

CABINET

Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,
on Thursday, 14th July, 2016 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Cheryl Butler in the Chair.

Councillors Jim Aspinall, Tim Brown,
Jackie James, Keir Morrison and
Nicolle Ndiweni.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Don Davis.

Officers Present: Craig Bonar, Carol Cooper-Smith,
Edd deCoverly, Ruth Dennis, David Greenwood,
Theresa Hodgkinson, Alan Maher,
Robert Mitchell, Carys Turner-Jones and Pam
Wharfe.

In Attendance: Councillors David Griffiths and Paul Roberts.

CA.11 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and non-Disclosable Pecuniary / Other Interests

No Declarations of Interest were received

CA.12 Minutes

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2016 be approved as a true record.

CA.13 Approval of Draft Housing Strategy 2016-20

The report to Cabinet dealt with the draft Housing Strategy for 2016-20. The draft strategy set out what had been achieved over the last four years, its aim was to provide a clear focus for the delivery of the housing service until the end of the decade. The report made it clear that the draft strategy would be subject to consultation over an eight week period involving external stakeholders and partners. Following on from the consultation, Cabinet would be asked to approve the final version of the strategy later in the year.

Members discussed and welcomed the draft strategy. In particular, they noted the important part it would play in helping to promote Health and Wellbeing throughout the District and in combatting Domestic Violence. Members also

welcomed the part which the strategy would play in helping to build and strengthen communities and in promoting environmental sustainability.

RESOLVED

- a) That Cabinet approves the draft Housing Strategy and associated action plan to enable commencement of an 8 week consultation period;
- b) That Cabinet notes the content of the strategy and executive summary.

Reasons

To enable the circulation of the draft Housing Strategy 2016-20 to internal and external stakeholders for the 8 week consultation period.

CA.14 Maximising Service Impact - coordinating and prioritising resources around key people and places

Cabinet considered a report on how the Council and its partners can maximise the impact of their efforts to improve the quality of life for the residents of the District. The report proposed to build on existing good practice by setting out a policy for targeting resources around those key people and places, which would benefit from a more joined-up approach between services. The policy also made clear that the Council and its partners would continue to be committed to all communities in the District.

Members discussed the report. They emphasised just how important they thought partnership working was to the Council. They were particularly pleased that local people would be involved in helping to decide how resources should be targeted in order to best meet their needs. There was a consensus that the strategy would help to improve the quality of life in these communities and in particular, would make valuable contributions to improving Housing, Health and Wellbeing and in combatting Domestic Violence.

RESOLVED

- a) That Cabinet asks all service areas to give particular emphasis and consideration to how they better support and target the identified people and places, whilst retaining a commitment to all parts of the District;
- b) That Cabinet asks services to ensure that they co-ordinate their efforts with other service areas and external agencies, as required;
- c) That Cabinet acknowledges the fundamental role that communities themselves will have in reshaping their own futures and to ensure that services work with and support the development of resident-led partnerships in these areas;
- d) That Cabinet recognises that service areas will continue to respond to service specific issues and pursue opportunities from all parts of the District;

- e) That Cabinet recognises that the determination of the areas will require an annual refresh and review of the data to ensure they remain the most appropriate areas of focus;
- f) That Cabinet agrees that the emphasis given to the key people and key places is built into the service planning and service review process for 2017/18.

Reasons

To signal clearly to the Council and its partners where the areas for targeting resources at particular localities should be in order to achieve maximum service impact.

CA.15 Affordable Homes in Jacksdale: Addition to Capital Programme

Members were then asked to agree a transfer of Section 106 money (or money which is provided as a result of planning developments) to help fund 8 rented homes in Jacksdale. The report to Cabinet explained that the homes would be owned and managed by the Waterloo Housing Group and that the Council would have full allocation rights for ten years to the properties from its housing register.

Cabinet supported the proposal. They welcomed the fact that the new homes would be in the village of Jacksdale and the contribution which they would make towards meeting housing needs in 'The Rurals' area.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet agrees to update the Capital Programme to reflect the project and the Council's contribution from s106 contributions (affordable housing) of £48,000.

Reasons

Capital expenditure can only be incurred once the project is approved on the Capital Programme. Once approved, arrangements will be in place to release the grant of £48,000 when required.

CA.16 Council Tax Section 13 (A) Policy

The report to Cabinet proposed a policy on how the Council would use its discretionary powers under Section 13A (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to reduce Council Tax liability where statutory discounts, exemptions and reductions do not apply. Members heard that the Valuation Tribunal had criticised local authorities in the past for not having a policy in place and as a consequence directed them to reverse their decisions. By adopting a policy the Council would avoid this.

It was also explained that it is unlikely the policy would have to be used, as the Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme, adopted in 2013, already allows it to give assistance towards the cost of Council Tax to those with a low income. Members were reminded that the Policy had been considered and supported by the Council's cross-party Welfare Reform Group. Cabinet welcomed this.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet agrees the Policy as set out in the Appendix to the report.

Reasons

In order to ensure that the Council is not vulnerable to adverse rulings from the Council Tax Valuation Tribunal.

CA.17 Draft Joint Procurement Strategy

Cabinet next considered a report which set out the progress to date towards adopting a revised Procurement Strategy. The report explained that although the strategy was for all of the local authorities who form part of the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire shared procurement service, it had been revised to address Ashfield's aspirations, especially around blacklisting and zero hours contracts. In this context, it also now included a section which related procurement activities to the Council's corporate plan priorities.

