

MINUTES of a meeting of the CABINET held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2017

Present: Councillor R Blunt (Chairman)

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

In Attendance: Councillors R Adams, J Clarke, J G Coxon, D Everitt, G Hoults, R Johnson, J Legrys, S Sheahan and M Specht

Officers: Ms T Ashe, T Galloway, Mrs C Hammond, Mr G Jones, Mrs B Smith and Miss E Warhurst

62. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor T J Pendleton.

63. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Members declared the following interests:

Councillor N J Rushton declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 5 - Leicester & Leicestershire Authorities' Joint Strategic Growth Plan: Draft for Consultation, as the Leader of Leicestershire County Council with responsibility for Joint Strategic Planning.

64. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

65. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2017.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2017 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Reason for decision: To comply with the Constitution.

66. LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE AUTHORITIES' JOINT STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN: DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

The Leader presented the report to Members. He informed Members that he had received a question from a Councillor in relation to the item. He stated that as the purpose of the report was to agree the consultation and that there would be opportunity for the authority to discuss and agree its own comments during the process, it was anticipated that reports would be taken to Policy Development Group, Cabinet and then Council and felt it would be the appropriate place to discuss the issues raised in relation to the rail infrastructure.

He advised Members that the draft Joint Strategic Growth Plan had been prepared by the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities and it took into account the known strategic infrastructure aspirations including the Midlands connect. He highlighted that the plan projected the known housing needs from the HEDNA to cover the period of 2031 and 2050 and that the strategy sought to re-balance growth away from the current trend of

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adding hundreds of houses onto existing settlements and instead focussed homes in new strategic locations. The locations were one south of the county near Hinckley, one close to the city and one in the north of the county to complement the thousands of new jobs that were being created around East Midlands Airport and the Roxhill scheme.

He reminded Members that growth would happen so the strategy sought to manage the growth and to secure strategic infrastructure as a result, and stated that the draft strategy had been endorsed for consultation by the Leicester and Leicestershire Members' Advisory Group and that the consultation would run for twelve weeks from the 8 January 2018.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The process which had been undertaken in the preparation of a Draft Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire be noted and endorsed;
2. Cabinet noted that the consultation draft plan had been endorsed by the Members' Advisory Group (MAG) which oversees the preparation of the plan;
3. The consultation process and timetable be approved; and
4. A further report be brought back to Cabinet to consider the consultation responses with a view to Cabinet recommending approval of the final version of the plan to Council.

Reason for decision: To demonstrate support for the collaborative working that has taken place across the seven Districts/Borough Councils, Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and the Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, To note that MAG has been engaged in and supports the proposed document, To ensure that all partners are in support of the process and that it is consistent across the County, and that all residents and stakeholders have an opportunity to make comments on the proposals; and To ensure that there is an opportunity to scrutinise the final version of the plan before it is agreed.

67. LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE AUTHORITIES' JOINT STATEMENT OF CO-OPERATION RELATING TO OBJECTIVELY ASSESSED NEED FOR HOUSING

The Leader presented the report to Members.

He advised Members that the Localism Act 2011 introduced the Duty to Cooperate which was a legal test, which tested whether the Local Authority which was submitting its Local Plan had co-operated effectively, actively and on an on-going basis. He informed Cabinet that when the Council submitted its Local Plan to the Secretary of State the previous year a joint statement of cooperation was signed with all the neighbouring authorities within Leicestershire.

He stated that Melton had submitted its Local Plan to the Secretary of State and others were hot on their heels. He asked Members to endorse the updated Joint Statement to reflect the HEDNA in particular.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

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The Leicestershire and Leicestershire Authorities' Joint Statement of Co-operation relating to Objectively Assessed Need for Housing be endorsed.

