

Cabinet
6 November 2018

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

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

PRESENT: Councillors T.Kingsbury (Deputy Leader and Executive Member, Housing and Community) (Chairman)

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 Chief Executive (R.Bridge)
PRESENT: 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)
Governance Services Manager (G.R.Seal)
Communications Officer (C.Trussell)

64. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 2 and 23 October 2018 were approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

65. ACTIONS STATUS REPORT

The status of actions agreed at the Cabinet meeting on 2 October 2018 in the report of the Corporate Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) was noted.

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

The following items were considered:-

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66.1. Adoption of the Welwyn Hatfield Council Statement of Principles Under the Gambling Act 2005

Report of the Corporate Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) asking the Cabinet to recommend adoption of the Council's Statement of Principles for a three year period commencing on 31 January 2019 as required by section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005.

Once adopted the Statement of Principles would form part of the decision making process for Council Members and Officers in the determination of applications for premises licences and permits. The Statement would also be used by the Courts should they be asked to consider an appeal against a Council Committee decision. The Statement followed the prescribed statutory format and was the subject of a consultation exercise. The draft Statement was approved for consultation release by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 11 June 2018 (Minute 11 refers).

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet approves the Welwyn Hatfield Council Statement of Principles at Appendix 1 to the report and recommends its adoption by the Council for the next three years commencing on 31 January 2019.

66.2. Street Trading Policy

Report of the Corporate Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) asking the Cabinet to recommend adoption of the Council's new street trading policy detailing current practices and a new system for vacant pitches and town centre pitches.

The draft policy was approved for consultation release by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 11 June 2018 (Minute 10 refers) and the Cabinet was now asked to recommend that the final policy be approved and recommended to the Council for adoption.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet approves the Street Trading Policy in Appendix 1 (including appendices A-H) to the report and recommends its adoption by the Council.

66.3. Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2019/20 (Forward Plan Reference FP870)

Report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) on the continuation of the scheme into 2019/20.

The Council's council tax support scheme replaced council tax benefits from April 2013 and was based on a broad framework agreed as part of a

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consultation undertaken with Hertfordshire County Council, the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner and other interested parties.

Much of the old council tax benefits scheme was retained within the local support scheme and the Council had continued to protect pensioners, disabled claimants and claimants with children under five. This was achieved by calculating council tax support on 75% of the council tax liability and not 100% and this was applied to working age claimants.

It was intended in 2019/20 to continue with the same council tax support scheme that the Council rolled out in 2018/19 and consultation had taken place with the County Council responding to say that it was in agreement with this approach.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet recommends to the Council that the localised council tax support scheme continue in 2019/20 to help people on low/no income to receive a reduction on their council tax.

67. ITEMS REQUIRING KEY DECISION

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

67.1. Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2018/19 (Forward Plan Reference FP877)

Report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) on the current treasury position and treasury management indicators.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

That the current treasury position and Treasury Management Indicators be noted.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

In accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy this report provided a mid-year update on the Council's treasury activities from 1 April to 30 September 2018 including details of the investment and loans portfolios, confirmed the Council's compliance with its Treasury Management approved indicators and provided an economic update from treasury advisors.

No new external borrowing had been undertaken during the period and Housing Revenue Account borrowing, originally £305M had now been

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reduced to £228M implying £77M of “headroom” within the borrowing limit. New borrowing was likely during the second half of the year, although this was not currently forecast to exceed repayments of existing debt during the period.

Cash balances were forecast to fall through 2018/19 as the capital investment programme continued and there had therefore been an emphasis on maintaining liquidity.

67.2. Disabled Facilities Grant Funding and Use of Better Care Fund (Forward Plan Reference FP887)

Recommendation from the meeting of the Cabinet Housing Panel on 25 October 2018 on funding the modernisation programme of Council owned sheltered housing (Minute 41 refers).

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

That the use of the set aside capital receipts of £672,000 towards funding the modernisation programme of Council owned sheltered housing be agreed to be incorporated into the 2019/20 budget process.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The Better Care Fund was an integrated budget which provided a mechanism for joint health and social care, planning and commissioning, bringing together ring fenced budgets from Clinical Commissioning Groups allocations, the Disabled Facilities Grant and funding paid direct to local government for adult social care services.

The money was ring fenced for the purpose of providing adaptations or other enablement which improved independence in the home and it was a legitimate use of the fund to be directed to capital projects, such as the sheltered housing improvement project, where the object was to improve health outcomes and maintain independence.

