

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL CABINET held on Tuesday 10 July 2018 at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors A.L.Perkins (Leader of the Council) (Chairman)
T.Kingsbury (Deputy Leader) (Executive Member, Housing and
Community)

D.Bell (Executive Member, Resources)
S.Boulton (Executive Member, Environment and Planning
Delivery)
T.Mitchinson (Executive Member, Leisure, Culture and
Communications)
B.Sarson (Executive Member, Regeneration, Economic
Development and Partnerships)
F.Thomson (Executive Member, Governance and Public Health)

OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Chief Executive (R.Bridge)

Corporate Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) (N.Long)

Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) (K.Ng)

Corporate Director (Housing and Communities) (S.Russell)

Head of Law and Administration (M.Martinus)

Head of Property Services (P.Gray)

Governance Services Manager (G.R.Seal)

Communications Officer (C.Bishop)

16. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17. ACTIONS STATUS REPORT

The status of actions agreed at the Cabinet meeting on 5 June 2018 in the report of the Corporate Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) was noted.

18. ITEM RELATING TO THE BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR
RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL

The following item was considered:-

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18.1. Health and Safety Service Plan 2018/19

Recommendation from the meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 June 2018 on adoption of the Plan to secure adequate arrangements for enforcement of health and safety law.

The Health and Safety Service plan was produced annually to demonstrate the arrangements in place within the Council to satisfy its legal duty under Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

The Council had a legal duty, as an enforcing authority within the Act, to have sufficient resources and arrangements in place to deliver, both proactive health and safety interventions and react to workplace accidents by having the resources necessary to undertake a criminal investigation.

The service was often dominated by serious workplace accident investigations, for which the Council had a good record of successful interventions. However, the quantity of these accidents requiring intervention could not be predicted and were difficult to plan for. The Service Plan gave a greater degree of proactive intervention which would focus on nationally identified priority topics which through local intelligence the Council knew would have a positive effect on the safety of employees and other persons in the Borough.

RESOLVED:

That the draft Health and Safety Plan 2018/19 be recommended to the Council for adoption.

19. ITEMS REQUIRING KEY DECISION

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

19.1. Decant Policy - Council Tenants and Leaseholders - Adoption of the Policy. Following Consultation with the Tenants' Panel (Forward Plan Reference FP847)

Recommendation from the meeting of the Cabinet Housing Panel on 5 March 2018 on the policy setting out the help offered by the Council where a tenant/leaseholder was required to move from their permanent home into alternative accommodation following consultation with the Tenants' Panel.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

That delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director (Housing and Communities), in consultation with the Executive Member, (Housing and Community), to review and amend as appropriate the

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amounts payable set out in Appendix One to the Policy, on an annual basis.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

A 'decant' was where a resident was required to move from their permanent home into alternative accommodation because of an unexpected or planned event – for example, a major repair issue; major improvements or disposal/redevelopment of their property and could be for a temporary period or a permanent move.

The Policy set out the circumstances in which a tenant/leaseholder or sub tenant could be decanted; what tenants and residents could expect if they were required to move from their home; what financial compensation would be paid and the likely options for rehousing that the Council could offer.

The Tenants' Panel had considered the draft Policy at its meeting on 30 May 2018 and the document had been updated to reflect comments made.

19.2. Parking Services Work Programme 2018-2020 (Forward Plan Reference FP859)

Recommendation from the meeting of the Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel on 7 June 2018 on proposed parking service work programme 2018-2020 (Minute 68 refers).

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

- (1) That due to the size of the projects and the time they could take to complete the work programme be extended from one year to two years, 2018-2020.
- (2) That the Peartree Ward and Hatfield car parks be added to the 2018-2020 work programme.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The Council received many requests for parking restrictions and parking improvements throughout the year and the work programme attempted to provide a structure to manage public expectations.

There were currently just over 500 outstanding requests for changes to the current parking restrictions.

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Given the redevelopment of the former Shredded Wheat site and that many of the office blocks in the Peartree Ward were being converted into residential accommodation with differing parking arrangements, the Peartree Ward would be added to the 2018-2020 work programme and the Hatfield Town Centre car parks also included.

The Council had already agreed to provide £100,000 in the budget for additional resource to be recruited into the parking services team to help to tackle the parking issues in the Borough more quickly and Officers were in the process of getting the recruitment process underway.

It was noted that the Council needed to be aware that when roads in Salisbury Village were adopted as public highway the existing parking restrictions in part of the village might lapse and require to be replaced.

19.3. Universal Credit (Forward Plan Reference FP865)

Report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) giving an update on the roll-out of universal credit and proposing the allocation of funding to the Citizen's Advice Bureau.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet agrees to provide £21,000 of Department for Work and Pensions funding to the Citizen's Advice Bureau which would have an Officer based at the Hatfield Job Centre providing personal budgeting support to Universal Credit claimants.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

As reported to the November 2017 Cabinet meeting, the second phase of the Universal Credit roll out came into effect from 6 December last year.

