

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES,
GERNON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY
ON MONDAY, 10TH SEPTEMBER, 2018 AT 3.00 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors Lynda Needham (Chairman), Julian Cunningham (Vice-Chairman), David Barnard, Tony Hunter, David Levett, Bernard Lovewell and Michael Weeks*

In Attendance: *Jeanette Thompson (Service Director - Legal and Community), Ian Couper (Service Director - Resources) and Hilary Dineen (Acting Committee and Member Services Manager)*

28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

29 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business notified.

30 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Chairman advised that this extra meeting was necessary due to the deadline of 25 September 2018 for submission of bids to the Government and it was necessary for all authorities in Hertfordshire to make a decision regarding this subject prior to that date.
- (2) The Chairman informed Members that the timing of the meeting was necessary as an evening meeting could not be scheduled and thanked Members for attending;
- (3) 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.
- (4) The Chairman advised that, in accordance with Council policy, this meeting was being audio recorded;
- (5) 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. Members wishing to declare a 'Councillor Speaking Right' must declare it at the same time as the interest.
- (6) 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.

31 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no presentations from members of the public.

32 BUSINESS RATES PILOT AND POOLING

The Executive Member for Finance and IT presented a report of the Service Director – Resources entitled Business Rates Pilot and Pooling.

The Executive Member for Finance and IT advised that The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had issued an invitation for Authorities to bid to become 75% Business Rates retention pilots. The bid needed to come from all the Authorities within Hertfordshire. The bid needed to be submitted by 25th September 2018, and was expected to be subject to a selection process.

The Council had for a number of years taken part in a Business Rate Pool and the option was also still available to apply for this for the year 2019/2020.

If NHDC was part of an approved pool it stood to gain approximately £400,000 of Business Rate retention.

It was not possible to be part of a pool and a pilot, but it was possible to apply for both.

The Service Director Resources informed Members that he had attended a meeting with other authorities. The latest forecast regarding the numbers of gains was that the gain for Hertfordshire in respect of Pooling was approximately £2.9 million and additional gain from the Pilot was approximately £6.1 million.

The authorities agreed on the split for any gains, which would be the same as for last years bid in that firstly all authorities would be brought to their baseline level, then to allocate the sums that they would have received had they been part of a Business Rates Pool. Of the remaining balance, one third would be allocated to a County wide investment fund the remainder would be allocated to the authorities on an agreed formula.

Although there was a risk of downturn, this was judged to be extremely low and any loss amount would be relatively small and therefore was a risk worth taking.

Members noted that the first part of Paragraph 9.3 of the report should read:

“To be accepted as a pilot for 2019/20”

The Executive Member for Finance and IT answered a number of questions from Members.

It was proposed and seconded that Cabinet delegates to the Service Director- Resources, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, authority to decide whether NHDC should be part of the application for a Business Rates pilot and / or a Business Rates pool and it was

RESOLVED: That Cabinet delegates to the Service Director- Resources, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, 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: It is recommended that the offers available are reviewed due to the potential financial benefits for NHDC and Hertfordshire as a whole. The delegation is recommended as a result of the timing of when bids need to be submitted.

The meeting closed at 3.20 pm

Chairman