67.3. Extension of Internal Adaptions Contract (Forward Plan Reference FP884)

Report of the Corporate Director (Housing and Communities) on the proposed extension of this contract.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

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That the Cabinet agrees to extend the internal and external adaptations contract with Gracelands Complete Maintenance Services by two years until 31 March 2021.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The Council offered a service to Council tenants to carry out aids and adaptations to tenants' homes (bathrooms, kitchens, access facilities) to make them suitable for disabled residents.

The original term of the contract would expire on 31 March 2019 and there was an optional two year extension.

Gracelands had provided a good service that was considered to represent value for money and an extension to the contract was considered to provide continuity of service.

68. SYRIAN VULNERABLE PERSONS RELOCATION SCHEME

Report of the Corporate Director (Housing and Communities) on the resettlement of families in the Borough.

In September 2015 the Prime Minister announced that the Government was increasing its commitment to the resettlement of Syrian refugees.

In April 2016 the Cabinet agreed that the Council should participate in the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Relocation Scheme with an initial target to resettle up to ten Syrian refugees in the Borough.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Cabinet notes that the Council had resettled two families (eleven people) through the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Relocation Scheme and that a third family (five people) had been accepted due to arrive in December 2018.
- (2) That the proposal to resettle further families via the scheme by the end of March 2020 be endorsed.

69. GENERAL PROCUREMENT BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

Report of the Corporate Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) with recommendations from the first meeting of the new Board on 8 October 2018 on the arrangements for forthcoming procurements and operation of the Board.

The General Procurement Board recommended that a separate Member Procurement Board for the Housing Maintenance contract be established due

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to the contract's size and complexity as well as the need for Tenants' Panel involvement.

It was also felt that the initial idea of a rotating chairmanship for the General Procurement Board would be difficult to operate in practice and that it would be more efficient for the portfolio holder for procurement to serve as permanent Chairman, with relevant portfolio holders presenting and voting on contracts within their portfolios.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That a separate Member Procurement Board be established for the Housing Maintenance contract.
- (2) That the Terms of Reference of the General Procurement Board be amended to remove the rotating chairmanship for future meetings and to have a standing Chairman to be the Executive Member (Resources) with Portfolio holders for the service continuing to have membership on the board and votes on 'their' items.

(Note: The Appendix to this report is the exempt report from the meeting of the Board on 8 October 2018 and is submitted at Agenda Item 18 in the Part II section of the meeting as it contains private and confidential information) (Minute 77 refers).

70. REVENUE BUDGET QUARTER 2 MONITORING REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2018-2019

Report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) presenting the revenue budget position as at 30 September 2018.

The forecast General Fund outturn was now a contribution to balances of £63,000 which was an improvement of £163,000 on the £100,000 drawdown predicted in the original budget.

The forecast Housing Revenue Account balance was now £3.465M which was £800,000 higher than forecast in the original budget, largely due to a higher than predicted opening balance as well as variances from Quarter 1.

Risks and opportunities to the General Fund at present showed a possible favourable impact for the year end, but at this stage it would be premature to adjust the forecast for all these items. Forecast rental income from the Council's commercial portfolio had been increased and the information from this process was being built into the 2019/20 budget preparation.

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RESOLVED:

- (1) That the revenue forecast outturn position as at Quarter 2 be noted.
- (2) That virements as detailed in section 3.3 of the report be approved.
- (3) That the position on debts set out in section 6 of the report be noted.
- (4) That the Cabinet notes that the underspends in the current year would be contributed to the Budget Priority and Transformation Earmarked Reserve to support the Council to invest in services and drive efficiency improvements in future years.

71. CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2018 (QUARTER 2)

Report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) on the capital budget position for Quarter 2 of 2018/19.

There were few substantive changes to capital budgets in this period other than roll-forwards from the previous year, but subsequent to this period the Special Council meeting on 23 October 2018 approved an £8M addition to the 2018/19 capital programme to enable a replication of the Weltech facility elsewhere in the Borough (Minute 35 refers).

RESOLVED:

That the overall position as at Quarter 2 on the capital programme and the update on the capital funding and reserves position be noted.

72. OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION ON REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR MINSTER CLOSE, HATFIELD

Report of the Corporate Director (Housing and Communities) on the outcome of consultation on these proposals.

