

Cabinet
7 March 2017

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the CABINET held on Tuesday 7 March 2017 at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber, 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)
H.Bromley (Executive Member, Environment)
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)

ALSO
PRESENT: J.Broach, S.Roberts

OFFICIALS Chief Executive (M.Saminaden)
PRESENT: Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) (N.Long)
Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) (K.Ng)
Executive Director (Housing and Communities) (S.Russell)
Head of Law and Administration (M.Martinus)
Governance Services Manager (G.R.Seal)
Communications Officer (C.Bishop)

136. MINUTES:

The Minutes of the meetings held on 9, 10 and 24 January and 7 February 2017 were approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

137. ACTIONS STATUS REPORT:

The status of actions agreed at the Cabinet meeting on 7 February 2017 in the report of the Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) was noted.

138. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE:

The following recommendations from meetings of the Resources Scrutiny Sub-Committee finishing on 19 January 2017 were considered :-

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138.1. Scrutiny of Enforcement Agents

The Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 21 September 2015 agreed that a Scrutiny Sub-Committee be set up to scrutinise the use of Enforcement Officers for debt collection to understand the process and the reasons for and frequency of use of Enforcement Agents. The scrutiny had now been completed and the report was presented to the Cabinet by the Chairman of the Sub-Committee, Councillor S.Roberts. The Cabinet thanked the Chairman for the work of the Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Scrutiny Sub-Committee's recommendations be agreed:-
 - (1) That Officers and Members agree a method of monitoring debt collection and enforcement and that reports should be presented to the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee quarterly as part of the Sopra Steria monitoring.
 - (2) That the following information be included within the reports:
 - (a) Number of reminders sent out.
 - (b) Number of summonses issued and the amount of money owed.
 - (c) Number of accounts sent to Enforcement Agents.
 - (d) Amount of money collected by Enforcement Agents.
 - (3) That consideration should be given to bringing the service in-house when the contract was next up for review/renewal.

139. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2017/18 - RELEASE OF FUNDS:

Report of the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) on the release of approved capital funds for ICT projects in the 2017/18 financial year.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet agrees the release of the capital funds for these projects in the 2017/18 capital programme.

140. RELEASE OF BUDGETS FOR PROJECTS IN HATFIELD:

Report of the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) seeking the release of approved capital funding in 2017/18 for various projects in Hatfield.

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RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet agrees to the release of the capital funds for these projects in the 2017/18 capital programme.

141. SURRENDER OF RESIDENTIAL LEASES BY THE NHS:

Report of the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) on the acceptance of an early surrender of the leases of two properties which were no longer required by the NHS.

It was noted that there was no delegation within the Constitution to accept a surrender unless it was linked to a re-grant of a new lease to the same or a different party and this was only a surrender if possession was accepted ahead of the actual break date.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Cabinet agrees to accept an early surrender of properties at 330 Howlands and 3 Little Lake, Welwyn Garden City so that they could be added to the housing stock and re-let.
- (2) That the Cabinet notes that prior to accepting the early surrender, a property inspection would be carried out and a schedule of dilapidations prepared according to the lease terms which the East and North Herts NHS Trust would need to remedy prior to the acceptance of the early surrender of the leases.

142. BUSINESS RATES - LOCAL NEWSPAPER RELIEF:

Report of the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) seeking adoption of a policy to award this rate relief.

RESOLVED:

That a policy be adopted to award £1,500 business rates discretionary rate relief to qualifying local newspapers that applied for the relief, for each of the next two financial years, based in the Welwyn Hatfield Borough, under section 47(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

143. UNIVERSAL CREDIT:

Report of the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) on the intention to complete the roll out of Universal Credit to benefit claimants.

RESOLVED:

That the roll out of Universal Credit be noted.

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144. PERFORMANCE EXCEPTION REPORT - FEBRUARY 2017:

Report of the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) summarising strategic data on an exception basis, following the last quarterly performance clinic.

RESOLVED:

That the performance data be noted and any proposed actions highlighted approved.

145. RISK MANAGEMENT:

Report of the Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) on the current top strategic and operational risks facing the Council.

RESOLVED:

That the current Strategic Risk Register and top operational risks be reviewed, noting particularly that relevant controls were assigned with mitigation plans with the correct status in place where necessary, together with comments in respect of each risk where shown.

146. COUNCIL'S ACHIEVEMENT LIST:

Report of the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) summarising the Council's key achievements and service improvements for the third quarter of 2016/17.

