

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERONON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY, SG6 3JF
ON TUESDAY, 27TH JUNE, 2023 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Councillor Elizabeth Dennis (Chair), Ruth Brown (Vice-Chair), Ian Albert, Amy Allen, Ruth Brown, Keith Hoskins, Steve Jarvis, Sean Prendergast, Alistair Willoughby and Dave Winstanley*

In Attendance:

Ian Couper (Service Director - Resources), Sarah Kingsley (Service Director - Place), Jeanette Thompson (Service Director - Legal and Community), Anthony Roche (Managing Director), Louise Symes (Strategic Planning and Projects Manager), Deborah Coates (Principal Strategic Planning Officer), Christine Crofts (Communications Manager), Chloe Hipwood (Service Manager), Martin Lawrence (Strategic Housing Manager), Clare Skeels (Senior Planning Officer), Louise Randall (Leisure Manager), Callum Reeve (Business Administration Apprentice (Democratic Services)), James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager) and Eleanor Hopcraft (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)

Also Present:

At the commencement of the meeting approximately 4 members of the public, including registered speakers.

Councillors Sean Nolan and David Levett were also present.

183 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 2:56

There were no apologies for absence received.

184 MINUTES - 14 MARCH 2023

Audio recording – 3:08

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis, as Chair proposed, and Councillor Ruth Brown seconded, and following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 14 March 2023 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

185 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 3:48

There was no other business notified.

186 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 3:50

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council policy this meeting was being audio recorded as well as filmed. The audio recording would be available on the NHDC website and the film recording via the NHDC YouTube channel.
- (2) The Chair reminded Members that the 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) The Chair reminded Members 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 for the purposes of clarification that 4.8.23(a) of the Constitution did not apply to this meeting.
- (5) The Chair advised of a change in the order of the agenda and Item 16 'Ashwell Conservation Area', Item 9 'The Allocation of DLUHC's Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Funding awards for 2023/24 and 2024/25' and Item 10 'Local Authority Housing Fund – Round Two' would be taken before Item 7 'Report and Referral from Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Corporate Peer Challenge Report and Action Plan'.

187 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 5:47

The Chair advised that Sarah Pateman from Survivors Against Domestic Abuse and Stevenage Borough Council was present to provide a presentation. This would be given before the presentation of Item 9 'The Allocation of DLUHC's Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Funding awards for 2023/24 and 2024/25'.

The Chair advised that Mr David Cook was also present to provide a presentation for Members regarding Item 16 'Ashwell Conservation Area'.

188 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

Audio recording – 6:11

The Chair advised that the items referred from the Overview and Scrutiny and the Finance, Audit and Risk Committees would be taken with the respective items on the agenda.

189 REPORT AND REFERRAL FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE REPORT & ACTION PLAN

Audio recording – 1:03:52

N.B. This item was considered after Agenda Items 16, 9 and 10.

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis presented the report entitled 'Corporate Peer Challenge Report & Action Plan' and advised:

- The Local Government Association (LGA) had conducted Peer Review of the Overview and Scrutiny and Finance, Audit and Risk Committees.
- Due to the all-out elections in 2024, some of the recommendations would be given a longer timescale.
- As there were no timelines in the action plan, the Leader, Deputy Leader and Managing Director would manage those in consultation with the Committee Chairs.
- The recommendations in the report would help provide added value and effectiveness to the Committees.

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis, as Chair proposed, Councillor Ruth Brown seconded, and following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the content of the CPC report was noted.
- (2) That the draft Action Plan at Appendix A was considered, and proposed action was recommended to Cabinet for approval (as per Appendix A or as amended, with relevant Overview & Scrutiny recommendation timescales).
- (3) That, in the absence of timescales, these be set by the Leader, Deputy Leader and Managing Director (in consultation with relevant Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs).

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To ensure that the Council responds to the matters identified within the CPC report, ensuring that the benefits of the CPC process are realised.

190 REPORT AND REFERRAL FROM FINANCE, AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE: LGA REVIEW ACTION PLAN

Audio recording – 1:05:58

Councillor Sean Nolan, Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, presented the referral on the 'LGA Review Action Plan' report and advised:

- The Committee was in agreement with the recommendations of the report and agreed that it was prudent to have long timelines for some actions due to the elections in 2024.
- The training provided to Members had been useful so far, as it was important to understand the role and purpose of the Committee, as well as the skills Members needed to have to sit on the Committee.

