

# NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## CABINET

### MEETING HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING ON TUESDAY, 15TH SEPTEMBER, 2020 AT 7.30 PM

## MINUTES

**Present:** *Councillors: Martin Stears-Handscomb (Chair), Paul Clark (Vice-Chair), Ian Albert, Judi Billing, Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg, Gary Grindal, Keith Hoskins and Steve Jarvis.*

*Deputy Executive Members: Councillors: Ruth Brown, Ian Mantle, Helen Oliver and Carol Stanier*

**In Attendance:** *Ian Fullstone (Service Director - Regulatory), Ian Couper (Service Director - Resources), Jeanette Thompson (Service Director - Legal and Community), Howard Crompton (Service Director - Transformation), Jo Dufficy (Service Director - Customers), Nigel Smith (Strategic Planning Manager) and Hilary Dineen (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager)*

## 39 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

*Audio recording – 5 seconds*

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that it was being conducted with Members and Officers at various locations, communicating via audio/video and online. There was also the opportunity for the public and press to listen and view proceedings.

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager undertook a roll call of Members and Officers to ensure that they could hear and be heard and gave the following advice.

The meeting was being streamed live on the Council's You Tube channel and also recorded via Zoom. If live streaming failed the meeting would adjourn. If the live stream could not be restored within a reasonable period then the remaining business would be considered at a later date.

Please stay in view of the camera at all times.

If for any reason the meeting was not quorate an Officer would notify attendees by interjecting the meeting. The meeting would adjourn immediately. Once the meeting was quorate the meeting would resume. If connection could not be restored within a reasonable period, then the remaining business would be considered at a later date.

If a remote Member lost connection the Chair may adjourn the meeting for a short period to enable connection to be re-established. If the Chair did not adjourn the meeting the Member would be deemed to have left the meeting at the point of failure and be deemed to have returned at the point of re-establishment. Only Members present for the entirety of debate and consideration of an item are entitled to vote.

Mobile phones and other noise emitting devices should be muted and the mute button on tablets and computers should be muted when not speaking.

When requested to vote, voting would be via the Green tick for “Yes”, Red Cross for “No” and Blue Raise Hand for “abstain” functions.

The Chair, Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb, started the meeting proper.

**40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

*Audio recording – 5 minutes 2 seconds*

There were no apologies for absence.

**41 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

*Audio recording – 5 minutes 12 seconds*

There was no other business notified.

**42 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Audio recording – 5 minutes 16 seconds*

- (1) The Chair welcomed everyone to this meeting of Cabinet;
- (2) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council policy, this meeting was being audio recorded as well as filmed. The audio recordings would be available to view on Mod.gov and the film recording via the NHDC YouTube channel;
- (3) Members were reminded that this Council had declared a Climate Emergency. This was a serious decision and meant that, as this was an emergency, all of us, officers and Members had that in mind as we carried out our various roles and tasks for the benefit of our District;
- (4) Members were reminded to make declarations of interest before an item, the detailed reminder about this and speaking rights was set out under Chair's Announcements on the agenda;
- (5) The Chair advised that he would take the agenda in the order published up to and including item 13. The meeting would then consider the Part 2 Items – Item 16 Careline Future Provision and Item 17 Land Adjacent to 1 North End Kelshall and then return to Part 1 to take Part 1 decisions on Item 14 at the end of the meeting.

**43 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*Audio recording – 6 minutes 26 seconds*

There were no presentations by members of the public.

44 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

*Audio recording – 6 minutes 30 seconds*

5a Item Referred from Finance, Audit and Risk Committee: 7 September 2020 - Risk Management Update

Councillor Kate Aspinwall, Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee presented the referral from the meeting of that committee held on 7 September 2020 regarding Risk Management Update the recommendations to Cabinet being;

- (1) That the Corporate Risk for the impact of Anti-Social Behaviour on Council Facilities be retained at a risk score of 7 instead of reduced to 5;
- (2) That the Novel Coronavirus (covid19) Corporate risk be retained at a risk score of 9 instead of reduced to 8;
- (3) That the New Corporate Risk, Covid19 – Leisure Management Contract, be proposed as a risk score of 8.
- (4) That the Route Optimisation of Collection Rounds Risk be archived.

