

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Foundation House,
Icknield Way, Letchworth Garden City
on Tuesday, 23rd January, 2018 at 7.30 pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Jane Gray.

2 MINUTES - 19 DECEMBER 2017

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 19 December 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;
- (4) The Chairman advised of changes to the order of business on the agenda, including that, following exclusion of the press and public, Item 15 (the Part 2 item on the North Hertfordshire Museum and Hitchin Town Hall: Acquisition of 14/15 Brand Street) will be considered in advance of Item 13 (the Part 1 item on the same matter). The press and public will be invited back into the room for the debate on the Part 1 item; and
- (5) At the Chairman's invitation, the Chief Executive read out the following statement in respect of the Forward Plan and the items on North Hertfordshire Museum and Hitchin Town Hall: Acquisition of 14/15 Brand Street:

"A member of the public has noticed that the Council's Forward Plan, published on 22 December 2017, contained an error, in that the date of decision for this item was shown as "23 January 2017" and not "23 January 2018".

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was consulted under Paragraphs 15.16 and 15.17 of the Council's Constitution regarding this matter. She accepted that there had been a typographical error, and had no objection to the matter being considered at the Cabinet meeting this evening. The typographical error was corrected in the version of the Forward Plan published on 19 January 2018.

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I am content that the Council has therefore complied with its Constitutional requirements despite the typographical error on the original Forward Plan.

I have been further advised that 28 days clear notice was not provided as notification of consideration of the Part 2 report on Hitchin Town Hall and neither was a further 5 days clear notice published prior to this meeting for consideration of this report, as per Regulation 5 of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) Regulations 2012.

As these requirements have not been met, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been consulted and, in the circumstances, has agreed to the Part 2 report being considered this evening on the basis that the meeting is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred. The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is satisfied that compliance with this Regulation is impracticable and that Paragraph 15.16 of the Constitution cannot be followed. The Chairman is authorised to provide this agreement under Regulation 5(6) of the Regulations and Paragraph 15.17 of the Council's Constitution."

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The meeting was addressed by Mr Colin Dunham (Hitchin resident) in respect of the North Hertfordshire Museum and Hitchin Town Hall – 14/15 Brand Street.

The Chairman thanked Mr Dunham for his questions and advised that he would receive a written response to them in due course.

6 ITEM REFERRED FROM FINANCE, AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE: 22 JANUARY 2018 - DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2018/2019

RESOLVED: That the recommendation of the of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee be supported and taken into consideration during the Cabinet's deliberations on the Draft Revenue Budget 2018/2019 (See Minute 83 below).

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 DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2018/2019

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- (1) That the expected Central Government funding levels be noted;
- (2) That the estimated position on the Collection Fund and how this will be funded be noted;
- (3) That a 2.99% increase in Council Tax for 2018/19 be approved;
- (4) That the position relating to the General Fund reserve be noted and, that due to the risks identified, a minimum balance of £2.15 million is recommended;
- (5) That the reduction in the 2017/18 working budget of £682,000 be approved, and the expected impact in 2018/19 of a £82,000 reduction in budget be noted;

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- (6) That the requests for the carry-forward of budgets that total £198,000 from 2017/18 to 2018/19 be noted, subject to further review of the carry forward relating to Area Committee Budgets at the end of the 2017/18 Financial Year;
- (7) That the inclusion of the efficiencies and investment proposals, as set out at Appendix 2 to the report, in the General Fund budget estimates for 2018/19 be approved, subject to the following amendments:
 - Efficiency E9 (Cessation of Area Committee Grants) – amendment to show a 30% reduction in grants available to Area Committee;
 - Efficiency E16 (Apprenticeship Scheme) – to be removed from the list of efficiency savings;
 - Efficiency E20 (Waste Contract Lot 2 Award) – removal from the list for 2018/19 as it was expected that the savings attributable to this item would be zero;
- (8) That the amendments to previously agreed efficiencies, as detailed in Paragraph 8.5.3 and Table 8 of the report, be approved;
- (9) That the proposal that any revenue savings arising from the capitalisation of waste vehicle costs are transferred to a specific reserve be noted;
- (10) That the savings targets for future years be noted; and
- (11) That the estimated 2018/19 net expenditure of £14.6Million, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, as amended, be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure that all relevant factors are taken into consideration when arriving at the proposed Council Tax precept for 2018/19; and to ensure that the Cabinet recommends a balanced budget to Council on 8 February 2018.