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis commented that she was satisfied with the work that the LGA had provided, and the feedback would improve the way in which the Council worked.

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Ruth Brown seconded, and following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Cabinet considered comments from Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.
- (2) That Cabinet approved the draft Action Plan.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To ensure that the Council responds to the matters identified within the peer support report, ensuring that the benefits of that process are realised.

191 THE ALLOCATION OF DLHUC'S HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION GRANT AND DOMESTIC ABUSE FUNDING AWARDS FOR 2023/24 AND 2024/25

Audio recording – 22:11

N.B. This item was considered ahead of Agenda Item 10.

Councillor Sean Prendergast declared an interest as a trustee of Survivors Against Domestic Abuse (SADA), and therefore left the room for the duration for the item and did not vote on the recommendations.

The Chair invited Sarah Pateman from SADA and Stevenage Borough Council to present.

N.B. A break in proceedings was taken from 19:55 to 20:00

Sarah Pateman gave a presentation with slides, and advised:

- SADA worked closely with North Hertfordshire District Council.
- Services that SADA offer include one to one sessions, agency referrals, safe houses and benefits advice and guidance.
- SADA had worked with private landlords to source safe spaces for victims and survivors of domestic abuse.
- Community Partnership meetings took place every 3 months and were themed.
- Due to the work being done to schools, more referrals have been made and families have been put in safe accommodation, and provided food and vouchers.
- SADA hoped to find an emergency safe space, extend the community deprivation project, provide more training with partners and continue virtual and in-person drop in sessions.

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis commented that SADA provided an invaluable service, and was pleased that a Women's Centre had been set up in Letchworth.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Amy Allen
- Councillor Steve Jarvis

In response to the questions, Sarah Pateman advised:

- Everyone would be housed in a safe space the same, as well as receiving legal advice.
- SADA was collecting data and surveys on behalf of the Police. Deprivation could come in many forms.
- Councillors were welcome to come to Community Partnership meetings at Settle.

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis commented that it did not matter on the circumstances, SADA would provide a safe space to survivors of domestic abuse. Services were available for everyone.

In the absence of Councillor Prendergast, Councillor Dave Winstanley presented the report entitled 'The Allocation of DLHUC's Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Funding Awards for 2023/24 and 2024/25' and advised:

- The Homelessness Prevention Grant would total £746k for two years, and the Domestic Funding Awards totalled £71k over two years.
- The funding allocations would allow the organisations to keep providing services.

- The award to SADA was vital in supporting their work, as Domestic Abuse was a cause of homelessness.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ian Albert
- Councillor Ruth Brown

In response to the questions, Martin Lawrence, Strategic Housing Manager, advised:

- The SADA service was embedded in the Housing Team at the Council.
- The current contract corresponded to the demand, but this would grow.
- The Managing Director had been made aware of £200k of extra provision, which could be used if needed.
- Finances had been looked at thoroughly and scrutinised by the Finance team.
- Fewer than 20 Ukrainian households had approached the Housing team for help. The funding towards that was welcome and the majority was likely to be used on general housing pressures and complex cases.

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Amy Allen seconded, and following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Cabinet approved the allocation of Homelessness Prevention Grant funding as follows:
 - Keystage Housing (£134k in 2023/24, £151k in 2024/25)
 - OneYMCA (£172k in 2023/24, £172k in 2024/25)
 - SADA core housing service (£20k in 2024/25)
 - Rough sleeper outreach service (£35k in 2024/25)
- (2) That Cabinet approved the allocation of additional Homelessness Prevention Grant funding provided for domestic abuse duties as follows:
 - SADA Community Project (£35k in 2023/24 and £36k in 2024/25)
- (3) That Cabinet noted the recent DLUHC announcement of a Ukraine Homelessness Prevention Grant top-up for the Council for 2023/24.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (1) There is an urgent need to secure accommodation-based support services for single homeless people in the district. Adopting the recommendations at 2.1(A), 2.1(B) and 2.1(D) would secure the provision of existing, high quality, local services for the next two years, which is in line with the priorities set out in the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, contained within the Council's Housing Strategy 2019- 2024.
- (2) Domestic abuse remains a significant driver of homelessness. Adopting the recommendations at 2.1(C) and 2.2(A) would extend the core housing service that Survivors Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) provides the Council with for a further year and enable expansion of SADA services into the community. SADA is a local specialist provider of domestic abuse support and accommodation services.

