

Cabinet
4 February 2025

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL CABINET held on Tuesday 4 February 2025 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors M.Holloway (Leader of the Council, Executive Member Economic Development and Climate Change)

J.Quinton (Deputy Leader of the Council, Executive Member Leisure and Community)

S.Bonfante (Executive Member Environment)

R.Grewal (Executive Member, Planning)

G.Moore (Executive Member, Housing)

A.Scott (Executive Member, Finance)

K.Thorpe (Executive Member Governance)

ALSO Councillor Platt
PRESENT:

OFFICIALS K.Ng, Chief Executive
PRESENT: R.Baker, Executive Director (Finance & Transformation)
Z.Al-Jawad, Executive Director (Place)
G.Ramtohal, Assistant Director (Legal & Governance)
G.Gnanamoorthy, Assistant Director (Planning)
C.Cade, Governance Services Manager
R.Vega, Senior Communications Officer

354. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting on 21 January 2025 were approved as an accurate record.

355. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

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356. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND PETITIONS

No public questions or petitions were received

357. ACTIONS STATUS REPORT

Cabinet noted the Action Status report.

358. NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED UNDER ITEM 15

No notifications for urgent business were received.

359. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

No declarations of interest were received.

360. ITEMS REQUIRING KEY DECISION

The following items were considered for Key Decision:

360.1. FP2112 AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR URBAN TREE MAINTENANCE

Cabinet received a report from the Executive Director (Resident Services and Climate Change) on the award of the contract for urban tree maintenance.

Decision taken

Cabinet:

1. Noted the intention to award the Urban Tree Maintenance contract for an initial period commencing on 1st April 2025 and ending on 31st December 2027, with an optional 12-month extension, to Gristwood and Toms Limited.
2. Agreed to delegate authority to award the contract to the Executive Director (Resident Services and Climate Change) in consultation with the Executive Member (Environment) following discussions with Hertfordshire County Council on their funding level under the Agency Agreement.

Reason for decision

The Council maintains 30,000 trees in the borough. The maintenance of trees is contracted out on three separate lots. The contract for young trees and woodland trees was contract was awarded by Cabinet in November 2024. A tendering exercise for urban trees was abandoned and re-tendered. The tendering took place and Gritswood and Toms limited were successful in their bid

360.2. FP2110 TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

Cabinet received a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Transformation) on the Transformation Strategy for year 2.

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Decision taken

Cabinet noted the report.

Reason for decision

The report set out the Council's progress against the Transformation Strategy. The report highlighted the key areas of focus for year 3 of the Strategy.

361. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET PANELS

The following items were considered following recommendation from Cabinet Panels:

361.1. FP2092 Local Plan Early Engagement Reporting and LDS

Cabinet received a report of the Assistant Director (Planning) on the Local Plan Early Engagement and Local Development Scheme update.

Decision taken

Cabinet agreed:

1. The key themes to inform the preparedness of the Local Plan.
2. The Local Development Scheme be published on the Council's website, and a copy be sent to the Secretary of State to comply with the Written Ministerial Statement of 12 December 2024.

Reason for decision

The Council engaged in early engagement with residents as part of the Local Plan review process. The engagement took place between the 23rd September and 4th November 2024.

In total, 209 contributions were received on the online platform, and 1,100 visitors. The responses are published on the engagement platform. The report also set out the timetable for the Local Plan.

362. APPOINTMENTS OF CABINET PANELS AND OUTSIDE BODY

Cabinet received a report of the Assistant Director (Legal & Governance) on appointments to Cabinet Panels and outside bodies.

Decision taken

Cabinet agreed:

1. Councillor Julie Cragg to replace Councillor Thusu on the Climate Biodiversity Cabinet Panel; and
2. Councillor Mark Short to replace Councillor Thusu on the Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel.
3. Councillor Kieran Thorpe to replace Councillor Broach on the Hatfield Community Sports Fund Board.

Reason for decision

A report was taken to Full Council on the 3rd February 2025 to update Members on the political proportionality in light of changes in membership of

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the Conservative Group as of the 10th January 2025. As a result, the Conservative Group is required to nominate new members on the Climate Biodiversity Cabinet Panel and Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel. Due to the health condition of Councillor James Broach, it is proposed that a new representative is nominated on the Hatfield Community Sports Fund Board.

363. QUARTER 3 CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2024-25

Cabinet received a report on the Quarter 3 Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2024/25.

Decision taken

Cabinet:

1. Noted:
 - a) The capital forecast outturn positions.
 - b) The forecast position as set out at 31 December 2024 for funding of the capital programme and reserve balances.
2. Approved the virements as set out in section 3.2 of the report.

Reason for decision

The report set out the capital expenditure and associated capital funding as at the end of Quarter 3 (December 2024). The report and appendices detailed the changes to the original capital programme and funding plans, as a result of programme commitments and project delivery.

364. QUARTER 3 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2024-25

Cabinet received a report on Quarter 3 Revenue Budget Monitoring report 2024/25.

Decision taken

Cabinet:

1. Noted the revenue forecast outturn position as at Quarter Three (31 December 2024) and note the position on debts set out in Section 5 of this report.
2. Approved the virements set out in Section 4.1.3 of this report.

Reason for decision

The report presented the forecast revenue outturn position as of 31 December 2024 for the financial year 2024-25 and outlines the main variances from the original budget for both the General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

365. QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT

Cabinet received the Quarter 3 Performance Report.

The Executive Member (Housing) highlighted how hard the Team had worked on housing performance in particularly the Housing Allocations Teams who

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had achieved 100% of their housing needs registered application assessments within 35 days.

Decision taken

Cabinet noted the report and its contents.

Reason for decision

The report summarised the Council's corporate quarterly performance data following the monitoring and review of performance reports by the Chief Executive, Directors, and Assistant Directors. This report covered the period 1 October 2024 to 31 December 2024 (Q3). All corporate projects and key performance indicators were included in Appendix 1.

366. RISK MANAGEMENT QUARTER 3 RISK REGISTERS

Cabinet received the report on the Quarter 3 Risk Register 2024/25.

Decision taken

Cabinet noted the Risk Register at Quarter 3, and the comments and actions in respect of the strategic and serious/severe operational risks.

Reason for decision

The report set out the current identified strategic risks facing the Council, and those operational risks assessed as having a residual risk level of serious or severe (those with a score of 10 or more). The report was an assessment of risk as of 31st December 2024. The Council captures and reports on both the inherent risk (before control measures are in place) and the residual risk (after control measures are put in place).

The report presented the risks under this framework. Narrative is provided by the risk manager and is shown against each risk individually in the report.

367. QUARTER 3 ACHIEVEMENT LIST

Cabinet received the report on the Council achievements list for October to December 2024.

Decision taken

Cabinet noted the report and its contents.

Reason for decision

The report highlighted the Council's achievements from business plan projects, committee decisions, community-based activities, events and campaigns achieved in the quarter.

368. SUCH OTHER BUSINESS AS, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIRMAN, IS OF SUFFICIENT URGENCY TO WARRANT IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION

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There were no items of urgent business.

369. 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 Item 13 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in Section 100(A)(3) and Paragraph 3 (private financial or business information) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).

370. ITEMS OF AN EXEMPT NATURE REQUIRING KEY DECISION

The following item was considered in Part 2:

370.1. FP2112 AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR URBAN TREE MAINTENANCE

Cabinet approved the recommendations as set out in the report.

Meeting ended at 6.51 pm