

CABINET

Meeting held on Tuesday, 21st July, 2020 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor Jason Zadrozny in the Chair;

Councillors Samantha Deakin, Tom Hollis,
Rachel Madden, Matthew Relf, Helen-Ann Smith,
Daniel Williamson and John Wilmott.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Kier Barsby and David Martin.

Officers Present: Craig Bonar, Lynn Cain, Carol Cooper-Smith,
Ruth Dennis, Joanne Froggatt,
Theresa Hodgkinson, Peter Hudson, Mike Joy
and Paul Parkinson.

CA.8 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and Non Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests

No declaration of interests were made.

CA.9 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 30 June 2020 be received and approved as a correct record.

CA.10 Corporate Plan and Year End Decision

Cabinet received the year end out-turn position and considered the proposed refresh of the Council's Corporate Plan.

Members considered the alternative option of declining to accept the changes to the Corporate Plan but this was not recommended as the refreshed Plan aligned with the Council's future ambitions and Corporate Priorities for the four year period of the plan (2019-2023).

RESOLVED that

- a) the successful delivery of the Corporate Plan to date and the levels of performance achieved against the Corporate Scorecard as at year-end 2019/20, be noted;
- b) the Corporate Plan refresh, as appended to the report, be approved;

- c) delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to review and revise the Corporate Scorecard, aligned to the Corporate Plan.

Reasons:

1. The Council's ambitions for the period 2019 – 2023 are clearly identified in a set of revised and updated Corporate Priorities which are presented in the Corporate Plan. These were developed by Cabinet last year and have since been reviewed and updated, with particular consideration of the impact of the pandemic and the Council's intended recovery activity.
2. The Council's priorities for the future and the key projects and initiatives are intended to be delivered and then translated and cascaded, through the Performance and Strategic Planning Framework, into specific Service Plans to facilitate focussed delivery.
3. The Corporate Plan sits above a wider strategic context which includes the Corporate Project Management Framework, Corporate Performance Indicators and a range of strategic documents relating to the organisation and its services.

CA.11 LGA Peer Challenge 2020

Cabinet Members considered the progress made in respect of the LGA Peer Challenge key recommendations following their visit in January 2020.

As the report item was for information only, there were not alternative options for Members to consider.

RESOLVED that

- a) the actions arising and progress made in respect of the LGA Peer Challenge key recommendations to date, be received and endorsed;
- b) approval be given for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to monitor the implementation of the key recommendations and supporting action plan.

Reason:

In April 2020 the Council endorsed the findings of the Local Government Association Peer Challenge. The Peer Challenge Review undertaken by the Local Government Association in January 2020 was designed to support Councils and is part of a sector led improvement programme. There was an expectation from the LGA and Government that the findings would be used to support improvements and Cabinet sanctioned all actions arising from the LGA report.

CA.12 Review of Street Naming and Numbering Policy

Cabinet were requested to review and approve the proposed updates to the Council's Street Naming and Numbering Policy.

Members considered the alternative option of adopting an alternative street naming and numbering policy but it was acknowledged that this would not align with national guidance.

RESOLVED

that the revised Street Naming and Numbering Policy, as appended to the report, be approved.

Reason:

The Street Naming and Numbering Policy was approved by Cabinet in 2017 and was due to be reviewed, as required, following a three year period. The updated policy facilitates a consistent and logical approach to the naming and numbering of addresses across the District.

CA.13 Policy for Discharging the Homelessness Duty into the Private Rented Sector

Cabinet were asked to approve a Policy to enable the Housing Options Team to discharge duties owed under the homelessness legislation into the Private Rented Sector (PRS).

Members considered the alternative option of declining to approve the Policy however, it was accepted that it would enable the Housing Options Team to discharge the homelessness duty into the PRS whilst increasing the tools available to officers to resolve cases of homelessness.

RESOLVED

that the Policy on Discharging the Homelessness Duty into the Private Rented Sector (PRS), as presented, be approved.

Reasons:

Homelessness legislation and regulation puts the onus on local Councils to assist residents who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to find a solution to their needs. It is important that a range of options are considered beyond its own stock of housing. This includes accommodation in the PRS. The Council needs to have published a policy on discharging into the PRS in order to utilise this option.