192 LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND ROUND TWO

Audio recording – 1:00:22

N.B. This item was considered ahead of Agenda Item 7.

Anthony Roche, Managing Director, presented the report entitled 'Local Authority Housing Fund Round Two' and advised:

- Earlier this year, Cabinet agreed to work with settle in the first round of funding applications.
- The Council was currently working on an memorandum of understanding to see how money would be allocated.
- This funding round would be aimed at Afghans and temporary accommodation for general use.
- The Council reached out to six potential providers; four have expressed interest.
- Due to the short timescales, the recommendations would delegated the final decision to the Service Directors in consultation with the Executive Members.
- Once the expressions of interests had be evaluated, one provider would be chosen to work with.

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Sean Prendergast seconded, and following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Cabinet noted the update on the Local Authority Housing Fund and wished to support round two of the scheme if it can.
- (2) That Cabinet delegated to the Service Director Regulatory and the Service Director Resources, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health and Executive Member for Finance and IT, the final decision on submission of the validation form.

REASON FOR DECISION: To provide as much time as possible to investigate whether the allocation from LAHF round two is able to be taken up.

193 LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN (LCWIP) UPDATE AND CONSULTATION REPORT

Audio recording – 1:08:38

Councillor Ruth Brown presented the report entitled 'Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Update and Consultation Report' and advised:

- The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) went out for consultation at the Area Forums, Parish Councils, Town Councils and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).
- The consultation was extensive, however under 30s were underrepresented despite the consultation going into schools.
- The LCWIP was the daughter document to the Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan, and agreed priorities on cycling and walking infrastructure.
- The main points were highlighted at paragraph 8.7 in the report.
- There was strong support for a safe cycling and walking route between Ashwell and Ashwell and Morden Station.
- There was lots of rejection to some proposals in Knebworth, and some proposals were altered and scaled back following responses received.
- There were concerns about the modal filters and one-way systems in Royston, which were scaled back.

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis thanked Councillor Brown and the Officers involved in the project, and highlighted the changes made since consultation as being a positive part of the report.

Councillor Ruth Brown proposed and Councillor Keith Hoskins seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Cabinet noted the attached LCWIP Consultation report at Appendix A.
- (2) That the Cabinet endorsed the proposed changes to the draft LCWIP, set out in the attached LCWIP Changes Summary Report.

REASON FOR DECISION: The LCWIP is a daughter document to Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan. Its adoption will guide and accelerate future investment in transport infrastructure that enables and encourages people to make more trips by active travel (walking, cycling, mobility scooter, and other legal low-speed mobility modes). This will help NHDC, HCC and the government deliver on their strategies for sustainable transport, public health and climate change; more specifically, to increase the modal share for active travel, and thereby to reduce air pollution and carbon emissions from motor vehicles.

194 ACTIVE NORTH HERTS STRATEGY

Audio recording – 1:12:47

N.B. Councillor Dave Winstanley left the Chamber at 20:43 and did not return.

Councillor Steve Jarvis presented the report entitled 'Active North Herts Strategy' and advised:

- The report covered the strategy of Activity and Leisure Provisions in North Hertfordshire.
- The Council would continue to provide facilities across the district to keep residents active and to increase the levels of those who are inactive.
- While North Hertfordshire did not have a significant deficiency in the activity of its residents, some groups were less active than others.
- The strategy would make better use of greenspace, and the Council would work more closely with partners across the voluntary sector, sports clubs and other providers to increase local opportunities.
- Some residents did not have facilities that were easily accessible for them, and the scope for more outreach activities would encourage participation.
- Provisions needed to be made to enable the delivery of an Active Communities Officer after 2025 in the new Leisure Contract. This position was currently funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Councillor Steve Jarvis proposed and Councillor Alistair Willoughby seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Cabinet approved and adopted the Active North Herts Strategy attached as Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- (2) That Cabinet recommended to Council that a budget of £50k be approved from 2025/26 onwards, to enable the delivery of a new Active Communities programme run by the leisure operator.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure the Council and its stakeholder partners have a clear policy position on its approach to the future delivery of sport, leisure, physical activity and wellbeing services across the district.

