

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Foundation House,
Icknield Way, Letchworth Garden City
on Tuesday, 26th September, 2017 at 7.30 pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2 MINUTES - 25 JULY 2017

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 25 July 2017 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

3 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no notification of other business.

4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Chairman announced that Members of the public and the press may use their devices to film/photograph, or do a sound recording of the meeting, but she asked them to not use flash and to disable any beeps or other sound notifications that emitted from their devices. In addition, the Chairman had arranged for the sound at this particular meeting to be recorded;
- (2) The Chairman reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question;
- (3) The Chairman asked that, for the benefit of any members of the public present at the meeting, Officers announce their name and their designation to the meeting when invited to speak.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Cabinet was addressed by Councillors Martin Stears-Handscomb and Simon Harwood in respect of Play Areas in Hitchin.

6 ITEM REFERRED FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 18 JULY 2017 - REPORT OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP ON THE COUNCIL'S MANAGEMENT OF LARGER PROJECTS

RESOLVED: That, in respect of the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group on the Council's Management of Larger Projects:

- (1) Recommendations 1, 2, 6, 7 and 10, and Recommendation 4, as amended by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, be supported;
- (2) Recommendation 3, as amended by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, be further amended to read:

"The Council's financial information should be comprehensive and presented in an appropriate form that may be easily understood";

Tuesday, 26th September, 2017

- (3) Recommendation 5 be amended with the removal of the second sentence, to now read:
- “Projects are constrained by the resources that the Council has available. The Council should ensure that large projects are properly resourced. If adequate resources are not available, the project should not begin until they are.”
- (4) Recommendation 8 be re-drafted to reflect the Council’s Constitutional position on Project Boards as follows:
- “The Chief Executive appoints the Lead officer for the Project Board, who will chair and choose the membership in consultation with the Leader of the Council. Membership will take into account the number of Members/Officers, the risk and/or profile of the project and the skills and experience that will benefit the project (this list is non exhaustive). It may include external support. Membership usually includes appropriate Cabinet members”; and
- (5) Recommendation 9, as amended by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, be further amended to read:
- “The Council should ensure there is meaningful consultation with the public prior to it finalising its plans; and make sure it continues to inform the public throughout the life of the project.”

REASON FOR DECISION: To respond to the Recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and Overview & scrutiny Committee regarding the report on the Management of the Council’s Larger Projects.

7 STRATEGIC PLANNING MATTERS

RESOLVED: That the report on Strategic Planning Matters be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To keep the Cabinet informed of recent developments on strategic planning matters and progress on the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

8 FIRST QUARTER REVENUE MONITORING 2017/18

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That the changes to the 2017/18 General Fund Budget, as identified in Table 2 and Paragraph 8.2 of the report, and involving an increase in net expenditure of £208,000, be approved; and
- (3) That the changes to the 2018/19 General Fund Budget, as identified in Table 2 and Paragraph 8.2 of the report, and involving an increase in net expenditure of £158,000, be noted, and that these be incorporated into the draft Revenue Budget for 2018/19.

REASON FOR DECISION: To monitor and request appropriate action of Directorates who do not meet the budget targets set as part of the Corporate Business Planning process; and to ensure that changes to the Council’s balances are monitored and approved.

9 TREASURY MANAGEMENT FIRST QUARTER 2017/18

RESOLVED: That the position of Treasury Management activity as at the end of June 2017, as set out in the report, be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure the Council's continued compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the Local Government Act 2003, and to ensure the Council manages its exposure to interest and capital risk.

10 FIRST QUARTER CAPITAL MONITORING 2017/18

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the forecast expenditure of £15.139million in 2017/18 on the Capital programme, as set out in Paragraph 8.2 of the report, be noted, and the changes detailed in Table 3 of the report, which resulted in a net decrease of the working estimate of £0.217million, be approved;
- (2) That the changes to the Capital Programme for 2018/19 and onwards as a result of the revised timetable of schemes detailed in Table 2 of the report, increasing the estimated spend in 2018/19 by £5.234million (re-profiled from 2017/18), be noted, and that these be incorporated into the draft Capital Programme for 2018/19 onwards; and
- (3) That the position of the availability of capital resources, as detailed in Table 4 of the report, and the requirement to keep the Capital Programme under review for affordability, be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To approve revisions to the Capital Programme, and to ensure that the Capital Programme is fully funded.

11 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2018/2019

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the current position relating to the current and previous financial years on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) be noted;
- (2) That there be no substantive changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2018/19;
- (3) That Cabinet is minded to recommend to the Council at its Meeting on 18 January 2018 that changes be made to the CTRS to implement the following to ensure the consistency of the Scheme with other welfare benefit changes:
 - That capital and income payments of Bereavement Support Payments should be disregarded for the purposes of CTRS; and
 - That any payments made by the London Emergencies Trust (LET) or the We Love Manchester Emergency Fund (WLMEF) should be disregarded for the purposes of CTRS,

and that the Head of Revenues, Benefits & IT should carry out the necessary public consultation;

- (4) That the Executive Member of Finance and IT be consulted on the content of the consultation questionnaire;
- (5) That it be noted that the level of Scheme funding to be allocated to Parish, Town and Community Councils will be the same as 2017/18; and
- (6) That Cabinet considers at its meeting on 19 December 2017 whether there is scope to amend the value of awards, taking into consideration any knowledge at the time on likely Council Tax increases for 2018/2019.

Tuesday, 26th September, 2017

REASON FOR DECISION: To decide on whether or not there will be changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2018/2019, thereby enabling the required public consultation to be carried out.

12 PROPOSALS REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION ACT 2017

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the proposed measures outlined in Section 8.3 of the report, so as to enable the Council to prepare for the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and discharge its new duties as regards the prevention and relief of homelessness, be approved;
- (2) That the Head of Housing and Public Protection, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health, be delegated the power to deploy any unallocated Flexible Homelessness Support Grant in order to best meet increased demand for homelessness services;
- (3) That the Head of Housing and Public Protection, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health, be delegated the power to deploy new burdens funding when it becomes available; and
- (4) That the housing services base budget for 2017/18 and beyond be amended, so that the current annual allocation of £6,000 for project work be reallocated to support homelessness prevention activity,

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Council, acting in its capacity as the Local Housing Authority (LHA), to deploy its resources to best effect in order to meet the legal obligations contained within the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

13 BUSINESS RATES PILOT AND BUSINESS RATES POOLING

RESOLVED: That the Head of Finance, Performance and Asset Management, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and IT, be delegated authority to decide whether NHDC should be part of the application for a Business Rates pilot and/or a Business Rates pool.

REASON FOR DECISION: To secure potential financial benefits for NHDC and Hertfordshire as a whole, and to ensure that bids are made within the stipulated timescales.