CA.14 Affordable Housing Development - Sutton in Ashfield

Cabinet were advised about an opportunity to develop a small number of Council owned sites within Sutton in Ashfield, for the purpose of affordable housing, and approval was sought for the development proposals.

Members considered the alternative options of keeping the sites as they are or selling them. These options were not recommended as both sites were under-utilised and could be re-purposed for much needed affordable housing with the viability of the sites for sale to outside parties remaining low given the likely capital receipt.

RESOLVED

that the following be approved subject to the necessary planning consent and confirmation of Homes England funding:

- a) to approve the demolition of two community centres, namely The Beeches and The Poplars, for the purpose of redeveloping the land for much needed adapted housing let on an affordable rent basis;
- b) to declare that the Stoney Street car park is no longer required for the purposes of car parking and to approve its future use as family housing let on an affordable rent basis;
- c) to grant delegated authority to the Director of Housing and Assets, in conjunction with the Director of Legal and Governance and the Corporate Finance Manager (and Section 151 Officer), to agree the appropriation of the Stoney Street site from the General fund to the Housing Revenue Account based upon best consideration of the land value, lost car park revenue and the parameters of the social housing viability model;
- d) to recommend that Council approves the use of Housing Revenue Account reserves to fund the site clearances and the development of circa 9 new Council Homes, and if approved, the project be added to the Capital Programme;
- e) to grant delegated authority to the Director of Housing and Assets, in conjunction with the Director of Legal and Governance and the Corporate Finance Manager (and Section 151 Officer), to negotiate and formalise fees, scheme costs, specification, delivery and any other aspects of the proposed development;
- f) to grant delegated authority to the Director of Housing and Assets, in conjunction with the Director of Legal and Governance and the Corporate Finance Manager (and Section 151 Officer), to procure and appoint a contractor to develop the three sites as a single package;
- g) to grant delegated authority to the Director of Housing and Assets to contract, on behalf of the Council with Homes England, for the purposes of receiving subsidy to ensure that developments are viable and fall within the Council's 30 year business plan model.

Reasons:

To enable a project that will increase Ashfield District Council's housing stock in order to meet significant levels of demand for affordable rented properties within the District, and to provide much needed adapted homes for the District's elderly and vulnerable residents.

CA.15 Corporate Risk - Year End 2019/20 Position

Cabinet was requested to review the Corporate Risk Register, analyse the movement in risk and mitigating actions in respect of those risks and approve the updated Corporate Risk Strategy.

Members considered the alternative option of declining to approve the Corporate Risk Strategy but this was not recommended following suggestions made by Internal Audit.

RESOLVED that

- a) the current significant items on the Register and the actions being taken to mitigate those risks, be received and noted with the establishment of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Panel being added to the list of mitigating actions for the Council's response to the risk associated with the COVID-19 pandemic;
- b) the updated Corporate Risk Strategy, as presented, be approved.

Reasons:

1. To prioritise and manage the mitigation of Risk in order that the Council can achieve its objectives.
2. Updates to the Corporate Risk Strategy in 2018 were considered appropriate in order to facilitate greater understanding of risk maturity and improved organisational performance against the Alarm national performance model for risk management in public services, as suggested by Internal Audit. This is highlighted as an improvement action in the Annual Governance Statement and the Council are continuing to develop its approaches to understanding risk appetite.
3. The Corporate Risk Strategy has recently been reviewed following the outcome of audit recommendations.

CA.16 Draft Out-turn 2019/20 Accounts

Cabinet considered details of income and expenditure incurred in 2019/20 in respect of the General Fund, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the Capital Programme and how this compared to the latest approved budgets including explanations for significant variances.

Due to the fact that the financial outturn position was as reported within the 2019/20 draft Statement of Accounts, there were no alternative options for Members to consider.

In relation to the proposed carry-forward of unutilised 2019/20 earmarked reserves, not approving the funding carry-forwards would prevent some projects from progressing or might require for them to be funded from the General Fund balance which was not recommended.