195 STRATEGIC PLANNING MATTERS

Audio recording – 1:16:34

Councillor Ruth Brown presented the report entitled 'Strategic Planning Matters' and advised:

- The report took into consideration the LCWIP and Conservation Areas.
- The proposed timetable for the remaining Strategic Planning Documents (SPDs) were detailed in the report, which were Sustainability, Biodiversity and Design Code.
- There were six large strategic sites. The first, Highover Farm was being presented to the Planning Control Committee on 6 July 2023.
- Paragraph 8.13 detailed the Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan Consultation, which would be reported on.
- Paragraph 8.16 detailed the Chesfield Consultation, which had lots of resident representation. However, further discussions would take place, as key stakeholders were not involved.
- Paragraphs 8.32 and 8.33 detailed the recommendation to approve £85k to respond to the Development Consent Order from London Luton Airport.
- The Council had made an in-principle objection, and the joint response would be made with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and Dacorum Borough Council.
- Paragraph 8.42 detailed bus service improvement. HCC had been given a significant sum of money to go towards fare reduction and priority buses in Hitchin.
- Paragraph 8.52 detailed Electric Vehicle Charging Points, which was currently awaiting funding from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles.
- If funding was unsuccessful, there could be alternative funding from HCC through the Government Local Electric Vehicles Infrastructure (LEVI) capital fund programme.

Councillor Ruth Brown proposed and Councillor Amy Allen seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report on strategic planning matters was noted.
- (2) That the officer responses and Project Board procedures attached as Appendices A to G were noted and endorsed by Cabinet.
- (3) That Cabinet approved the use of £85k of reserve funding to respond to the London Luton Airport planning application being considered by the Planning Inspectorate.

REASON FOR DECISION: To keep Cabinet informed of recent developments on strategic planning matters.

196 NORTH HERTS PLACE NARRATIVE

Audio recording – 1:21:45

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis presented the report entitled 'North Herts Place Narrative' and advised:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered and referred this report. Overall the Committee was positive on the report and there was good feedback and scrutiny around the organisations that were involved in the Place Narrative.

- Royston BID did not feed into this report as they were unavailable, however the new manager would be consulted.
- Local councillors and representatives from arts and community groups in Royston also provided an input.
- The idea of having a Place Narrative came from an LGA Peer Review pre-Covid.
- Having a Place Narrative would make a place exist and sell the story of the area.
- The branding for the place narrative was strong and was without Council and political party colours.
- Partners were happy to work with the Council to sell the Place Narrative, and the Communications Team would lead on the work.

Councillor Ruth Brown advised a director from Royston BID did attend a focus group.

Councillor Keith Hoskins commented that the Place Narrative was a great piece of work.

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Keith Hoskins seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approved the North Herts Place Narrative.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) Despite being a district since 1974, North Hertfordshire has no clear identity and needs a point of differentiation within the county. This will help North Herts stand out as the place to invest, live, visit and work in Hertfordshire.
- (2) Currently, the Council and its partners are all telling different stories about North Herts which leads to fragmented communications. A joined up and coherent approach in the future will have greater impact, generate greater engagement and raise the profile of North Herts the place.

197 WASTE SHARED SERVICE: CLIENT TEAM AND CORPORATE SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS

Audio recording – 1:28:48

Councillor Amy Allen presented the report entitled 'Waste Shared Service: Client Team and Corporate Support Arrangements' and advised:

- The report was based on outcomes from the Member-led Joint Working Group between East Herts and North Herts Councils.
- Workshops held with Senior Managers identified and considered corporate support arrangements affecting waste contract administration and management.
- The changes made were to enhance the customer experience with transformation programmes and improved efficiency.
- The report followed from previous Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Executive reports regarding future waste management.