Following consultation with the residents of Minster House, Minster Close, Hatfield, the Cabinet had approved the redevelopment of the sheltered housing scheme with a modern older persons housing scheme being rebuilt on the site through the Council's Affordable Housing Programme.

In addition to the main Minster House building there were also Council owned bungalows adjacent to the sheltered scheme which were not included within the original tenant consultation process and the Cabinet also authorised the commencement of consultation with the tenants of these bungalows in order to provide a larger, modern, state of the art sheltered housing scheme.

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RESOLVED:

- (1) That the outcome of the consultation with the tenants as set out in the report be noted.
- (2) That the redevelopment proposals proceed as set out in the report.
- (3) That it be noted that the bungalow residents were given the opportunity to move out of their properties either temporarily or permanently due to the likely disruption which would be caused by the redevelopment of Minster House.

73. 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 16 to 19 (Minutes 74 to 77 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.

74. ITEMS OF AN EXEMPT NATURE REQUIRING KEY DECISION

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

74.1. Streetscene Procurement Update (Forward Plan Reference FP888)

Exempt report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) and Minutes of the meeting of the Procurement Board held on 22 October 2018 providing an update on the way forward for this procurement.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Cabinet agrees with the views of the cross party Streetscene Contract Procurement Board that bidders would be asked to complete the bids on Lot 1- Waste

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Collection and Street Cleansing based on the increased recycling rate option for the final tender stage.

- (2) That the Cabinet agrees to set up a cross party Member task and finish group to oversee the mobilisation phase of the Streetscene contract.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The Cabinet had set up a cross party Procurement Board to oversee the procurement process for the establishment of new contract(s) to deliver Waste Collection, Street Cleansing (Lot 1) and Grounds Maintenance (Lot 2) to the Borough.

74.2. Award of Contract - Asset Valuations General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (Forward Plan Reference FP886)

Exempt report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) on the award of contract for these services.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Cabinet approves the award of contract for the General Fund valuations to GVA Grimley Ltd for a period of six years.
- (2) That the Cabinet approves the award of contract for the Housing Revenue Account valuations to the Valuations Office Agency for a period of four years from March 2021.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The asset valuation contracts for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account had been re-tendered in a single exercise to ensure that the best value for money could be obtained and an Officer-led procurement exercise had been undertaken.

75. AWARD OF CONTRACTS FOR SPECIALIST HERITAGE AND TOWNSCAPE ADVICE

Exempt report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) on the award of contracts to provide continuing heritage and townscape advice for the three components of the Hatfield Town Centre Regeneration Project.

Currently, two consultancy practices were working on the Hatfield Town Centre project and to avoid delay it was recommended that they be appointed

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to assist with further work up to 2020/21 without a further competitive tendering process.

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with section 14k (Alternative Procedures in Prescribed Circumstances) of the Contract Procedure Rules the Cabinet agrees to appoint Ettwein Bridges and Citydesigner to undertake work in 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 in accordance with the information contained in the exempt report and that the main commission would be completed in years 2019 to 2020 but minor follow up advice might be required.

76. GENERAL PROCUREMENT BOARD

Exempt report of the meeting of the Board on 8 October 2018 on the arrangements for forthcoming procurements and operation of the Board further to Agenda Item 10 in the Part I public section of the meeting (Minute 70 refers).

RESOLVED:

That the exempt report of the meeting of the General Procurement Board held on 8 October 2018 be noted.

77. PROPERTY INVESTMENT

Exempt report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) on a proposed property investment to replicate the Weltech Business Centre model elsewhere in the Borough with the aim to continue to support the start-up and small business sector.

The Special Council meeting on 23 October 2018 agreed that £8M be added to the current year's capital programme for the purchase of properties for this purpose (Minute 35 refers).

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Cabinet agrees in principle to purchase the property as outlined in section 3 of the exempt report.
- (2) That the Cabinet agrees to give delegated authority to the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services), in consultation with the Leader, Executive Member (Resources) and Executive Member (Environment and Planning Delivery) to agree the final offer for the purchase once all the building survey and due diligence process was completed.

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- (3) That the Cabinet agrees to give delegated authority to the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services), in consultation with the Executive Member (Resources), to agree the cost of conversion as highlighted in paragraph 3.8 of the exempt report.

(Note: The Chairman of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been given notice and agreed 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 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).

The reason for this item is to be able to proceed with a proposed property investment without delay.

Meeting ended 8.00pm
GS