The Executive Member for Finance and IT advised:

- That he would support the recommendations;
- That risks would be reviewed by the Risk Management Group;
- That it was important not to keep risks at a high level unnecessarily.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed, Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb seconded and it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Corporate Risk for the impact of Anti-Social Behaviour on Council Facilities be retained at a risk score of 7 instead of reduced to 5;
- (2) That the Novel Coronavirus (covid19) Corporate risk be retained at a risk score of 9 instead of reduced to 8;
- (3) That the New Corporate Risk, Covid19 – Leisure Management Contract, be proposed as a risk score of 8;
- (4) That the Route Optimisation of Collection Rounds Risk be archived.

**REASONS FOR DECISIONS:**

- (1) The responsibility for ensuring the management of risks is that of Cabinet;
- (2) This Committee has the responsibility to monitor the effective development and operation of Risk Management.

5b Item Referred from Finance, Audit and Risk Committee: 7 September 2020 - First Quarter Revenue Monitoring

**RESOLVED:** That the referral from Finance, Audit and Risk Committee regarding First Quarter Revenue Monitoring be taken with Item 9.

5c Item Referred from Finance, Audit and Risk Committee: 7 September 2020 - First Quarter Investment Strategy

**RESOLVED:** That the referral from Finance, Audit and Risk Committee regarding First Quarter Revenue Investment Strategy be taken with Item 10.

5d Item Referred from Finance, Audit and Risk Committee: 7 September 2020 - Medium Term Financial Strategy

**RESOLVED:** That the referral from Finance, Audit and Risk Committee regarding Medium Term Financial Strategy be taken with Item 11.

5e Referral from Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 8 September 2020 - Careline Future Provision Part 2

**RESOLVED:** That the referral from Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding Careline Future Strategy be taken with Item 16.

#### 45 COUNCIL PLAN 2021 - 2026 AND COUNCIL OBJECTIVES FOR 2021-2026

*Audio recording – 12 minutes 26 seconds*

The Leader of the Council presented the report entitled Council Plan 2021 - 2026 and Council Objectives for 2021-2026 together with the following appendices:

- Appendix A – Revised Council Plan 2021 – 2026;
- Appendix B - Proposed Actions 2020;
- Appendix C – Achievements;
- Appendix C - Achievements – Addendum.

He advised that the workshops regarding the Council Plan had been well attended and that the minor typographical errors in the document would be corrected before publication.

It was proposed by Councillor Martin Stears-Handscorn, seconded by Councillor Paul Clark and:

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the draft completed Council Plan be approved; which provides a summary of objectives and of activity to support the progression of following Council Objectives below (an amended first overarching Council objective whilst the other four remain the same);

- Be a welcoming, inclusive, and efficient council;
- Build thriving and resilient communities;
- Respond to challenges to the environment;
- Enable an enterprising and co-operative economy;
- Support the delivery of good quality and affordable homes.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:** That Cabinet reviews and recommends to Full Council the adoption of the following:

- Appendix A – Council Plan 2021 -2026
- Appendix B – Proposed Actions
- Appendix C – Achievements

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** The Council plan is a key element of the corporate business planning process, as a highlevel strategic document it sets out the Council's priorities for the next year. As an overarching policy framework document, it guides and influences the use of Council resources; providing a focus for activities, plans and services the Council provide. The draft Council plan has reflected the amendment to the first overarching Council Objective.

#### 46 STRATEGIC PLANNING MATTERS

*Audio recording – 18 minutes 3 seconds*

The Executive Member for Planning and Transport presented the report entitled Strategic Planning Matters together with the following documents:

- Strategic Planning – Addendum;
- Appendix A - Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan Examination Report.

He drew attention to the addendum document which contained an additional recommendation numbered 2.2.

