

# NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## MINUTES

Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices,  
Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City  
on Tuesday, 18th December, 2018 at 7.30 pm

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:** David Scholes (Chief Executive), Anthony Roche (Deputy Chief Executive), Ian Couper (Service Director - Resources), Jeanette Thompson (Service Director - Legal and Community), Howard Crompton (Service Director - Customers), Louise Symes (Strategic Planning and Projects Manager) and Melanie Stimpson (Democratic Services Manager)

### 71 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

#### Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 1 - 1 minute 08 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Barnard and Bernard Lovewell.

### 72 MINUTES - 10 SEPTEMBER 2018

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 1 - 1 minute 30 seconds*

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 10 September 2018 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

### 73 MINUTES - 25 SEPTEMBER 2018

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 1 - 2 minute 03 seconds*

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 25 September 2018 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

### 74 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 1 - 2 minute 32 seconds*

In accordance with 100B (4)(B) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with the urgent procedure rules as contained within the Council's Constitution the following matters were considered.

- a. Recommendation to Council – Chief Inspector Julie Wheatley,
- b. Information Note: North Hertfordshire Museum of Hitchin Town Hall – Acquisition of 14/15 Brand Street.

The recommendation to Council was considered at the conclusion of Agenda Item No.8 – Royston First Business Improvement District (BID) Renewal.

The Information Note: North Hertfordshire Museum and Hitchin Town Hall – Acquisition of 14/15 Brand Street was presented at the conclusion of Agenda Item No. 13 – Corporate Business Planning – Draft Budget 2019-2020

Prior to item (b) being discussed Councillors Julian Cunningham and Michael Weeks declared interests as Members of the Cabinet Sub-Committee (Council Charities).

**75 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 1 - 3 minute 34 seconds*

- (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.

**76 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 1 - 4 minute 26 seconds*

Royston First Business Improvement (BID) Renewal

Mr John Gourd, Site Director, Johnson Matthey gave an update on the vast improvement in the last eleven years explaining that the BID was now focussing on the industrial area and raising the profile of Royston. The relationship with the District Council was fantastic and with Members on the Advisory Committee and the support was greatly appreciated. In response to a question from Councillor Levett it was noted that the bid area had been extended to capture and bring benefits to Royston Gallery.

**77 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

There were no items referred from other Committees.

**78 ROYSTON FIRST BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID) RENEWAL**

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 1 - 9 minute 35 seconds*

Prior to the item being discussed Councillor Tony Hunter declared an interest in that he was a Member of the Bid Management team as a District Council representative and in accordance with legal advice would leave the Chamber for the duration of the item.

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Communities Manager to obtain Cabinet's endorsement of proposals to progress the renewal ballot for the BID for Royston First.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Cabinet considers the Royston First BID renewal proposals appended at A.
- (2) That the Cabinet instructs the Returning Officer to hold the BID renewal ballot for Royston.

**Tuesday, 18th December, 2018**

- (3) That the Service Director – Customers be authorised to cast the Council's votes in the Royston First BID renewal ballots in favour of acceptance.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** The Council is under a legal duty to comply with the BID arrangements under section 44 of the Local Government Act 2003 ("the Act"). This includes compliance with the Act and The Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended) ("the Regulations") in respect of receipt of any BID renewal.

Councillor Hunter returned to the meeting.

## **79 RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL - CHIEF INSPECTOR JULIE WHEATLEY**

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 1 - 21 minute 50 seconds*

The Leader of the Council introduced the following item of Other Business – Chief Inspector Julie Wheatley.

After 8 years serving the North Herts community in various positions, Chief Inspector Julie Wheatley has been promoted to Superintendent and will be leaving her role with us in the New Year. During the four years that Julie has been the North Herts Chief Inspector she has worked hard to build strong partnerships with the Authority and other local partners to improve community safety and reduce anti-social behaviour and crime and disorder. North Herts is one of the highest performing Community Safety Partnerships in the county, is one of the safest places to live in Hertfordshire and the country and has the highest rates of victim satisfaction in the county.