The Council had raised concerns over the length of time Universal Credit claims took to process before the roll out of the second phase and the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) had put measures in place to address some of the issues raised.

Universal Credit in the Borough was administered by the Hatfield Jobcentre, and the Council did not have any control over the award, nor the time it took to process an application. The Council's role was to advise and support residents when completing a claim form and signposting them to the DWP or other support services.

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The Council had been working with the Citizen's Advice Bureau on Universal Credit and given that they were the experts in providing advice and support to claimants that needed financial support, they would be best placed to provide the personal budgeting support to Universal Credit claimants.

The percentage increase in workloads caused by Universal Credit was 16%, although there was also an increase in other benefit correspondence and new ways of working were being looked at to address this.

20. RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET PANEL

The following recommendation from the meeting of the Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel on 7 June 2018 was considered (Minute 67 refers):-

20.1. Resident Permit Parking Scheme, Double Yellow Lines and Verge Protection in the Crop Common and Cecil Crescent Areas of Hatfield

Residents within the consultation area had previously contacted Parking Services highlighting significant parking demand in certain roads. A total of 634 residents and businesses were consulted and three formal objections were received. The objections raised were not against the Verge and Footway Order, but were related to the creation of double yellow lines and the resident parking scheme.

As standard practice all changes to the parking restrictions would be monitored for a period of six months and any changes would be carried out during this period.

RESOLVED:

That, having considered the reasons for the proposals, objections, and issues around equalities and diversity, together with proposed mitigating actions, the Cabinet agrees to proceed with the creation of the Traffic Regulation Order for a resident permit parking scheme, double yellow lines and verge protection in the Crop Common and Cecil Crescent areas of Hatfield, as recommended by the Panel.

21. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE ON OUTSIDE BODY

Hertfordshire County Council had requested the appointment of a representative to serve on the Panshanger Park Liaison Group in 2018/19, a new body which would receive updates on the progress of the final restoration of the site by the operators, together with the opening of the country park and to receive the Council's views on the proposals.

The Leader nominated Councillor T.Mitchinson.

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RESOLVED:

That Councillor T.Mitchinson be appointed as the Council's representative to serve on the Panshanger Park Liaison Group in 2018/19.

22. 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 13, 14 and 15, (Minutes 22 to 24 refer) on the grounds that they 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.

23. ITEMS OF AN EXEMPT NATURE REQUIRING KEY DECISION

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

23.1. Property Investment (Forward Plan Reference FP863)

Exempt report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) on potential property investment opportunities.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

(1) That the Cabinet agrees in principle to purchase the property as outlined in section 3 of the exempt report.

(2) That delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services), in consultation with the Executive Member (Resources), to agree the maximum purchase price to be offered for the purchase.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The Council had set aside a budget for direct property investment in the Borough for regeneration purposes as well as providing an ongoing

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revenue income to the General Fund. Officers had identified an investment opportunity recently for the Cabinet to consider.

23.2. Water Hygiene/Testing Communal Housing (Forward Plan Reference FP857)

Exempt report of the Corporate Director (Housing and Communities) on the procurement process and award of contract for these services.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet approves the contract award as detailed in the exempt report taking on board the comments of the leaseholder consultation exercise as recommended by the Cabinet Housing Panel (Minute 10 refers).

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The Council had an obligation to ensure that all cold water storage tanks and communal systems were free from Legionella Bacteria, and that they conformed to The Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems L8 Regulations.

These obligations were complied with via a contractor carrying out these services on the Council's behalf and details of the tender process to procure a new contract for these services was set out in the exempt report.

24. STREETSCENE CONTRACT PROCUREMENT

Exempt report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) on potential service changes and recycling options as part of the procurement process.

The existing Streetscene and Grounds Maintenance contracts were due to end in March 2020 and a cross party Procurement Board was set up to oversee the procurement process of the new contract.

The first rounds of the tenders would be submitted and returned to the Council at the end of August 2018 and would enable Officers to analyse the financial implications of enhanced recycling rate options. It was anticipated that a further report would be brought back to the Cabinet before the final tender stage to confirm the recycling options.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet agrees with the views of the cross party Streetscene Contract Procurement Board on potential service changes as

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highlighted in the exempt report, anticipating that a future report would be brought to the Cabinet before the final tender stage to confirm the recycling options once the financial implications were known.

25. PROPOSAL TO CONSULT WITH RESIDENTS AT MINSTER CLOSE ABOUT POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT

Exempt report of the Corporate Director (Housing and Communities) seeking approval to consult with residents of the sheltered housing scheme about a proposal for redevelopment.

The Cabinet had agreed that the sheltered housing scheme at Minster House, be redeveloped to a larger, modern older person's housing scheme on the site.

There was an opportunity to provide a much larger scheme if Minster Close was included and options for designs were currently being considered.

A further report would be brought to the Cabinet setting out the results of the consultation and making recommendations on options.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet approves the commencement of consultation with residents and family members of the occupied bungalows at Minster Close about the proposal to include these properties in the wider development scheme at Minster House, Hatfield.

Meeting ended 8.15pm
GS