Councillor Amy Allen proposed and Councillor Alistair Willoughby seconded, and following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- (1) Agreed that each Council leads on their own customer service provision with one set of processes for customer interactions being developed and agreed with a focus on resolution at the first point of contact.

- (2) Noted the draft timeline for the transition for customer service provision outlined in 8.7
- (3) Agreed to the proposed updates and changes to financial management and governance arrangements and subsequent necessary changes to the Inter Authority Agreement outlined in Section 8.
- (4) Agreed the updated waste service policy statements contained in Appendix 2 to come into force from May 2025.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the shared waste service.

198 ASHWELL CONSERVATION AREA

Audio recording – 6:20

N.B. This item was considered ahead of Agenda Item 9.

Mr David Cook gave a verbal presentation and advised:

- The Parish Council had planted trees to strengthen the case for a Conservation Area.
- No residents who would be impacted by the proposed Conservation Area received a letter and had not been invited to comment.
- Future consultations should include individual letters to households affected by the proposals.
- Three properties included within the proposed Conservation Area did not add value to the proposed conservation area.

N.B. Councillor Amy Allen entered the Chamber at 19:41.

Councillor Dave Winstanley left the Chamber at 19:40 and re-entered at 19:41.

In response to the question from Councillor Ian Albert, Mr. Cook advised that he believed impacted households should receive letters on proposals such as these.

Councillor Ruth Brown presented the report entitled 'Ashwell Conservation Area' and advised:

- The proposed Conservation Area went out to consultation, and Cabinet was asked to approve and adopt.
- Paragraph 8.2 detailed that interested parties were contacted and Ashwell Parish Council advertised the consultation period to residents.
- All comments were duly considered and revisions were made.
- The Conservation Area boundaries surrounding properties had to be amended to follow property boundaries.
- The properties mentioned by Mr. Cook made a neutral contribution to the Conservation Area and framed the entrance to the village. By including them in the proposed Conservation Area, there was potential to enhance them.

Councillor Steve Jarvis commented that Mr. Cook made a good point and that it was important that the consultation reached impacted people.

In response to the questions from Councillor Jarvis, the Senior Planning Officer advised that Townsend Meadow did not make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, so was excluded. There were four character areas in Ashwell, with area four including post-War properties.

Councillor Ian Albert commented that it was important to pick up points from the consultation and the points that Mr Cook made.

Councillor Ruth Brown proposed and Councillor Steve Jarvis seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the boundary changes to the Ashwell Conservation Area were approved and the new Ashwell conservation area was designated.
- (2) That the Ashwell CAAMP were approved and adopted.
- (3) That Officers were authorised to undertake the associated administrative tasks to finalise the designation of the Ashwell conservation area, outlined in paragraph 8.6.
- (4) That delegated authority was granted to the Service Director – Regulatory in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Transport to make any minor non-material corrections (including but not limited to cosmetic additions or presentational alterations) to the CAAMP as considered necessary for the publication of the CAAMP.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To ensure that our Conservation Areas and historic assets within North Hertfordshire are appropriately assessed and designated to inform decision making for planning applications and in the preparation of neighbourhood plans and our Local Plan.

199 PIRTON CONSERVATION AREA

Audio recording – 1:30:46

Councillor Ruth Brown presented the report entitled 'Pirton Conservation Area' and advised:

- The report sought Cabinet approval for the new Conservation area in Pirton.
- Revisions had been made following the consultation.
- Appendix A detailed the consultation, and Appendix B detailed the proposed changes.

Councillor Ruth Brown proposed and Councillor Sean Prendergast seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the boundary changes to the Pirton Conservation Area are approved in the new Pirton Conservation Area was designated.
- (2) That the Pirton CAAMP was approved and adopted.
- (3) That Officers were authorised to undertake the associated administrative tasks to finalise the designation of the Pirton Conservation Area, outlined in paragraph 8.6.
- (4) That the delegated authority was granted to the Service Director – Regulatory in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Transport to make any minor non-material corrections (including but not limited to cosmetic additions or presentational alterations) to the CAAMP as considered necessary for the publication of the CAAMP.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure that our Conservation Areas and historic assets within North Hertfordshire are appropriately assessed and designated to inform decision making for planning applications and in the preparation of neighbourhood plans and our Local Plan.