The Strategic Planning Manager advised that the Draft Design SPD, mentioned in the report would not be considered at this meeting.

Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb proposed, Councillor Keith Hoskins seconded and it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report on strategic planning matters be noted;
- (2) That the Service Director – Regulatory in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning & Transport:
  - i. Develops modifications to the Examiner's recommendations in consultation with the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Planning Group; and
  - ii. Approves public consultation on those modifications to inform a decision on the Inspector's report to be made by Cabinet at the earliest opportunity.

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

#### 47 DRAFT DESIGN SPD

*Audio recording – 20 minutes 24 seconds*

The Chair advised that the Item entitled Draft Design SPD had been withdrawn from the agenda.

#### 48 FIRST QUARTER REVENUE MONITORING 2020/21

*Audio recording – 22 minutes 42 seconds*

The Executive Member for Finance and IT presented the report entitled First Quarter Revenue Monitoring 2020/21.

Councillor Kate Aspinwall, Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee presented the referral from the meeting of that committee held on 7 September 2020 regarding First Quarter Revenue Monitoring 2020/21 the recommendations to Cabinet being;

- (1) That the report entitled First Quarter Revenue Monitoring 2020/21 be noted;
- (2) That the changes to the 2020/21 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.2, a £1.468million increase in net expenditure, be approved;
- (3) That the changes to the 2021/22 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.2, a total £186k increase in net expenditure, be noted. These will be incorporated in the draft revenue budget for 2021/22;
- (4) That the write-off of debtor invoices totalling £17,442.64 raised to Hitchin Markets Limited, as explained in paragraphs 8.3 and 8.4, be approved.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report entitled First Quarter Revenue Monitoring 2020/21 be noted;
- (2) That the changes to the 2020/21 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.2, a £1.468million increase in net expenditure be approved;
- (3) That the changes to the 2021/22 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.2, a total £186k increase in net expenditure be noted. These will be incorporated in the draft revenue budget for 2021/22;
- (4) That the write-off of debtor invoices totalling £17,442.64 raised to Hitchin Markets Limited, as explained in paragraphs 8.3 and 8.4 be approved.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** Members are able to monitor, make adjustments within the overall budgetary framework and request appropriate action of Services who do not meet the budget targets set as part of the Corporate Business Planning process.

**49 FIRST QUARTER INVESTMENT STRATEGY (CAPITAL AND TREASURY) REVIEW 2020/21**

*Audio recording – 28 minutes 2 seconds*

The Executive Member for Finance and IT presented the report entitled First Quarter Investment Strategy (Capital and Treasury) Review 2020/21 together with the following appendices:

- Appendix A - Capital Programme Detail including Funding 2020/21 onwards;
- Appendix B - Treasury Management Update.

Councillor Kate Aspinwall, Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee presented the referral from the meeting of that committee held on 7 September 2020 regarding First Quarter Investment Strategy (Capital and Treasury) Review 2020/21 the recommendations to Cabinet being;

- (1) That the forecast expenditure of £10.519million in 2020/21 on the capital programme, paragraph 8.3 refers, be noted;
- (2) That the adjustments to the capital programme for 2020/21 onwards as a result of the revised timetable of schemes detailed in table 2, increasing the estimated spend in 2021/22 by £0.296million, be approved;
- (3) That the position of the availability of capital resources, as detailed in table 3 paragraph 8.6 and the requirement to keep the capital programme under review for affordability, be noted;
- (4) That the position of Treasury Management activity as at the end of June 2020, be noted.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed, Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb seconded and it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the forecast expenditure of £10.519million in 2020/21 on the capital programme be noted, paragraph 8.3 of the report refers;
- (2) That the adjustments to the capital programme for 2020/21 onwards as a result of the revised timetable of schemes detailed in table 2 of the report, increasing the estimated spend in 2021/22 by £0.296million be approved;
- (3) That the position of the availability of capital resources, as detailed in table 3 paragraph 8.6 of the report and the requirement to keep the capital programme under review for affordability be noted;
- (4) That the position of Treasury Management activity as at the end of June 2020 be noted.

