

Cabinet
3 October 2017

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL CABINET held on Tuesday 3 October 2017 at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors J.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 T.Mitchinson
PRESENT:

OFFICIALS Chief Executive (R.Bridge)
PRESENT: Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) (K.Ng)
Executive Director (Housing and Communities) (S.Russell)
Head of Law and Administration (M.Martinus)
Head of Housing Operations (S.Pearson).
Governance Services Manager (G.R.Seal)
Communications Officer (N.Burrows)

48. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

49. ACTIONS STATUS REPORT

The status of actions agreed at the Cabinet meeting on 5 September 2017 in the report of the Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) was noted.

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

The following items were considered:-

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50.1. Remote Network Access

Report of the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) requesting capital funding for upgrading the Council's secure remote log on connection.

The software provider, Pulse was no longer developing the current version of this software and the facility would soon be unsupported. This was resulting in connectivity problems with some suppliers being unable to connect to the Council's network remotely.

RESOLVED:

That the Council be recommended to approve a supplementary capital estimate of £30,000 for the purchase of the latest version of the Pulse Secure Virtual Private Network appliance and that the budget be released with immediate effect.

50.2. Housing Allocation Policy Review

Recommendation from the meeting of the Cabinet Housing Panel on 18 September 2017 on approval of proposed changes to the policy following consultation.

Following a review of the Council's Housing Allocation Policy, the Cabinet Housing Panel agreed that Officers could consult on a number of proposed changes.

A twelve week consultation commenced on 8 May 2017 and the majority of respondents were in favour of the proposed changes which aimed to achieve greater fairness and transparency in the way priority for social housing was agreed.

The Cabinet Housing Panel considered the outcome of the consultation and was now recommending that the Cabinet approve the proposed changes to the Policy for adoption by the Council.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet approves and recommends the proposed changes to the Housing Allocation Policy to the Council for adoption.

51. ITEM REQUIRING KEY DECISION

To consider the following item for decision in the current Forward Plan:-

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51.1. Proposals for the Demolition and Reprovision of Enhanced and Increased Temporary Accommodation at Howlands House, Welwyn Garden City (Forward Plan Reference FP822)

Report of the Executive Director (Housing and Communities) on the appointment of an architect for the demolition and redevelopment of Howlands House, Welwyn Garden City.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Cabinet approves the appointment of Pellings, from the Council's existing Architect framework agreement, to draw up a detailed scheme and submit a planning application for the demolition and redevelopment of Howlands House, Welwyn Garden City.
- (2) That, subject to planning approval, a further report be brought to the Cabinet setting out the detailed financial appraisal and seeking authority to procure a construction partner.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

Howlands House provided short term accommodation for people and families who were homeless. Built around 40 years ago it was subject to considerable wear and tear and had become dated over time.

The Council had carried out initial feasibility work and the site allowed the opportunity for a phased demolition and new build development.

The proposed scheme would provide larger, modern, temporary accommodation facilities including improved access via a lift and a specialist disability unit on the site.

The new development could be partly funded using the allowed amounts of Right to Buy receipts.

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

52. ITEM REQUIRING KEY DECISION NOT ON THE FORWARD PLAN

To consider the following item for decision not in the current Forward Plan:-

52.1. Hatfield Swim Centre Changing Room Refurbishment

Report of the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) seeking delegated authority for the award of the contract for this scheme.

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(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

That delegated authority be given to the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services), in consultation with the Executive Member (Policy and Culture), to award the contract for the Hatfield Swim Centre changing village refurbishment, subject to the value of the contract not exceeding £150,000.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The Council received a total of 11 bids for this work for which £150,000 had been identified. £110,000 was coming from the Council's capital programme for 2017/18 and £40,000 had been allocated to it from Finesse Leisure's own reserves. This area of the Swim Centre had been an ongoing source of customer complaints over recent years so this project would target and address the worst affected parts. It was hoped to get this work completed over December 2017 when the Centre traditionally had its quietest trading period in the year and could remain open to the public whilst this was done.

(Note: The Chairman of the Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been given notice that it was impracticable to comply with the requirement that at least twenty eight days notice must be given of the intention to make a key decision in the Forward Plan in accordance with Regulation 10 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 because it was urgent and could not reasonably be deferred for the reason specified).

(Note: The reason for this item was to be able to award the contract to enable the works to take place and be completed before the peak period for leisure facilities in January 2018).

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

53. PILOT SCHEME FOR BUSINESS RATES GROWTH RETENTION

Report of the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) on the pilot scheme for business rates growth retention.

The Department of Communities and Local Government had announced that it was inviting Councils to work together in putting forward proposals to retain 100% of growth in business rates in the local area.

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The principle behind these pilot areas retaining 100% of income growth locally was to allow authorities to jointly make coherent strategic decisions about the wider area and to jointly manage risk and reward.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet agrees to give delegated authority to the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services), in consultation with the Executive Member (Resources), to enter into a Hertfordshire business rates pool and/or to submit a joint application to the Department of Communities and Local Government to enter the pilot scheme for business rates growth retention, if after full consideration, there was a financial case for doing so.