200 Q4 UPDATE ON PROGRESS AGAINST THE COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 22-23

Audio recording – 1:32:49

Councillor Ian Albert presented the report entitled 'Q4 Update on the Progress Against the Council Delivery Plan 22-23' and advised:

- The discussions at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee around this item were welcomed.
- The report brought together key projects that the Council planned to deliver.
- The end of year report included an update on the Local Government Boundary Review which was now complete.
- There was detail on the progress of continuing projects, completed projects, and upcoming projects.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked questions surrounding EV charging points, Royston Leisure Centre, Solar Panels and procurement and resourcing risks.
- There was discussion surrounding the prioritisation criteria of projects, which was usually done at Service Director level.

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis commented that projects needed to be viewed as living documents, which would need to be looked at as budget decreases. Prioritisation of the delivery plan was needed.

Councillor Steve Jarvis commented on the solar panel issues at Royston Leisure Centre, and the need to think about potential project outcomes. The outcomes could be different from expectations, and different delivery routes and priorities should be explored.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Elizabeth Dennis seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Cabinet noted the progress against Council projects as set out in the Council Delivery Plan (Appendix A) including new milestones, deleted milestones, and changes to milestone dates and risks.
- (2) That Cabinet noted the deletion of projects outlined in 8.6, to be replaced by new projects in 2023-24.
- (3) That Cabinet noted the completion of the Museum and HTH recovery, Customer Portal, Full review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, and Green Space Management Strategy Projects.
- (4) That Cabinet noted the reduction in the Town Centre Recovery risk score from a 3 to a risk score of 2.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: The Council Delivery Plan (CDP) monitoring reports provide Cabinet, with an opportunity to monitor progress against the key Council projects, and understand any new issues, risks, or opportunities.

201 REVENUE BUDGET OUTTURN 2022/23

Audio recording – 1:43:48

Councillor Sean Nolan, Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee presented the referral and advised:

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- The considerations around this item looked at a number of areas, but overall the report was seen positively as less was being spent.
- The Committee had questions surrounding items such as parking charge write-downs, which had a negative impact on the balance.
- There were questions over the way items were looked at previously and budgeted in.
- For example, the Management Fee for the Leisure Facilities was not quite back at pre-Covid Levels. This was due to the income from gyms and pools being down due to the pandemic, but the income is likely to return close to pre-Covid levels.
- The Committee discussed any future items and how the finance team could look at things going forward. As the Covid-19 pandemic would not have as much of an effect on items, how that would affect the ability to budget in future.
- There were questions around ensuring reality was reflected in smaller variance going forward.

Councillor Ian Albert presented the report entitled 'Revenue Budget Outturn 2022/23' and advised:

- The report set out the position on Revenue Budget across the final quarter and the year overall.
- Appendix A summarised the budget movements across the year.
- The final budget had moved from £18.2million to a final spend of £16.7million. Some provisions set aside for Covid-19 were not required and the increase in investment interest income affected the final net spend.
- There would be additional investment income and inflation impacts on budgets going forward.
- The 23/24 budget provision for Covid-19 impacts had been decreased in the budget setting process and it was expected to be confirmed in the Q1 investment returns would be significantly above budget. In the longer term it was assumed that interest rates and inflation would decrease.
- Table 4 detailed spend movement in the last quarter, and Table 7 set out the expected year end general fund position, subject to audit.

Councillor Steve Jarvis commented that the income from Churchgate was significantly higher than budgeted.

In response to the question from Councillor Steve Jarvis, Councillor Elizabeth Dennis advised that the £10k carried over for the Boundary Review was a hold to cover objections or call-ins of the Boundary Review by Members of Parliament. This would be released as the deadline for call-in had passed.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Alistair Willoughby seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Cabinet noted this report.
- (2) That Cabinet approved a decrease of £920k in the 2022/23 net General Fund expenditure, as identified in table 4 and paragraph 8.1, to a total of £15.818million.
- (3) That Cabinet approved the changes to the 2023/24 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.3, a total £47k decrease in net expenditure.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- (4) That Council approves the net transfer from earmarked reserves, as identified in table 9, of £5.274million.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) 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.
- (2) Changes to the Council's balances are monitored and approved.