9 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018/2019 ONWARDS

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- (1) That the inclusion in the proposed Capital Programme of all the new Capital Investment proposals listed in Appendix C to the report, totalling £3.274Million overall (£1.931Million profiled in 2018/19) be approved; and
- (2) That the provisional Capital Programme for 2018/19 to 2021/22 of £17.075Million, as detailed in Appendices A and B to the report, be adopted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure that the Capital Programme meets the Council's objectives and that officers can plan the implementation of the approved schemes.

10 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR 2018/2019

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That the 2018/19 Treasury Strategy Statement, as attached at Appendix C to the report, be adopted.

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 that the Council manages its exposure to interest and capital risk.

11 PIRTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - EXAMINER'S REPORT

RESOLVED:

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- (1) That the Examiner's report for the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (2) That following the inclusion of the Examiner's proposed modifications to the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan, as set out in Appendix B to the report, it is approved to proceed to a referendum;
- (3) That the Counting Officer be instructed to conduct a referendum on the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan; and
- (4) That the decision to "make" the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan be delegated to the Head of Development and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Enterprise.

REASON FOR DECISION: To progress the Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan, enable a referendum to take place and following a vote of more than 50% in favour of the Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan to make the Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan.

12 SALE OF LAND AT LUMEN ROAD, ROYSTON

RESOLVED: That the sale of land at Lumen Road, Royston for £25,000 to Aldwyck Housing Group be agreed.

REASON FOR DECISION: To gain a capital receipt from the sale of the site, in order to provide additional housing in the District and avoid the maintenance costs involved in owning a small parcel of land.

13 NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE MUSEUM AND HITCHIN TOWN HALL - ACQUISITION OF 14/15 BRAND STREET

[Prior to the consideration of this item and Minute 90 below, Councillors Bernard Lovewell, Ray Shakespeare-Smith and Michael Weeks declared that they would be withdrawing from the meeting, as they were Members of the Cabinet Sub-Committee (Council Charities), which was responsible for making decisions on the North Hertfordshire Museum and Community Facility on behalf of the Hitchin Town Hall: Gymnasium and Workmans Hall Trust. Accordingly, they withdrew from the meeting.]

[Note: this item was considered after Minute 90.]

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the current position in relation to the negotiations regarding the acquisition of 14/15 Brand Street be noted;
- (2) That officers be required to progress the alternative options, as identified in Paragraph 4.1 of the report, to enable the North Hertfordshire Museum to open fully (whilst keeping open the possibility of a negotiated settlement); and
- (3) That it be noted that some elements of any settlement agreement may be required from the Cabinet Sub-Committee (Council Charities).

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Council to complete the development of the North Hertfordshire Museum/Hitchin Town Hall project as intended by Council and operate the facility for the benefit of the local community; and to protect the Council's interests and obtain best return from the Council's existing investment and to secure projected income from the facility to offset some of the operational and fixed costs.

14 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).

15 NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE MUSEUM AND HITCHIN TOWN HALL - ACQUISITION OF 14/15 BRAND STREET

[Note: this item was considered before Minute 88.]

RESOLVED: That the current position in relation to the negotiations for the acquisition of 14/15 Brand Street be noted, and the fundamental concerns about the settlement agreement as drafted by HTHL/HTHFL be agreed.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Council to complete the development of the North Hertfordshire Museum/Hitchin Town Hall project as intended by Council and operate the facility for the benefit of the local community; and to protect the Council's interests and obtain best return from the Council's existing investment and to secure projected income from the facility to offset some of the operational and fixed costs.