

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Cabinet held as a Virtual Meeting
on Tuesday, 15th December, 2020 at 7.30 pm

1 WELCOME AND REMOTE/PARTLY REMOTE MEETINGS PROTOCOL SUMMARY

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

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager undertook a roll call and drew attention to the Remote/Partly Remote Meetings Protocol Summary which gave advice regarding the following:

- Attendance;
- Live Streaming;
- Noise interference;
- Rules of Debate;
- Voting; and
- Part 2 Items.

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

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gary Grindal and Deputy Executive Members, Councillors: Helen Oliver and Sean Prendergast.

3 MINUTES - 28 JANUARY 2020 TO 22 OCTOBER 2020

RESOLVED:

- (1) That, subject to the amendments below, the Minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 28 January 2020, 23 June 2020, 21 July 2020, 15 September 2020 and 22 October 2020 be approved as a true record of the proceedings;
 - That the Minutes of 28 January 2020 record the attendance of Howard Crompton, Service Director-Customers.
 - That the Minutes of 15 September 2020 be record that Howard Crompton was in attendance as the Service Director – Customers and Jo Dufficy was in attendance as the Customer Services Manager;
- (2) That, with the authorisation of the Chair, his electronic signature and initials be attached to the Minutes approved in (1) above.

4 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business notified.

5 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Chair announced 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.

- (2) Members were reminded that this Council had declared a Climate Emergency. This was a serious decision and means 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. More details were included on the agenda front sheet.
- (3) 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.
- (4) The Chair advised that he would take the agenda in the order published up to and including item 12. The Part 2 Items would then be considered, following which Part 1 to take Items 13, 14 and 15.

6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Bernard Eddleston, Chair of Charnwood House Community Management Association thanked the Chair for the opportunity to address Cabinet regarding the report entitled Charnwood House, Hitchin.

The Chair thanked Mr Eddleston for his presentation.

7 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

6a Referral from Finance, Audit and Risk Committee: 3 December 2020 - Risk Management Update

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the risk score for the Covid 19 Leisure Management Contract risk be increased from 8 to 9;
- (2) That the amendments to the Risk Management Framework as part of the Management response to the SIAS Audit be noted and approved;

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

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

6b Referral from Finance, Audit and Risk Committee: 3 December 2020 - Second Quarter Revenue Monitoring 2020/21

RESOLVED: That the referral from the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 3 December 2020 entitled Second Quarter Revenue Monitoring 2020/21 be taken with Item 11.

6c Referral from Finance, Audit and Risk Committee: 3 December 2020 - Investment Strategy (Capital and Treasury) Mid Year Review 2020/21

RESOLVED: That the referral from the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 3 December 2020 entitled Investment Strategy (Capital and Treasury) Mid Year Review 2020/21 be taken with Item 12.

6d Referral from Finance, Audit and Risk Committee: 3 December 2020 - Draft Budget Report 2021/22

RESOLVED: That the referral from the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 3 December 2020 entitled Draft Budget Report 2021/22 be taken with Item 10.

8 STRATEGIC PLANNING MATTERS

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report on strategic planning matters be noted;
- (2) That the responses to the Ashwell and Barkway Neighbourhood Plans and the Government's Planning White Paper consultation at Appendices A to F be noted and endorsed;
- (3) That Cabinet's thanks to Nigel Smith and his colleagues for the work undertaken regarding the Local Plan Inspections be placed on record.

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

9 NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY LOTTERY

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approves the establishment of a Community Lottery, to be managed by an External Lottery Manager (ELM).

REASONS FOR DECISIONS

- (1) To set up a Community Lottery that will enable the local Voluntary and Community Sector groups to have access to additional funding at no cost;
- (2) The Community Lottery will provide an income stream for the Council, with the Council benefiting financially from each ticket sale, however at a lower monetary proportion than the VCS groups.