RESOLVED that

- a) the 2019/20 draft Revenue Outturn for the General Fund, the HRA Outturn and the Capital Programme Outturn, be noted;
- b) approval be given to the proposed in-year movements to and from reserves (Section 1.11);

- c) approval be also given for the 2020/21 revenue budgets being adjusted to reflect carry-forward of 2019/20 'approved but not utilised' project funding from earmarked reserves (Section 4);
- d) Council be recommended to approve the carry-forward of the £10.4m underspend on the Capital Programme to 2020/21 due to slippage (delays to schemes) included within the Programme (Section 3).

Reason:

To report to those charged with governance, the Council's financial Outturn for 2019/20 and to comply with the Council's Financial Regulations.

CA.17 Council's Insurance Arrangements 2019/20

Members were presented with the latest position concerning insurance funds and premiums paid during 2019/20.

As this report item was for information only, there were no alternative options for Members to consider.

RESOLVED

that the contents of the 2019/20 Annual Insurance Report, as presented, be received and noted.

Reason:

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

CA.18 Contract for Procurement Services

Cabinet were asked to consider and approve the Contract for Procurement Services supplied by Nottingham City Council.

Members considered the alternative option of insourcing the function or procuring a different partner for procurement services. However neither option was recommended as the cost of insourcing the function would outweigh the cost of the good levels of service and significant, achieved benefits currently being provided by Nottinghamshire City Council.

RESOLVED that

- a) approval be given to the costs and scope of service for the Contract for Procurement Services to be supplied by Nottingham City Council;
- b) delegated authority be granted to the Director of Resources and Business Transformation, to negotiate and agree a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with representatives of Nottingham City Council for the provision of procurement services to Ashfield in line with the details contained in the report;
- c) delegated authority be also granted to the Director of Legal and Governance to finalise the legal elements of the contract.

Reason:

Nottingham City Council (NCC) currently provide procurement services to Ashfield District Council; a decision taken by Cabinet on 15 March 2018. The scope of the service requiring approval is a formalisation of that service in contract, currently delivered under a Memorandum of Understanding. Further, changes to the cost of the service have increased by £13,250 per annum and the gain share element previously agreed has been eliminated.

CA.19 Community Engagement Strategy

Cabinet considered the progress made on the draft Community Engagement Strategy and agreed timescales for completion.

Members considered the alternative option of engaging an external consultant to complete the strategy but this was not taken forward due to the potential financial costs to the Council.

RESOLVED that

- a) the draft Community Engagement Strategy, as appended to the report, be approved;
- b) further consultation (internal and external) be undertaken to finalise the Strategy with delegated authority being granted to the Director of Place and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Health and Leisure and the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing, to complete the document as required;
- c) a toolkit for staff be developed, alongside a training module to ensure competency when implementing the Strategy across the Council.

Reasons:

1. The Community Engagement Strategy is an outstanding action on the audit list and a priority within the Health and Happiness section of the Corporate Plan. It also has a fundamental role to play in ensuring we can demonstrate our values.
2. The recommendations will enable the Council to produce and implement an effective community engagement strategy in a timely fashion, ensuring that staff and key stakeholders are consulted and involved in its development, and that appropriate training is given so staff are able to maximise community engagement within their work at an appropriate level to the task at hand.

CA.20 Urgent Item of Business: Towns Fund Accelerated Projects

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5 (Urgent Items), the Chairman decided to consider the report as an urgent items of business.

Members were advised about a funding opportunity which had become available for Kirkby and Sutton and delegated authority was sought to develop and deliver a number of projects by 31 March 2021.

Members considered the alternative option of declining to accept the funding but acknowledged that this was an opportunity to immediately invest in Kirkby and Sutton to support economic recovery from the impacts of Covid-19.

RESOLVED that

- a) the £750k funding for both Kirkby and Sutton from the Government's Towns Fund, to deliver a number of capital projects within this financial year, be accepted;
- b) delegated authority be granted to the Director of Place and Communities, in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Place, Planning and Regeneration, to:
 - select the projects for each town;
 - commission specialist advisors for the development and delivery of the projects;
 - develop and deliver the projects.

Reason:

To facilitate investment into Kirkby and Sutton and to enable projects to be developed and delivered by the end of March 2021.

The meeting closed at 11.50 am

Chairman.