**REASONS FOR DECISIONS:**

- (1) Cabinet is required to approve adjustments to the capital programme and ensure the capital programme is fully funded.
- (2) 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.

**50 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

*Audio recording – 30 minutes 54 seconds*

The Executive Member for Finance and IT presented the report entitled Medium Term Financial Strategy together with the following appendix:

- Appendix A - Medium Term Financial Strategy.

He advised that:

- It was vital to have a Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- Government funding remained uncertain;
- The spending review and funding arrangements had yet again been postponed;
- There was unlikely to be any additional funding from Government;
- This had made medium term financial planning extremely difficult;
- The timing of projects would need to be considered carefully;
- There would be an impact, due to Covid-19, on Council Tax and Business Rate income, although this would effect the 2021-22 financial year;
- The MTFs assumed that the Local Plan would be adopted, although there would be a time lag to when people would move into new housing and start paying Council Tax;
- Thanks were due to the Service Director – Resources and his team for their hard work in preparing this and other financial documents.

The Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee presented the referral from that Committee and advised that:

- The Finance, Audit and Risk Committee had held a detailed discussion particularly regarding the Council Tax reductions scheme and the effect on collection rates;

- They acknowledged the difficulties in preparing the document with the many uncertainties;
- The Committee also acknowledged the incredibly difficult and challenging job that the Service Director – Resources and his team have done.

It was proposed by Councillor Ian Albert, seconded by Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb and:

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:** That the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-26 as attached at Appendix A be adopted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** Adoption of a MTFs and communication of its contents will assist in the process of forward planning the use of Council resources and in budget setting for 2021/2022 to 2025/2026, culminating in the setting of the Council Tax precept for 2020/21 in February 2021.

## 51 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2021/2022

*Audio recording – 41 minutes 24 seconds*

Prior to discussing the report, the Executive Member for Finance and IT drew informed Members that this was Howard Crompton's last meeting as Service Director – Customers. He thanked Mr Crompton for all of his support and wished him good luck in his retirement.

The Executive Member for Finance and IT presented the report entitled Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2021/22 and informed Members:

- Uncertainties regarding future impact of Covid-19 and future Government funding had made modelling very difficult;
- It was proposed that no changes be made to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2021/22;
- Consideration would need to be given as to whether the funding currently paid to Parish Councils could continue in future years.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed, Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb seconded and it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the CTRS position relating to this and previous financial years be noted;
- (2) That that a full review of the CTRS has commenced and been postponed due to the consequences on the Scheme of the COVID-19 pandemic be noted;
- (3) That the decision as to whether to continue with the amount to be distributed to Parish, Town & Community Councils and if so whether this should be maintained at £38,885 be delegated to the Service Director – Customers and the Service Director – Resources in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance & IT, taking into account the financial settlement for 2021/2022;
- (4) That no changes to the CTRS be made for 2021/2022.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To update Cabinet on how the Scheme is working and to consider whether any changes need to be made for 2021/2022.



**52 CONSOLIDATION OF BUSINESS RATES AND COUNCIL TAX DISCRETIONARY POLICIES**

*Audio recording – 46 minutes 34 seconds*

The Executive Member for Finance and IT presented the report entitled Consolidations of Business Rates and Council Tax Discretionary Policies together with the following appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief Policy;
- Appendix 2 - Council Tax Discretionary Reduction in Liability Policy.

The Executive Member for Finance and IT advised:

- That this was purely a consolidation of two policies;
- No changes to the content were being made;
- Cabinet was being asked to give authority to the Service Director - Customers in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and IT to make minor amendments in future.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed, Councillor Martin Stears-Handscorn seconded and it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief Policy (Appendix 1) and the Council Tax Discretionary Reduction in Liability Policy (Appendix 2) be approved;
- (2) That the policies be reviewed every three years and authority to make minor amendments be delegated to the Service Director – Customers in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance & IT;
- (3) That any significant changes or new policies to be added be approved by Cabinet.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To consolidate the plethora of legislation in single documents to make them more transparent, easier for the public to access and easier for the Council to maintain.