Reason for decision: To comply with the Duty to Co-operate

68. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

He stated that the report sought Cabinet's support for the Council's ongoing digital transformation programme which aimed to improve customer services to the residents of the District, especially the on line offer and that by modernising the authority's approach to customer delivery and allowing more customer transactions to be delivered on line, the following benefits will be delivered:

- Customers can access services 24/7, and are not constrained by office opening hours
- More efficient processes can be conducted on line without the need for more laborious paper based systems or face to face / telephone transactions e.g. the table in 1.5 describes how much easier it will be for a resident to book a bulky waste collection
- Information on our customers can be collected more easily to enable services to be tailored to meet their needs
- Front line customer services staff will be freed up to help our more vulnerable customers who sometimes need more time

He advised Members that a dedicated project team had been set up, and in partnership with the Council's ICT provider, Firmstep, the authority would shortly be piloting an expanded on line service in Waste and Environmental Services. He informed Members that in order to deliver the initial phase of the programme, it was recommended that funds of £197k were allocated, although it should be noted that as more and more customer transactions take place on line, long term savings would be delivered as outlined in 1.5 (f).

Councillor N J Rushton stated that the digital transformation programme was one of the first initiatives to be delivered under the Council's Customer First Programme which was currently under development, and would put customers at the heart of everything the Council did and improving the offer to customers meant taking full advantage of what on line technology could deliver in the present day market place. He commended the digital transformation programme which would see the Council deliver customer services in a more flexible, accessible and efficient manner which would meet the expectations of the residents in the modern age.

Councillor R D Bayliss stated that he could do nothing but support the programme however he sought reassurances that residents of the district, which included many tenants that were not digitally minded received the support that they required.

Councillor N J Rushton stated that the residents that were not digitally competent would get the support as the programme would free up officer time to provide the support as required.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

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1. The aims and process of the Digital Transformation Programme be approved.
2. The allocated funds of £197k from reserves to ensure delivery of the initial phase of the programme be approved.
3. Further updates would be brought to Cabinet as the programme progresses be noted.
4. Additional funds would be required to ensure that the Council is fully digitised as far as is practicable, to ensure it keeps up with customer trends and expectations in being a flexible, efficient, effective and modern organisation, and reports would be brought to Cabinet as required for future phases be noted.

Reason for decision: To ensure Members are aware of the programme's details, progress, timescales and costs. And to obtain support from Members for the programme and its objectives.

69. 2017/18 QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Leader presented the report to Members.

He advised Members that the key focus for the authority was the Customer First Programme which had seen officers working to develop the strategy that would be presented to Members over the next few months and that staff workshops had been held to look at the current service delivery to identify workstreams to enhance and improve the service to customers. He highlighted the following improvements in the performance of the customer service team over the last two quarters:

- The Council had implemented a number of quick wins which were put in place to help reduce the call waiting time for customers.
- There had been a 16% increase in the number of calls answered compared to the same time the previous year achieving target of 74.4% over both quarters.
- There was also an improvement in call waiting times with the average being 1 minute 19 seconds that was from an average of 2 minutes 27 seconds at the same time the previous year.

He highlighted that the Council was still below target but it was a step in the right direction ensuring that customers were at the heart of everything that the authority did, adding that it was too long in the waiting but the journey had been started.

Councillor R Blunt provided Members with the following highlights from the Quarter:-

- The Planning Inspector had issued his final report in respect of the Local Plan and that it would then be considered at Council on 21 November 2017. Advising Members that it was no mean feat and was pleased that a credible plan was going forward for consideration.
- Following the 'call for sites' exercise in July and August, officers were assessing the employment sites received and identifying any potential additional sites for inclusion in the final Employment Land Availability Assessment report. The project was still on track for completion in Q3.
- The Green Shoots grant had been a great success with the purchase of 68,000 bulbs to be planted in the district. The free tree scheme had exceeded expectations again and there was currently 16,000 trees on order and they would be delivered in Q3.

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Councillor T Gillard stated that he had received a number of positive comments about the improvements in Coalville especially concerning the nightlife which was particularly busy. He also acknowledged and thanked all the staff that had worked on the Remembrance Day Parade especially the Cultural Services Officer which was a great success. He highlighted that the Business Focus Team had continued to work hard as mentioned in the report.

