

Cabinet
11 July 2017

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL CABINET held on Tuesday 11 July 2017 at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors A.L.Perkins (Deputy Leader) (Executive Member, Planning, Housing and Community) (Vice-Chairman in the Chair)

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: Councillors J.Fitzpatrick, K.Holman, T.Mitchinson, K.Thorpe

OFFICIALS Chief Executive (R.Bridge)
PRESENT: Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) (N.Long)
Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) (K.Ng)
Head of Law and Administration (M.Martinus)
Governance Services Manager (G.R.Seal)
Communications Officer (T.Underwood)

18. APOLOGIES:

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J.W.Dean (Leader of the Council) (Chairman).

19. MINUTES:

The Minutes of the meetings held on 6 and 12 June 2017 were approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

20. ACTIONS STATUS REPORT:

The status of actions agreed at the Cabinet meeting on 6 June 2017 in the report of the Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) was noted.

21. ITEM REQUIRING KEY DECISION:

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

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21.1. Government Funding - Prevention of Homelessness - Approval of Proposals for Utilising new Grant Functions (Forward Plan Reference FP805)

Report of the Executive Director (Housing and Communities) relating to the ring fenced funding the Government had allocated to Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

That the project proposals to be funded from the new grant money from the Government, as recommended by the Cabinet Housing Panel, be approved.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The new grant gave Councils more control and flexibility over homelessness budgets. It formed part of the Government's approach to tackling homelessness, helping both those at risk of homelessness and those experiencing a crisis.

Detailed work had been carried out on a series of proposed work streams/projects identified as a priority for funding from this newly available sum.

It was intended that the initiatives would be continued even when funding ceased in two years' time. In order to do this there would need to be effective measures in place to assess the outcomes achieved.

There would be a planned approach as to how the extended duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act would be co-ordinated and implemented, which included holding regular meetings with the relevant organisations on a county wide basis to identify the best way forward.

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

21.2. Release of Approved Budget for Welwyn Garden City Town Centre North (Forward Plan Reference FP807)

Report of the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) seeking the release of the allocation of £100,000 in the approved capital budget for this project.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

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That the budget allocated to the Welwyn Garden City Town Centre North project be released.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

This project was part of the Council's capital programme for the financial year 2017/18 and was approved by the Cabinet on 10 January and by the Council on 7 February 2017.

The funds would be used to progress the Welwyn Garden City 2014 Supplementary Planning Document for the north of the town centre and to start transport modelling, design assessments and project viability and deliverability work.

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

22. RISK MANAGEMENT:

Report of the Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) on the current strategic risks facing the Council as determined by the Executive Board and reviewed at the performance clinic in May 2017 reflecting the assessments in place for the first half of the current financial year.

RESOLVED:

That the current Strategic Risk Register and comments in respect of each risk where shown be noted.

23. 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 12 (Minute 24 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.

24. GOLDINGS HOUSE, HATFIELD:

Exempt report of the Executive Director (Housing and Communities) recommending the transfer of the freehold of Goldings House, Hatfield to the Paradigm Housing Group.

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In September 2003 the Cabinet agreed to commence a trickle transfer process of leasehold ownership of flats at Goldings House, Link Drive, Hatfield from the Council to Chiltern Hundreds Charitable Housing Association (now part of Paradigm Housing Group). The Council retained the freehold ownership for Goldings House.

The trickle transfer was agreed in order to establish a better management arrangement for the block, by having one owner responsible for management and maintenance.

It was agreed that as the Council flats became empty they would be transferred to Paradigm Housing Group. In the meantime Paradigm took over the maintenance of the communal areas at Goldings House.

The Council remained responsible for the external maintenance of the block, but with the ability to recharge Paradigm on a proportionate basis for any work carried out.

The intention was that these arrangements would be in place until all the properties had been transferred to Paradigm Housing Group and that once all the flats had transferred, the freehold of the building would then be transferred for a sum based on the capitalisation of the individual ground rents.

All the Council owned flats had now transferred and there was one leasehold unit which was purchased under the Right to Buy. Paradigm Housing Group were in the process of purchasing this property from the leaseholder, so once this was complete they would own all the units in the block.

In order to safeguard the Council from any potential future opportunity cost, a clawback provision equivalent to 50% of the profit would be triggered if Paradigm Housing Group decided to redevelop the block as private housing in the future. It was noted that Members would wish to extend this provision and recover an additional £275,000 over and above the 50% profit clawback.

With the permission of the Chairman, Councillor K.Thorpe spoke on this item and asked a number of questions. The Chairman advised that written answers would be given and circulated to the Cabinet

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Cabinet approves the transfer of the freehold of Goldings House, Goldings Crescent, Hatfield to Paradigm Housing Group as detailed in the exempt report.
- (2) That the Cabinet approves the capital receipt being used to support the Council's Affordable Housing Programme.

Meeting ended 8.00pm
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