10 IT CAPITAL - PURCHASING OF LAPTOPS

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- (1) That the capital programme for IT spend is amended as detailed in 7.4 Table 2 to enable IT to progress the procurement of laptops for staff to facilitate more effective home working arrangements. The net impact is an increase in spend in 2021/22 of £55k as detailed in 7.5 and shown in Table 3;
- (2) That £50k of the capital is bought forward into this year's budget so that the IT Manager can progress the procurement of the first batch of laptops so that delivery to staff can happen at the earliest opportunity.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) To enable a continued agile way of working which has been brought about by the Coronavirus pandemic, increasing flexibility and business continuity resilience and ensuring a future proofed approach;

- (2) To avoid additional capital costs associated with a requirement to increase Microsoft licences where users have a personal computer in the office and an NHDC provided device at home;
- (3) To respond to feedback from the staff survey regarding the need for staff to be provided with equipment that have cameras and microphones to enable council wide participation in meetings and similar activities;
- (4) To enable the procurement, build and distribution of laptops to take place ahead of the new financial year, considering supplier lead in times and scheduling of resources in the IT team.

11 DRAFT BUDGET REPORT 2021/22

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the funding forecasts for 2021/22 and the significant uncertainty around Central Government funding levels in 2021/22 and beyond, and that these estimates provided could be subject to significant change be noted;
- (2) That the comments made at the budget workshops and the inclusion of the revenue savings and investments in the draft budget be noted;
- (3) That the comments made at the budget workshops and the inclusion of the capital investments in the draft budget be noted;
- (4) That it be confirmed that Council Tax increases for 2021/22 will be in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy (i.e. the maximum amount allowed without the need for a local referendum).

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To ensure that all relevant factors are considered in arriving at a proposed budget and Council Tax level for 2021/22, to be considered by Full Council on 11 February 2021.

12 SECOND QUARTER REVENUE MONITORING 2020/21

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report entitled Second 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 £2.036million 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 £53k decrease in net expenditure be noted. These will be incorporated in the draft revenue budget for 2021/22.

REASONS 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.

13 INVESTMENT STRATEGY (CAPITAL AND TREASURY) MID-YEAR REVIEW 2020/21

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the forecast expenditure of £3.937million 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 £7.022million 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.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- (1) That the position of Treasury Management activity as at the end of September 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.

14 LAND AT THE SNIPE. WESTON, HERTS

NB: This item was considered following consideration of the Part 2 item of the same name.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the land at The Snipe, Weston be declared surplus to the District Council's requirements and the decision to place upon the open market or pursue alternative development options be delegated to the Service Director for Resources, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and IT;
- (2) If the property is placed on the open market for sale, then following receipt of offers for the land identified in Appendix A, the decision to accept an offer is delegated to the Service Director for Resources, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and IT.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) To provide a financial receipt to help fund the District Council's capital programme;
- (2) To facilitate the provision of new private and affordable housing through the use of Council owned land that might otherwise remain of limited benefit to the community;
- (3) Marketing the land on the open market will maximise interest from developers and satisfy the requirements to obtain the best price reasonably obtainable.

15 COVID-19 LEISURE CONTRACTS RECOVERY

NB: This item was considered following consideration of the Part 1 item of the same name.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations considered in Part 2 be agreed.

REASON FOR DECISION: As detailed in the Part 2 report.

16 CHARNWOOD HOUSE, HITCHIN

RESOLVED: That the principle of the option presented be progressed further with the widest possible community engagement on the proposals and use.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: As detailed in the Part 2 report.

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

The Chair announced that Members were to move to the Part 2 meeting at which point a 5 minute break would be taken.

18 COVID-19 LEISURE CONTRACTS RECOVERY

NB: This item was considered prior to the Part 1 item of the same name.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That the recommendations contained in the Part 2 report be agreed.

REASON FOR DECISION: As detailed in the Part 2 report.

19 LAND AT THE SNIPE, WESTON, HERTS

NB: This item was considered prior to the Part 1 item of the same name.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations contained in the Part 2 report be agreed.

REASON FOR DECISION: As detailed in the Part 2 report.

20 CHARNWOOD HOUSE, HITCHIN

RESOLVED: That the principle of the option presented be progressed further with the widest possible community engagement on the proposals and use.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (1) To bring a town centre asset into beneficial use for the wider community;
- (2) To reduce ongoing maintenance costs for this property.