

MINUTES of a meeting of the CABINET held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 4 MARCH 2014

Present: Councillor R Blunt (Chairman)

Councillors R D Bayliss, T Gillard, T J Pendleton, N J Rushton and A V Smith MBE

In Attendance: Councillors D De Lacy, J Legrys, S Sheahan and M B Wyatt

Officers: Mr S Bambrick, Mr R Bowmer, Ms C E Fisher, Mrs C Hammond and Miss E Warhurst

104. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received.

105. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor N J Rushton declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 3 - Public Question and Answer Session, as owner of the indoor market in Ashby de la Zouch, and would leave the meeting during this item, and a non pecuniary interest in item 7 – Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership Economic Plans, as a member of the LLEP.

106. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Having declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, Councillor N J Rushton left the meeting.

There were no public questions received.

The Chairman had received a request from Councillor M B Wyatt to ask a question.

Councillor M B Wyatt asked the following to Councillor T Gillard:

“Prior to any expenditure being incurred out of the approved capital programme, I would like to ask if Cabinet would reconsider the options for works to the Coalville Market.”

Councillor Wyatt provided the following additional information to support his question that was circulated to Members in the additional papers.

“I wish to ask you to re-consider your budget proposal to spend £168,000 on the indoor Market in Coalville.

For many years the Market has failed to meet the aspirations of the Council and local residents. Many shoppers to the area feel the Market Hall is depressing, cold, unwelcoming and out of the way from the main shopping area.

I genuinely believe that this is the right time to seriously look again at the idea of an outdoor Market, which many local residents are eager to see in our Town.

In other Towns in the region having an outdoor Market brings extra trade, and if located in the right place can complement the already established traders.

Statistics show that income from both established shops and traders do increase, so making it more beneficial to have them trading in close proximity.

The siting of an open Market is one which will need some careful consideration but there are a number of sites.

Chairman's initials

Marlborough Square could be a prime site. A reduction in parking could be an issue, but if the old Market Hall was utilised for additional parking then this problem could easily be resolved and provide the Council with additional income.

The Precinct Owners have learned recently that having an open Market in the Precinct is a positive contribution to their established traders. After speaking to a representative of the Precinct they have acknowledged that the food and drinks festival was a huge success for their traders. Clearly another approach to the Precinct owners should be established to see if this site could also be considered.

Finally the Clock Tower. This site is a prime site and the heart of our Town.

Coalville needs a new start. Having an outdoor Market will help to regenerate our Town, remove the old Market Hall which is an eyesore, and finally give Coalville a future.”

Councillor T Gillard gave the following response:

“The Council have received positive feedback from traders and shoppers that the Indoor Markets popularity could be improved with investment to the approaches, signage and entrances. Officers are also working with the market traders to improve the marketing and promotion of the stalls and special events held at the market.

We are confident that the market will increase the income it generates by attracting new traders. The investment will also improve the profile of the market which in turn supports the regeneration of Coalville Town Centre.

I note Councillor Wyatt’s suggestion that we should explore the opportunity for an open air market; however this is an option that has already been shown not to be viable. This said, we fully support opportunities to encourage commercial activities in open spaces in the Town Centre such as the events held in the Belvoir Shopping Centre.”

Councillor R Blunt added that the administration was not against the idea of an outdoor market, but the authority did not have the expertise to run this service. He advised Councillor Wyatt that they would be happy to support, as much as possible, an outdoor market should the right operator be found and that the Business Portfolio Holder and the Head of Regeneration and Planning would be happy to discuss any ideas on going forward with him.

Councillor N J Rushton returned to the meeting.

107. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2014.

By affirmation of the meeting it was

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Reason for decision: To comply with the Constitution.

108. HOUSING REPAIRS SCHEDULE OF RATES AND RELATED SUPPORT CONTRACTS

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

Chairman’s initials

He advised Members that the current contract was coming to an end and that the procurement of new contracts was taking place. He informed Members that it had been proposed to change the scope of the works to remove a number of specialist services and commission them separately.

It was moved by Councillor R D Bayliss, seconded by Councillor N J Rushton and

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet delegates authority to award the Housing Repairs Schedule of Rates Contract and related support contracts to the Director of Services in consultation with the Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and the Housing Portfolio Holder.

Reason for decision: To ensure the continued service provision is delivered in an effective and efficient manner to support the work carried out by the In House Repairs Team.

109. MAJOR AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS CONTRACT - DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO AWARD

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

He advised Members that the provision of alterations to the homes of older and/or disabled Tenant's homes, was not a statutory duty, however it was more cost effective to put the contract out to tender and due to the nature of the works this would enable both large and small local companies to submit quotes.

Following a question from Councillor R Blunt, the Director of Services advised that there was no significant waiting list, and the work that was required was manageable.

It was moved by Councillor R D Bayliss, seconded by Councillor N J Rushton and

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet delegates authority to award the contracts for the Provision of Aids and Adaptations Works to the Director of Services in consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder.

Reason for decision: The level of expenditure on this contract exceeds the authority threshold in the Scheme of Delegation and to ensure the delivery of service provision.

110. LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP ECONOMIC PLANS

The Business Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

He informed Members that the Council had developed a Local Growth Plan to help promote the district for economic growth and regeneration funding opportunities and he highlighted the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership's priorities that the Council wished to promote over the next three years. He advised Members that a more detailed resource and delivery plan would then be brought to a future Cabinet once the results of the bids to Government were known.

It was moved by Councillor T Gillard, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT:

Chairman's initials

Cabinet -

1. Endorses in principle Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), delegating the final approvals to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader;
2. Supports the submission of the City Deal (whilst there are still final minor negotiations underway with Cabinet Office), delegating the final approvals to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader;
3. Receives an outline of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Strategy
4. Endorses the North West Leicestershire Local Growth Plan

Reason for decision: To agree which priority investment projects will be incorporated into the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan

111. IMPROVING OUR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Leader presented the report to Members.

He advised Members that the programme aimed to improve the customer's experience of service delivery. He highlighted that there had already been a significant reduction in the number of rejected calls since 2011/12 and that general customer satisfaction was improving. He outlined the three phases of work to be carried out and passed on his thanks to the Customer Team Manager for his hard work.

It was moved by Councillor R Blunt, seconded by Councillor A V Smith and

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet notes the progress of the ICE programme

Reason of decision: To note the progress of the ICE Programme.

112. FORMER TENANT RENT ARREARS, CURRENT TENANT RENT ARREARS, COUNCIL TAX, NON DOMESTIC RATES AND SUNDRY DEBTOR WRITE-OFFS

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented to Members.

He informed Members that in 2012/13 the Authority had the highest collection of Business Rates in the County and had performed comparatively well on Council Tax arrears.

It was moved by Councillor N J Rushton, seconded by Councillor R D Bayliss and

RESOLVED THAT:

1. Cabinet approves the write offs over £10,000 detailed in this report.
2. Cabinet notes the amounts written off under delegated powers.

Reason for decision: To comply with proper accounting practices.

113. PROPOSED COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2014/15

Chairman's initials

The Leader presented the report to Members.

He advised Members that a lot of hard work had been put into ensuring that the format of the plan was suitable for customers and took the opportunity to thank the Head of Legal and Support Services for all the work that had been done. He informed Members that the Council's priorities would remain the same.

It was moved by Councillor R Blunt, seconded by Councillor A V Smith and

RESOLVED THAT:

Following consideration of the proposed Council Delivery Plan for 2014/15, Cabinet -

1. Endorses the plan's content and recommends it to Council for approval on 25 March 2014.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any final amendments to the plan prior to Council on 25 March 2014.

Reason for decision: To endorse the Council's Delivery Plan for 2014/15 prior to Council's consideration.

114. 2013/14 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Leader presented the report to Members, outlining some of the key performance highlights in respect of Leisure Centre memberships, early completions of new affordable homes, Refuse and Recycling, Development Control, the General Fund forecast and sickness absence rates.

Councillor T Gillard highlighted the work of the Business Focus Team and that three new Market Traders had been attracted to Coalville Indoor Market.

Councillor R D Bayliss referred to the delivery of decent homes improvements and advised that due to external issues there were 19 properties behind, but advised that this should be improved by the end of the next quarter.

Councillor T J Pendleton reported that there had been a drop in the target in processing applications due to the contentious nature of two applications, however with a fully staffed service, performance should improve.

Councillor A V Smith advised that she would be hoping to run a recycling campaign later in the year to remind residents of what could be recycled.

It was moved by Councillor R Blunt, seconded by Councillor T Gillard and

RESOLVED THAT:

The Quarter 3 Performance Report (October – December 2013) be received and noted.

Reason for decision: The report is provided for Members to effectively monitor the organisation's performance.

115. ADDITIONAL COSTS OF THE DECENT HOMES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME 2014/15

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

Chairman's initials

He reminded Members that at the last meeting of Cabinet they were advised that additional costs had been identified and that this would need to be met from other reserves.

It was moved by Councillor R D Bayliss, seconded by Councillor N J Rushton and

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet -

1. Notes the projected increase in costs associated with completing the 2014/15 Decent Homes Programme of Improvements.
2. Recommends to Council the revised 2014/15 Housing Capital Programme and HRA budget as detailed in appendix 2 and 3 of this report to fund this increase in costs, and the amended prudential indicators detailed in appendix 4.
3. Agrees to receive a further report at its next meeting on 24 June 2014 regarding the funding options to complete decent homes improvements to the additional non decent properties recently identified.

Reason for decision: To ensure that Council has adequate financial resources to deliver the required programme of improvement works to Council tenants homes.

116. MINUTES OF THE GRANTS REVIEW WORKING PARTY

The Community Services Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

She advised that concerns had been raised from the working party about the future of one off grants, but she has reassured them that the Authority was looking at a more productive way of looking at how they were granted.

It was moved by Councillor A V Smith, seconded by Councillor T J Pendleton and

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet approves the recommendations made by the Grants Review Working Party as detailed within the minutes attached at appendix 1.

Reason for decision: To enable community and voluntary organisations in the District to receive financial assistance for projects that meet the Council's priorities.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 5.40 pm

Chairman's initials