**53 CARELINE FUTURE PROVISION**

*Audio recording – 1 hour 24 minutes 28 seconds*

NB This report was considered after the Part 2 report of the same name.

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager undertook a roll call of Members and Officers to ensure that those present could hear and be heard.

Prior to the Part 2 Item of the same name being considered Councillor Judi Billing had declared a declarable interest in that she was also a Hertfordshire County Council Member. She did not consider this to be a significant interest therefore she would take part in the debate and vote.

Prior to the Part 2 Item of the same name being considered Councillor Steve Jarvis declared a declarable interest in that he was also a Hertfordshire County Council Member. He did not consider this to be a significant interest therefore he would take part in the debate and vote.

Councillor Martin Stears-Handscorn proposed, Councillor Gary Grindal seconded and it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report entitled Careline Future Provision be noted;
- (2) That the Service Director – Customers and Service Director - Resources in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing & Environmental Health and Executive Member for Finance and IT be authorised to continue discussions with Hertfordshire County Council and to enter into a formal agreement for the expansion of the Careline Service, provided this remains cost neutral for the Council.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To secure the on-going viability of the Careline Service and the excellent service to customers that it provides.

**54 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

*Audio recording – 48 minutes 54 seconds*

Prior to moving into the confidential meeting to discuss the item entitled Careline Future Provision, Councillor Judi Billing declared a declarable interest in that she was also a Hertfordshire County Council Member. She did not consider this to be a significant interest therefore she would take part in the debate and vote.

Prior to moving into the confidential meeting to discuss the item entitled Careline Future Provision, Councillor Steve Jarvis declared a declarable interest in that he was also a Hertfordshire County Council Member. He did not consider this to be a significant interest therefore he would take part in the debate and vote.

**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 Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).

**55 CARELINE FUTURE PROVISION**

*This Item was not audio recorded or filmed.*

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager undertook a roll call of Members and Officers to ensure that all present could hear and be heard.

NB This report was considered prior to the decision being taken on the Part 1 report of the same name.

The Executive Member for Housing and Environment Health presented the Part 2 report entitled Careline Future Provision together with the following document:

- Careline Future Provision – Addendum.

Councillor Kate Aspinwall, Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented the Part 2 referral from the committee meeting held on 8 September 2020 regarding Careline Future Provision.

The Service Director – Customers gave an update and presented the addendum report.

A detailed debate took place.

Councillor Gary Grindal proposed, Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb seconded and it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report entitled Careline Future Provision – Part 2 be noted;
- (2) That the Service Director – Customers and Service Director - Resources in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing & Environmental Health and Executive Member for Finance and IT be authorised to continue discussions with Hertfordshire County Council and to enter into a formal agreement for the expansion of the Careline Service, provided this remains cost neutral for the Council.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To secure the on-going viability of the Careline Service and the excellent service to customers that it provides.

**56 LAND ADJACENT TO 1 NORTH END, KELSHALL, ROYSTON, HERTFORDSHIRE**

*This Item was not audio recorded or filmed*

The Executive Member for Enterprise and Co-operative Development presented the Part 2 report entitled Land Adjacent to 1 North End, Kelshall, Hertfordshire together with the following appendices:

- Appendix A - Plan of land to be disposed;
- Appendix B - Cabinet report 24 March 2020;
- Appendix C - Opinion of Senior Planning Officer;
- Appendix D - Offer e-mail from owner of 1 North End (current garden licensee).

Councillor Keith Hoskins proposed, Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb seconded and it was:

**RESOLVED:** That the recommendations contained in the Part 2 report entitled Land Adjacent to 1 North End, Kelshall, Royston, Hertfordshire be agreed.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To provide a financial receipt to help fund NHDC's capital programme.

The meeting closed at 9.01 pm

Chair