54. 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 August 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.

55. 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 14 to 17 (Minutes 56 - 59 refer) on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in Section 100A(3) and Paragraphs 1 (personal information), 2 (individual identity) and 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.

56. ITEMS OF AN EXEMPT NATURE REQUIRING KEY DECISION

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

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56.1. Housing Operations Customer First Transformation Programme (Forward Plan Reference FP809)

Exempt report of the Executive Director (Housing and Communities) on the proposed remodelling of the Housing operations service through the Customer First Transformation Programme.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet endorses and approves the proposals for the programme as set out in the exempt report.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The emphasis of the proposed operating model was to provide a direct face to face, out in the field, service to customers across all tenures, delivering a streamlined, customer focused and outcome driven approach that put customers and neighbourhoods at the heart of the service.

The programme aimed to deliver long term financial efficiency savings through the remodelling and the new service delivery effective from 2018/19.

Changing the way that the Housing Operations function delivered the landlord services would deliver an estimated efficiency saving of approximately £184,000 year on year, once implementation costs had been met.

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

57. ITEMS OF AN EXEMPT NATURE REQUIRING KEY DECISION NOT IN THE FORWARD PLAN

To consider the following items of an exempt nature for decision not in the current Forward Plan:-

57.1. Proposed Sale of Salisbury Square, Hatfield

Exempt report of the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) on the proposed sale of Salisbury Square, Hatfield.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet agrees to the disposal of the Council's remaining share of the trust holdings at Salisbury Square, Hatfield along with

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any residual title held to Gascoyne Cecil Estates at a price of £500,000.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

On 3 November 2015, Cabinet agreed to the sale of the Council's share in the trust holding of Salisbury Square to Gascoyne Cecil Estates.

The Cabinet was now updated on the transaction and asked to agree revised terms of the sale following further discussions between the parties and consideration of options.

(Note: The Chairman of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been given notice that it was impracticable to comply with the requirements that at least twenty eight days notice must be given of the intention to make a key decision in the Forward Plan and to consider the item in the private section of the meeting in accordance with Regulations 5 and 10 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 because it was urgent and could not reasonably be deferred for the reason specified).

(Note: The reason for this item was to be able to proceed with the proposed sale without delay.

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

57.2. Parking Enforcement and Management Contracts

Exempt report of the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) considering the options for the re-procurement of these contracts.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Cabinet agrees to enter into a new Service Level Agreement with East Hertfordshire District Council for the current on street parking enforcement activities as well as an option for the enforcement of the Council car parks for a term of five years plus an extension of one year and a further year.
- (2) That the Cabinet agrees that the car park cleansing operations are added to the Council's Streetscene contract from 1 October 2019.
- (3) That the Cabinet agrees that a Member Procurement Board be set up to assess the re-procurement of the car park

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management contract and available options, in particular, the remit of this Board to include exploring the optimal parking management system going forward which would include getting definitive costs for all aspects of the work, with the enforcement being included in the new East Hertfordshire District Council tender.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The Council currently delegated its powers of on-street parking enforcement to East Hertfordshire District Council through a Service Level Agreement, which had been in place since 2005 covering the issuing of Parking Enforcement Notices. This arrangement was due to expire on 16 January 2019 and was working well.

The current car park management contract with CP Plus Ltd was also coming to an end on 30 September 2019 and this provided an opportunity to explore the options for the re-provision of these functions.

A Member Procurement Board would be set up to explore all available options.

(Note: The Chairman of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been given notice that it was impracticable to comply with the requirements that at least twenty eight days notice must be given of the intention to make a key decision on the Forward Plan and to consider the item in the private section of the meeting in accordance with Regulations 5 and 10 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 because it was urgent and could not reasonably be deferred for the reason specified).

(Note: The reason for this item was to be able to proceed with the arrangements for re-procuring these contracts without delay).

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

58. NON DOMESTIC RATES WRITE OFFS

Exempt report of the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) on a non-domestic rates write off of over £10,000 where the ratepayer had gone into liquidation.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet agrees to write off a non-domestic rates debt of over £10,000 where no further recovery action could be taken as detailed in the exempt report.

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59. REPORT FROM CABINET PANEL

59.1. Campus West Cabinet Panel - 31 July 2017

Exempt report of the meeting of the Campus West Cabinet Panel on 31 July 2017 on the budget and income for quarter one and review of the business giving an update on the progress being made to implement some of the changes recommended in the review. Further progress would be reported to the Cabinet Panel's next meeting on 16 November 2017.

RESOLVED:

That the exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Campus West Cabinet Panel held on 31 July 2017 on the budget and income for quarter one and review of the business be received.

Meeting ended at 7.55 pm
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