Following a vote it was:-

### **RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL:**

That in accordance with paragraph 4.4.1(b) of the Council's Constitution Full Council recognises the exceptional contribution to the community made by Chief Inspector Julie Wheatley and places on record our sincere thanks and appreciation for her service in North Hertfordshire.

## **80 STRATEGIC PLANNING MATTERS**

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 1 - 23 minute 40 seconds*

The Executive Member for Planning, Enterprise and Transport presented the report of the Services Director – Regulatory and Addendum/Alterations informing Members of the current positions regarding strategic planning matters.

Following discussion the Leader of the Council moved the recommendations with the Addendum/Alterations and following a vote it was

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report on Strategic Planning Matters be noted;
- (2) That the submissions in Appendices A to F are noted and endorsed by Cabinet.
- (3) That Cabinet reaffirm its resolution of 30 July 2013 "That a Community Infrastructure Levy for North Hertfordshire be not pursued for the time being".

- (4) That Paragraph 8.1.2 in the report be clarified as follows:-

“The County Council supports the introduction of CIL, at an appropriate level to recover necessary infrastructure and particularly in relation to the way it deals with the cumulative impacts from smaller sites.”

- (5) That Paragraph 8.5.2 in the report be deleted and replaced with:-

“8.5.2 Further consultations on changes to planning guidance and further planning reforms were issued in October 2018. The first of these closed in early December 2018. A response was prepared and submitted under delegated powers and is attached as Appendix F. The second consultation closes in January 2019. Any response will be prepared under delegated powers and reported to a future meeting.”

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

- (1) To keep the Cabinet informed of recent developments on strategic planning matters and progress on the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.
- (2) To provide clarity on the Council's corporate approach to the collection of financial and other contributions from developers and to enable the production of a revised Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

**81 PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY and INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY**

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 1 - 35 minute 50 seconds*

The Executive Member for Planning, Enterprise and Transport presented the report of the Service Directors – Regulatory and Place seeking approval of these Strategies and agreement of their associated Action Plans. The Leader of the Council moved the recommendations and following a vote it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That Cabinet adopt the Playing Pitch Strategy and its associated Action Plan as set out in Appendix A.
- (2) That Cabinet adopt the Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy and its associated Action Plan as set out in Appendix B.
- (3) That Cabinet recommends that delegated authority is given to the Service Directors of Regulatory and Place to agree updates to the Playing Pitch Strategy and Indoor Sport Facilities Strategy and their associated Action Plans as required in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning, Enterprise and Transport and the Executive Member for Leisure and Green Issues.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:** The Playing Pitch and Indoor Sport Facilities Strategies will ensure that North Hertfordshire continues to work in partnership with key organisations to provide accessible sport and leisure facilities to meet current and future needs across the District. The Action Plans recommend a number of projects for the District which seek to deliver the vision and aims contained in the strategies.

**82 THE CONTRACTING OUT OF HOMELESSNESS REVIEW DECISIONS**

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 1 - 45 minute 50 seconds*

Report of the Service Director – Regulatory on the contracting out of homelessness reviews. The Leader of the Council moved the recommendations and following a vote it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That Cabinet approves the 'contracting out' of homelessness reviews and the subsequent issuing of decisions on the Council's behalf, in accordance with the relevant legislation.
- (2) That Cabinet agrees the allocation of the ring-fenced homelessness grant (from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) to fund the anticipated initial cost of contracting out, of between £5k-£10k for the period 1 January 2019 to 31 March 2020.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:** The outsourcing of homelessness review decisions to a specialist organisation should provide an efficient and cost effective solution, releasing management capacity that can be directed at further supporting the front-line response to the new provisions of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA).

**83 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2019-2023**

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 1 - 50 minute 0 seconds*

Cabinet discussed the report of the Communications Manger on the consideration and adoption of the proposed Strategy setting out the strategic direction of the Council's communications over the next five years.

The Leader moved that the recommendations be approved and following a vote it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That Cabinet adopts the North Hertfordshire District Council Communications Strategy 2019 – 2023.
- (2) That Cabinet agrees the delegation for creating the Action Plan and the annual review of the Action Plan contained in the Communications Strategy, to the Communications Manager in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:** To allow the Council's communications team to carry out a programme of relevant communications activities, in line with an agreed strategic approach, ensuring residents and other stakeholders are well informed about the work of the Council and about relevant activities in the District.