202 INVESTMENT STRATEGY (CAPITAL AND TREASURY) END OF YEAR REVIEW 2022/23

Audio recording – 1:50:43

Councillor Sean Nolan, Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee presented the referral and advised:

- Discussion centred around on the positive and negative effects of interest rates and inflation on the Council and its residents.
- There were questions around Property Improvements, such as the project at the Royston Leisure Centre.
- There were comments surrounding the balance of cost against return, the Council's role and risks that should be considered.

Councillor Ian Albert presented the report entitled 'Investment Strategy (Capital and Treasury) End of Year Review 2022/23' and advised:

- The report set out the position on Capital Budgets for the year up to 31 March 2023 and the Treasury Investment returns.
- Tables 2 and 3 set out the changes to the forecast spend during the final quarter, and paragraph 8.6 detailed the completed Capital Schemes.
- Paragraph 8.10 onwards, confirmed that the Council complied with the Investment Strategy during 2022/23 and its position on Investment Returns.

In response to the question from Councillor Ian Albert, the Service Director – Resources advised that the performance indicators in the report were for 22/23.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Alistair Willoughby seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Cabinet noted expenditure of £6.923million in 2022/23 on the capital programme, paragraph 8.3 refers.
- (2) That Cabinet approved the adjustments to the capital programme for 2023/24 as a result of the revised timetable of schemes detailed in table 2, increasing the estimated spend in by £1.222million.
- (3) That Cabinet noted the position of the availability of capital resources, as detailed in table 4 paragraph 8.7 and the requirement to keep the capital programme under review for affordability.
- (4) That Cabinet approved the application of £6.300million of capital receipts/set aside towards the 2022/23 capital programme, paragraph 8.7 refers.

(5) Cabinet noted the position of Treasury Management activity as at the end of March 2023.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- (6) Cabinet was asked to recommend this report to Council and ask Council to:
- Approve the actual 2022/23 prudential and treasury indicators.
 - Note the annual Treasury Report for 2022/23.

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.

203 YEAR END REPORT ON RISK MANAGEMENT GOVERNANCE

Audio recording – 1:54:19

Councillor Sean Nolan, Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, presented the referral and advised:

- The discussion at the Committee focussed on managing risk and actions undertaken by the Council, being risk aware and understanding where risks were generated from.
- Discussion also looked at the role and inputs of the Shared Internal Audit Service and the Shared Anti-Fraud Service in Risk Management.

Councillor Ian Albert presented the report entitled 'Year End Report on Risk Management Governance' and advised:

- The report set out Risk Management over the last year.
- Various corporate risks were included in the Council Delivery Plan, which gave a broader look at the Council's Risk Management Activities.
- Paragraph 8.7 detailed Risk Appetite and Horizon Scanning.
- The Council needed to consider being brave in relation to risk, but balance against the need to look after resident's money and provide services the provide value for money.
- The report promoted the role of the Performance and Risk Management Group, which Members of the Finance, Audit and Risk and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Executive could attend.

Councillor Steve Jarvis commented that he was concerned that there was nothing related to the risks of Climate Change on the Risk Register. There were serious risks to the Council and the ability to deliver services posed by Climate Change that needed to be highlighted and evaluated.

The Service Director – Resources advised that the corporate risks fed through from the Council Delivery Plan, which was made up of specific actions and the risks in relation to those. He advised that the next Council Delivery Plan would be updated to reflect the risk and actions that would be developed in relation to climate change.

Councillor Steve Jarvis proposed an additional recommendation that the risk associated with Climate Change should be recognised when the Council Delivery Plan is updated in Autumn.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed, with additional recommendation and Councillor Alistair Willoughby seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Cabinet noted the comments from FAR on the Annual Risk Management update.
- (2) That Cabinet noted the comments from FAR on the review of the Risk Management Framework.
- (3) That the risk associated with Climate Change should be recognised when the Council Delivery Plan is updated in the Autumn.

REFERRED TO COUNCIL:

- (1) That Council consider the Annual Risk Management update, including comments provided by Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

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.

The meeting closed at 9.33 pm

Chair