RESOLVED:

That the achievements list be noted.

147. JIMMY MAC'S GRANT:

Report of the Executive Director (Housing and Communities) on the continuation of grant funding for Jimmy Macs now that the Housing Trust's services were being delivered by the Council.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Cabinet approves a grant of £59,500 to Jimmy Macs Activity Centre for the Retired and Disabled for the financial year 2017/18 to continue the services previously paid for by the Housing Trust.
- (2) That the Cabinet agrees that this grant, payable from the Housing Revenue Account, be treated separately to the Community Grants

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Fund managed by the Grants Board and monitored in a report to the Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel.

148. 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 items 19 and 20 (Minutes 149 and 150 refer) on the grounds that they 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.

149. ITEMS OF AN EXEMPT NATURE REQUIRING KEY DECISION:

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

149.1. Lift Refurbishment - Sheltered Housing (Forward Plan Reference FP791)

Exempt report of the Executive Director (Housing and Communities) on the award of contract for the refurbishment of four lifts in sheltered housing schemes.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

That the contract for the refurbishment of four lifts in three sheltered housing schemes be awarded to The Terry Group Limited as detailed in the exempt report.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

Due to four lifts in three sheltered accommodations schemes showing considerable signs of wear and tear and being subject to frequent breakdowns, a refurbishment was required.

A procurement had been undertaken in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. Out of the fifteen bids received, ten met the minimum criteria and were evaluated against a criteria of 60% price, 30% quality and 10% experience.

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

149.2. Tudor Road, Welwyn - Bungalow Refurbishment (Forward Plan Reference FP793)

Exempt report of the Executive Director (Housing and Communities) on the award of contract for the refurbishment of five sheltered scheme bungalows in Tudor Road, Welwyn.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

That the contract for the refurbishment of five sheltered scheme bungalows in Tudor Road, Welwyn be awarded to Buildtrust Limited as detailed in the exempt report.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The Council owned fifteen bungalows at Tudor Road, Welwyn which were built in 1971. These bungalows would be modernised to “lifetime homes” standard involving redesigning the internal and external layouts.

A procurement had been undertaken to identify a company to undertake these works. The eight bids received were evaluated using a criteria of 60% price and 40% quality.

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

149.3. Consultation on Proposal to Redevelop the Former Little Mead Garage Site for New Affordable Homes (Forward Plan Reference FP795)

Exempt report of the Executive Director (Housing and Communities) giving an update on progress to redevelop this site.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

(1) That the Cabinet agrees to make a cash offer to the Council leaseholder for the direct purchase of their property in accordance with a maximum value agreed by the Council’s appointed surveyors, Brasier Freeth and as set out in the exempt report.

(2) That should an agreed position not be reached with the leaseholder for the purchase of their property, the commencement

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of formal procedures towards the acquisition of this property through a Compulsory Purchase Order be authorised.

- (3) That subject to receipt of the necessary planning permission, the Cabinet agrees that a procurement be progressed to seek a construction partner to demolish the existing properties and build the proposed three two bed houses and four three bed houses with the procurement results being reported to a future Cabinet meeting for approval.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

It was proposed to progress a planning application for the redevelopment of sixteen Council owned garages and two flats at Little Mead, Hatfield to provide seven new build houses to be let delivered through the Council's Affordable Housing Programme.

A consultation exercise had been carried out with local residents and stakeholders.

One of the existing properties was leasehold and in order to progress the redevelopment, would need to be purchased. An external valuation had been done and the leaseholder was interested in reaching an agreement with the Council.

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

150. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR SPECIALIST PROPERTY ADVICE

Exempt report of the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) on the award of contract for the provision of specialist property advice for major regeneration projects.

Colliers International had been involved in the projects to date having either been commissioned following the provision of competitive quotes or as a subcontractor.

They had a large amount of detailed, commercial knowledge of the schemes whereas any other consultant would need time, which would result in repeated fee expenditure, to get up to speed. It was, therefore, considered appropriate to appoint them further without competition

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with Rule 14(k) (Alternative Procedures in Prescribed Circumstances) of the Contract Procedure Rules, the Cabinet agrees to appoint Colliers International to undertake work in 2017/18 and 2018/19 as set out in the exempt report, on the basis that it was to the advantage

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of the Council to waive the Rules to make the appointment without further competition.

Meeting ended at 8.05 pm
GS