**84 INFORMATION NOTE: NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE MUSEUM AND HITCHIN TOWN HALL - ACQUISITION OF 14/15 BRAND STREET**

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 1 - 58 minute 00seconds*

The Information Note of the Deputy Chief Executive updated Members on the proposed acquisition of 14/15 Brand Street since the Cabinet meeting on 20 November 2018.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Information Note updating the Cabinet on the proposed acquisition of 14/15 Brand Street, since the Cabinet meeting on 20 November 2018, be noted.

**85 CORPORATE BUSINESS PLANNING - DRAFT BUDGET 2019/20**

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 1 – 1 hour 10 minute 10 seconds*

Report of the Service Director – Resources to consider the draft budget for 2019/20 and the main factors which contribute to the determination of the North Hertfordshire District Council Tax level, and consider the appropriate level of Council Tax that will be recommended to the meeting of the Council on the 7 February 2019.

It was reported that the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement on 13 December showed that a lot of assumptions in the report were true, but that there would be an overall reduction in funding of around £100,000 compared to what had been estimated.

Hertfordshire had been successful in becoming a Business Rates Pilot in 2019/20 which was more advantageous than being part of a pool.

It was noted that the figure of £15,426k of total funding in Table 4 on page 275 of the report – Forecast General Fund Position was incorrect and should be corrected to £15,389k. However, the confirmation of the funding from Central Government meant that the total would change to £15,316k. There would be a corresponding reduction in the planned contribution to funding equalisation reserve (also in Table 4) from £723k to £650k.

Executive Members discussed amendments to the budget and the Cabinet would request that these be considered again in January 2019.

The Leader moved that the recommendations and additional recommendation be approved and following a vote it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That Cabinet notes the significant uncertainty around Central Government funding levels in 2019/20 and beyond, and that the estimates provided could be subject to significant change.
- (1) That Cabinet notes the estimated position on the Collection Fund and how this will be funded.
- (2) That Cabinet confirms that Council Tax increases for 2019/20 should be in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- (4) That Cabinet notes the comments on the inclusion of the savings and investment proposals in the draft budget to include any additional savings or investments.
- (5) That Cabinet notes the comments on the inclusion of the capital investment proposals to include any additional capital investments.
- (6) That the Cabinet asks for amendments to the budget as discussed to be looked at again in January 2019.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

- (1) To ensure that all relevant factors are taken into consideration when arriving at the proposed Council Tax precept for 2019/20.
- (2) To ensure that the Cabinet recommends a balanced budget to Council on 7 February 2019.

**86 SECOND QUARTER REVENUE MONITORING 2018/19**

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 2 - 0 minute 10 seconds*

The Deputy Leader presented the report to inform Cabinet of the summary position on revenue income and expenditure forecasts for the financial year 2018/19 as at the end of the second quarter.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That Cabinet notes the report.
- (2) That Cabinet approves the changes to the 2018/19 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.2, a £17k decrease in net expenditure.
- (3) That Cabinet notes the changes to the 2019/20 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.2, a £213k decrease in net expenditure and incorporated in the draft revenue budget for 2019/20.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:** 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.

**87 SECOND QUARTER CAPITAL MONITORING 2018/19**

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 2 - 7 minute 20 seconds*

Report of the Service Director – Resources updating the Cabinet on progress with delivering the capital programme for 2018/19 as at the end of September 2018 and indicating its impact on the approved capital programme for 2018/20 – 2021/22.

The Leader of the Council moved the recommendations and following a vote it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That Cabinet notes the forecast expenditure of **£7.211million** in 2018/19 on the capital programme, paragraph 8.2 refers, and approves the adjustments detailed in table 3 which resulted in a net decrease on the working estimate of **£2.468million**.
- (2) That Cabinet approves the adjustments to the capital programme for 2018/19 onwards as a result of the revised timetable of schemes detailed in table 2, increasing the estimated spend in future years 2019/20 by **£7.387million**.
- (3) That Cabinet notes the position of the availability of capital resources, as detailed in table 4, and the requirement to keep the capital programme under review for affordability.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:** Cabinet is required to approve revisions to the capital programme. Cabinet is required to ensure that the capital programme is fully funded.