Members discussed the report. There was a consensus that it was an excellent piece of work, which showed how local authorities can improve the procurement process and have an impact for the better on the procurement 'supply chain', or how we purchase goods and services from suppliers. All of the officers involved in the review were thanked for their contributions. In particular, Cabinet made it clear that it supported the requirement within the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, for businesses to make declarations in regard to professional and business conduct, including blacklisting.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet agrees to approve and adopt the Procurement Strategy for Ashfield District Council.

Reasons

To allow Cabinet to consider the draft Procurement Strategy.

CA.18 Revenue Outturn 2015/16

The report to Cabinet set out the Council's income and expenditure during the last financial year for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. This explained that the performance of both funds had been better than expected. As a consequence, this would help to reduce the volume of savings which the Council would have to make in future years.

Cabinet was told that the revenue outturn figures were still unaudited, or in

other words not yet finalised, at this stage. The final position would be presented to the Audit Committee in September.

Members discussed the report and welcomed the better than expected outturn figures.

RESOLVED:

- a) That Cabinet notes the revenue outturn for the General Fund;
- b) That Cabinet notes the revenue outturn for the Housing Revenue Account.

Reasons

To report to those charged with Governance the financial position for the end of 2015/16 and comply with the Council's Financial Regulations.

CA.19 Capital Outturn 2015/16

Members next considered a report on the outturn of the Council's capital expenditure during 2015/16. This stated that the Council spent nearly £2m less than originally budgeted. The report explained that this was due, in part, to delays in starting or progressing General Fund capital projects, as well as a delay in completing the Darlison Court sheltered housing development, which is paid for through the Housing Revenue Account.

Again, Members were told that these figures were still unaudited and that the final position would be presented to the Audit Committee later in the year. Cabinet discussed the projects which had been supported and their benefits to local communities. In this context, specific mention was made of the Darlison Court and Brook Street facilities, the substantial investments which had taken place in home improvements across the District and the Council's contribution to the Hucknall inner relief road.

RESOLVED:

- a) That Cabinet notes the outturn position of the 2015/16 Capital Programme;
- b) That Cabinet notes the slippage on the 2015/16 Capital Programme.

Reasons

To report to those charged with Governance the financial position for the end of 2015/16 and comply with the Council's Financial Regulations.

CA.20 Council's Treasury Management and Borrowing Activities

The report explained how the Council had performed during 2015/16 against the prudential indicators for borrowing and investing money. The key point to emerge from the report was that the Council had performed well, and secured

relatively good returns on its investments. However, it was difficult to say whether these returns could be maintained in the future, given the market uncertainty following the European Union membership referendum result. Cabinet was assured that every effort would be made to maintain the return on the Council's investments. Members welcomed the assurance.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet notes the performance as outlined in the report.

Reasons

To meet the requirements of the Council's Financial Regulations.

CA.21 Council's Insurance Requirements

The report to Council explained to Members the latest position with regards to the Council's Insurance Requirements. This explained that at the end of March 2016 there were balances of £50k on the Liability Fund and £220k on the Property Fund.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet notes the contents of the annual report on insurance.

Reasons

To meet the requirements of the Council's Financial Regulations (C.37)

CA.22 Leisure Review - Transformation Programme

Members were reminded that a review had been carried out of the Council's leisure facilities. The report to Cabinet set out the findings from this review. These included a range of specific recommendations, including a proposal to update the Feasibility Studies for the leisure facility in Kirkby.

Cabinet was told that there would be consultation on these findings during the summer. A number of public drop-in sessions would be organised to hear what local people think of the findings. There would also be an online survey, both to find out the views of local people, as well as the registered users of the sites, local groups and partners. The review's findings would also be considered by Scrutiny Panel 'A' in July.

The findings from the consultation exercise and the scrutiny meeting, along with specific recommendations, would then be reported back to Cabinet in the autumn.

In addition, the report provided the latest update on the 'Targeted Activities' programme. Specific mention was made in this context of the Ashfield Games which had gone well, as had the School Workplace Health Programme. Members welcomed this and thanked the officers for their work. They also heard that the Council had been asked by Sport England to help develop its strategy to encourage sports participation by 13 – 15 year olds. Again,

Members welcomed this and thought that it illustrated the Council's excellent record on promoting sports participation.

RESOLVED

- a) That Cabinet endorses the Leisure Review findings contained within the body of the report;
- b) That Cabinet agrees that extensive consultation on the findings be carried out with residents, leisure users and partners;
- c) That Cabinet agrees that an update of the Feasibility Studies for a leisure facility in Kirkby be carried out;
- d) That Cabinet endorses the update of the Targeted Activities Programme, the Sport England Pilot on Commissioning and other strategic work.

Reasons

To update Cabinet on Key Projects within the Council's Corporate Plan (2016-19) including the Leisure Review and the feasibility for a replacement for the Festival Hall Leisure Centre.

CA.23 Exclusion of Public and Press

That in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting during the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A, of the Act and in respect of which the Proper Officer considers that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

CA.24 Council Owned Sites within the emerging Local Plan

The report to Cabinet sought approval for the inclusion of Council owned sites for inclusion within the emerging Local Plan for residential development.

RESOLVED

- a) That Cabinet approves the inclusion of Council owned sites as detailed in the report within the emerging local plan for residential development;
- b) That Cabinet approves the use of Council owned sites as detailed in the report, if required, to help enable the development of third party land.

Reasons

To confirm Council support for the deliverability and development of its own priority sites within the draft Local Plan.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm

Chair.