Councillor R D Bayliss was pleased to advise Members that the average re-let times, which had been concerning in the past, was not exceeding the target and he congratulated officers on their hard work. He stated that the back log of repairs had been actioned and that officers were now working on the current work.

Councillor N J Rushton advised Members that the general forecast surplus outturn was due to increase to £1.196m from a budget of £934K which was mainly due to the an increase in business rate collection, which had increased by £534k more. He stated that the surplus would have been more however there had been a few adverse events including an increase on the Leisure Services deficit. He was highlighted that more money had been spent on Planning Enforcement but this was in relation to Public Protection. He informed Members that the special expenses budget was still in tolerance and that the HRA budget was forecasting an outturn of £257k against a budget of £142k which was mainly due to an increase in rental income.

Councillor A V Smith advised Members that the 16,000 trees had arrived and where being delivered. She informed Members that there were two unhappy faces in her area which were the Leisure Centre Membership income and usage levels and was hoping that it was related to the holiday period and customers were not around to make use of the facilities but advised Members that she would be keeping an eye on the figures over the next quarter.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The Quarter 2 Performance Report (July - Sept 2017) be received and noted.

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

70. MINUTES OF THE COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY

The Community Services Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

She thanked the Members of the Working Party as they continued to press for a positive change in Coalville.

She informed Members that the Coalville by the Sea event in August had again been successful and was attended by around 1,000 local people adding her thanks to the event sponsor. She highlighted the work towards the Christmas Lights Switch on and the improved arrangements for the lights that were to be out in place. She acknowledged the Remembrance events that had been held at the weekend and it again had been a fantastic event, thanking the many volunteers that had helped to keep the public safe and ensure the events went smoothly. She added that she was looked forward to seeing the plans that the working party had for the commemorative artwork for the next year's commemorative event.

She noted the work on the mobile vehicle activated signs and concerns raised to Leicestershire County Council in relation to the replacement of damaged signs.

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She advised that the Chief Executive was keen for the Council to work towards the Green Flag award for both Coalville and Ashby parks and Members of the working party were very supportive of the proposals. It was noted that Coalville Park had suffered from vandalism and the Green Flag would help develop a framework to assist in prevention and protection of the park

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The recommendations made by the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party as detailed within the minutes be noted and the recommendations as summarised at 3.0 be approved.

Reason for Decision: To progress Coalville Special Expenses projects and programmes.

71. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED THAT:

In pursuance of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the business to be transacted involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Reason for decision: To enable the consideration of exempt information.

72. LAND SALE - COALVILLE

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

He updated Members on the progress of the work and the results of the drop in sessions that had been held. He outlined to Members the next steps of the process that included the submission of an application for outline planning permission.

Councillor R Blunt reminded Members that the sale of the land would ensure that the leisure project would move forward and that Council would be able to set an example with a good quality development design on land that the authority owned.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The results of the communications and engagement exercise be noted.
2. The submission of an application for outline planning consent be approved.

Reason for decision: Cabinet approval is sought to submit an application for outline planning permission.

73. ASSET MANAGEMENT - LONDON ROAD CAR PARK AND STENSON SQUARE

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

He advised Members that the decision at the Cabinet meeting in July had been called in and considered by Policy Development Group. He informed Cabinet that following the recommendation from the group that Cabinet reconsidered its decision the report before them asked Cabinet to undo its previous decision.

He acknowledged Councillors for calling in the decision and that active scrutiny of the decision ensured that the best outcome for Coalville could be delivered.

Councillor R Blunt stated that the Cabinet had to be brave and take the first step but Member scrutiny had proved that it may not have been the right step at that time.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The decisions made at the Cabinet meeting on 25 July 2017 with regard to Asset Management – London Road Car Park be reconsidered.
2. All recommendations approved with regard to Asset Management – London Road Car Park, with the exception of the recommendation to consider the contents of the report be withdrawn.
3. Authority be delegated to the Director of Housing to continue discussions to identify a suitable site for development in Coalville with the aim of securing the best possible outcome for the Council and the people of Coalville.

Reason for decision: Cabinet is required to consider the results of the call-in and determine the next steps.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 5.27 pm