**88 TREASURY MANAGEMENT SECOND QUARTER 2018/19**

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 2 - 12 minute 30 seconds*

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented the recommendations in the report of the Service Director – Resources informing the Cabinet of Treasury Management Activity in the second quarter 2018/19. Following a vote it was

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet note the position of Treasury Management activity at the end of September 2018.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:** That Cabinet recommends to Council to note the position of Treasury Management activity as at the end of September 2018.

**REASONS 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.

**89 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2019/2020**

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 2 - 13 minute 25 seconds*

The Deputy Leader of the Council introduced the report of the Service Director – Customers. The Leader of the Council asked the Cabinet to agree the recommendations. Following a vote it was

**RESOLVED:**

- i That Cabinet notes the CTRS position relating to this and previous financial years.
- ii That there be no changes to the CTRS for 2019/2020 and that this is recommended to Council at its meeting on 17 January 2019.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:** That Cabinet recommends to the Council that the level of Scheme funding to be allocated to the Parish, Town and Community Councils will be the same as 2018/2019 and will be reviewed for 2020/2021.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

- i To keep the Scheme aligned as far as possible with Housing Benefit.
- ii To ensure that the Council complies with the requirement to ensure that a Scheme is in place by 11 March 2019.

**90 BUSINESS RATES RETAIL DISCOUNT SCHEME**

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 2 - 18 minute 15 seconds*

Report of the Service Director – Customers to agree a Business Rates Retail Discount Scheme for North Hertfordshire following the Budget announcement on 29 October 2018. The Leader of the Council moved the recommendations and following a vote it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the high level implications of the proposed scheme be noted.

**Tuesday, 18th December, 2018**

- (2) That the Cabinet delegates the final detail of the scheme to the Service Director - Customers in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance & IT.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

- (1) To comply with the proposals announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Budget on 29 October 2018.
- (2) To provide additional financial assistance to retail businesses in line with the Budget announcement.
- (3) To ensure that the scheme will be finalised in time for implementation from 1 April 2019.

**91 CORPORATE STATEMENT OF ENFORCEMENT POLICY REVIEW**

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 2 - 20 minute 40 seconds*

Report of the Legal Regulatory Team Manager which reviews the Council's Corporate Statement of Enforcement Policy so that enforcement decisions and actions are consistent throughout the Council. The Leader of the Council moved the recommendations with the proposal to include the enforcement flowchart and following a vote it was

**RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet approves the amended Policy contained at Appendix A (with flowchart).

**REASONS FOR DECISION:** To bring the Council's Corporate Enforcement Policy up to date.

**92 OUTBOUND MAIL CONTRACT**

*Audio Recording – Start of Item – Session 2 - 24 minute 30 seconds*

Report of the Service Director – Customers seeking approval under rule 28.9 of the Council's Contract Procurement Rules to enter into a variation of the Inbound Mail Contract with Northgate Public Services to also include the provision of an Outbound Mail Service.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That Cabinet approves the Variation of Contract with Northgate Public Services for the provision of an Inbound Mail Contract to also include an Outbound Mail service, initially until December 2020 with an option to extend to December 2023.
- (2) That the position relating to the on-going operation of the Document Centre be noted.
- (3) That the intention to extend the Inbound Mail Contract for three years be noted.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:** To achieve revenue savings of around £78,000 per annum and the variation is necessary to achieve new ways of working to ensure the Council meets its priority to deliver cost effective services.

**93 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 2 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).

94 **OUTBOUND MAIL CONTRACT**

Exempt report of the Service Director – Customers further to the Part I report.

**RESOLVED:**

That the position relating to the out-going operation of the Document Centre and the intention to extend the inbound Main Contract be noted.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:** To achieve revenue savings of around £78,000 per annum and the variation is necessary to achieve new ways of working to ensure the Council meets its priority to deliver cost effective services.

The meeting closed at 10.22 pm

Chairman