood Avenue, Cuffley - Restriction of Waiting

In November 2015 parking proposals for a mixture of single and double yellow lines were formally advertised, including Bacons Drive, Cranfield Crescent and Homewood Avenue, Cuffley. During the formal stage a number of objections were received from residents in these roads.

The objections mainly centred on the need for residents in Cranfield Crescent and Bacons Drive to park during the proposed restriction times which a single yellow line would not permit. A number of properties shared a driveway which in most cases was also quite steep. The practicality of using, this with modern day vehicles meant they could easily damage vehicles' undercarriage. Therefore, a decision was made to remove these roads from the final proposals and to consult residents further on a resident parking permit scheme.

Further consultation was carried out to establish if residents in these roads agreed with the objectors. The majority response from Homewood Avenue residents was to leave the restrictions as they currently were, apart from a request to extend the existing double yellow lines slightly to improve the visibility at both junctions of Homewood Avenue and Tolmers Road.

The proposals were formally advertised on 14 August 2016 and no formal objections were received.

**RESOLVED:**

That having considered the proposals, in particular the issues raised around equalities and diversity and all other relevant issues, including any proposed mitigating actions and the detailed reasons for the proposals, the Panel's recommendation to proceed with the creation of the Traffic

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Regulation Order for Cranfield Crescent and part of Bacons Drive - resident parking scheme and Homewood Avenue, Cuffley - restriction of waiting, be approved.

94.2. Heyford Way, Hatfield - Proposed Resident Parking Permit Scheme and Restriction of Waiting

Heyford Way in Hatfield was a relatively new development close to the railway station. Even before the road was formally adopted by Hertfordshire County Council, requests had been received from residents for some type of parking restriction to manage the significant number of non-residents parking in this road and then walking to the railway station.

Residents were advised that the parking areas were not going to be included as part of the scheme as these areas were privately owned and not classed as public highway. They were asked to take this into consideration before completing and returning their survey form. The majority of responses opted to proceed with the scheme which was formally advertised on 14 August 2016. No objections were received during the formal consultation.

RESOLVED:

That having fully considered the proposals, in particular the issues raised around equalities and diversity and all other relevant issues, including any proposed mitigating actions and the detailed reasons for the proposals, the Panel's recommendation to proceed with the creation of the Traffic Regulation Order for Heyford Way, Hatfield - resident parking scheme and restriction of waiting be approved.

95. CABINET HOUSING AND PLANNING PANEL - MEMBER APPOINTMENT:

An appointment was required to replace Councillor M.Spinks on the Panel following his resignation as a Member of the Council.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor S.Johnston be appointed to serve on the Housing and Planning Panel.

(Note: The Chairman accepted this item as urgent business on account of the need to make an appointment to fill the vacancy on the Panel before its next meeting on 3 November 2016).

96. 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

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23 (Minute 97 refers) on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in Section 100A(3) and paragraph 3 (private financial or business information) 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.

97. ITEMS OF AN EXEMPT NATURE REQUIRING KEY DECISION:

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

AWARD OF CONTRACTS:

97.1. Sale of Recovered Newsprint (Forward Plan Reference FP766)

Exempt report of the Executive Director on the procurement of this service.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

That the award of the following contracts for a minimum period of eighteen months from 1 December 2016 be approved:-

Lot 1 – (Newspaper) – Palm Recycling Ltd

Lot 2 – (Mixed Paper) – Newport Paper Company Ltd

Lot 3 – (Mixed Paper with Tetra Pak) – Newport Paper Company Ltd

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The Council was the Lead Authority in the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership for managing recycling contracts and had joined with other Hertfordshire and one Essex authority to procure contractors to collect and recycle recovered newsprint and mixed papers.

The Council collected separated newspaper from residents. Other councils in Hertfordshire also collected paper, sometimes mixed with other materials.

97.2. Comingled Recyclates (Forward Plan Reference FP765)

Exempt report of the Executive Director on the contract for this service.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:



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That a seven year contract with an optional three year extension be awarded to Pearce Recycling Ltd (Pearce) commencing on 1 February 2017.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The Council was the Lead Authority in Hertfordshire Waste partnership for managing recycling contracts.

The Council had joined with three other Councils (Dacorum Borough Council, Watford Borough Council and Three Rivers District Council) to let a long term contract for this service. It was considered that a long term contract would generate more interest from the market enabling contractors to invest in the hi-tech machinery which was required to mechanically sort the recyclates.

97.3. Corporate Cleaning (Forward Plan Reference FP775)

Exempt report of the Executive Director on the process to procure cleaning services for the Council's operational buildings.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

That a two year contract with a possible one year extension be awarded to Birkin Cleaning Services Ltd (Birkin).

(2) Reasons for the Decision

A Member Procurement Board had overseen the process to procure cleaning services for the Council's operational buildings.

The contract would be for a higher level of specification than the current contract and hence there was some increase in cost above existing budgets. This could be accommodated within the inflationary increase assumed in the budget setting process for 2017/18.

97.4. Window Cleaning (Forward Plan Reference FP775)

Exempt report of the Executive Director on the Council's window cleaning contract.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

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That a three year contract with an optional one year extension be awarded to F and G Cleaners Ltd.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

Tenders for the Council's window cleaning contract had been evaluated 70% on price and 30% on quality.

F and G Cleaners Ltd scored the highest against the evaluation criteria at a slightly lower cost than the existing contract.

97.5. Award of Tree Maintenance (Forward Plan Reference FP776)

Exempt report of the Executive Director on the letting of new tree maintenance contracts.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

That the following contracts be awarded for a three year period commencing on 1 January 2017 (with the exception of Lot 2, which would commence on 1 November 2017) with an option to extend for a further one year:-

Lot 1 – Maintenance of Urban Trees - contractor 1: Maydencroft Ltd, contractor 2: Gristwood and Toms Ltd and contractor 3: CSG (Usher's) Ltd.

Lot 2 – Maintenance of Young Trees - Maydencroft Ltd

Lot 3 – Maintenance of Woodland Trees - Maydencroft Ltd

(2) Reasons for the Decision

A Member procurement Board was established to oversee the creation of the new contracts and the appointment of new contractors.

Tenders were evaluated on the basis of 40% on price, 50% on quality and 10% on interview.

Contracts included stiff financial penalties for late completion or poor quality work, as these formed part of the Council's performance indicators.

Meeting ended at 8.10pm  
GS