

MINUTES of a meeting of the CABINET held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 29 JULY 2014

Present: Councillor R Blunt (Chairman)

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

In Attendance: Councillors N Clarke, C Large, T Neilson, S Sheahan and M B Wyatt

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

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N J Rushton.

17. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor R Blunt declared a Disclosable Non-Pecuniary Interest in the additional item, Waste Recycling Credits, as a Member of the Cabinet at Leicestershire County Council and would leave the meeting for the consideration of this item.

18. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no public questions received.

19. ADMISSION OF ADDITIONAL ITEM

RESOLVED THAT:

By reason of special circumstance in that an additional item of business needs to be considered before the next meeting of the Cabinet, the item entitled "Waste Recycling Credits" be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgency in accordance with Section 100B(4)(B) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Reason for decision: To enable the consideration of urgent business.

20. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2014.

By affirmation of the meeting it was

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Reason for decision: To comply with the Constitution.

The Chairman advised Members that, as item 5 - Investing in our Communities, required the approval of item 11- Provisional Financial Outturn 2013/14 report, it would be considered later in the meeting.

21. TENANT SCRUTINY PANEL - AMENDMENT TO TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

Chairman's initials

He welcomed Ms Janet Higgins, Chairperson of the panel to the meeting. He highlighted the background of the panel and advised Members that during the first year the panel had identified a number of areas within the Terms of Reference that were inappropriate for the function of a scrutiny body. He informed Members that the panel had worked with the contractors to iron out any issues with the work that had been done to tenants properties, leaving out the middleman and would recommend the model to other councils. He congratulated the Chairperson and panel members on the work they had done so far.

It was moved by Councillor R D Bayliss, seconded by Councillor T J Pendleton and

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet approves the implementation of the proposed revised Tenant Scrutiny Panel terms of reference as detailed in appendix b.

Reason for decision: The Tenant Scrutiny Panel propose amendments to the Panel's Terms of Reference.

22. RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Head of Finance presented the report to Members.

He advised Members that the Strategy had been to the Policy Development Group for consideration and that it had been requested that additional text be added to the first bullet point in paragraph 1.1 to read "to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees, agency staff, external contractors and the people it serves" and went on to add that that the health, safety and welfare of all agency staff and external contracts had always been an objective of the Council. He asked Cabinet to approve the Strategy with the inclusion of the additional text.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet approves the revised Risk Management Strategy attached at appendix 1, including the additional text as requested by the Policy Development Group.

Reason for decision: Having an up to date Risk Management Strategy will assist in the implementation of Council Delivery Plans and improve Value For Money.

23. ADDITIONAL COSTS OF THE DECENT HOMES PROGRAMME 2014/2015

The Chairman advised Members that it would be more appropriate to consider items 8 and 9 together and then agree the recommendations in each report.

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

He reminded Members of the background to the report. He advised Members that there were three options to consider, these were to either ignore the 305 properties, the authority could borrow the money or use its own resources to fund the work. He stated that this was the preferred option. He advised Members that this resource would be detailed in the outturn report later on the agenda. He went on to draw Members' attention to the minutes of the Policy Development Group and stated that Members of the Group had requested a presentation to all Councillors on the impact of the Decent Homes Improvement Programme on the HRA Business Plan.

The Chairman invited Councillor M B Wyatt to speak to the item.

Chairman's initials

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that on the whole the feedback that he had received from tenants in his ward had been very positive in relation to the work that had been carried out through the programme, however there were a few tenants that were not receiving the level of work that should be expected. He added that tenants were being left with minor problems, that when reported to the contractors, the tenants were feeling extremely frustrated by the lack of communication from the contractors. Councillor M B Wyatt felt that communication and final inspections on the properties could be improved. He concluded by stating that once issues had been reported to officers they were rectified straight away and that his concerns were with the contractors.

The Head of Housing thanked Councillor M B Wyatt for the positive comments and advised Members that he was in ongoing conversations with Councillor M B Wyatt and any new issues raised by him would be investigated and rectified.

Councillor T J Pendleton stated that all the houses in his ward that had required work had been completed with only one snag, that had been dealt with and he was very pleased with how the work had been done.

Councillor R Blunt stated that he was pleased the work was on target and congratulated the Portfolio Holder, the Head of Housing and the team for their hard work.

It was moved by Councillor R D Bayliss, seconded by Councillor T J Pendleton and

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet

1. Notes the reduction in the number of grant eligible properties and the consequent reduction in backlog funding grant as detailed in section 4.0 of this report, and the projected additional cost of making all identified non decent homes meet the decent homes standard by March 2015.
2. Considers the outcome of the Policy Development Group's consideration of this matter at their meeting on 16 July 2014.
3. Recommends to Council the revised 2014/15 Housing Capital Programme and HRA budget as detailed in appendix a and b of this report to fund the completion of all the required work, and the amended prudential indicators detailed in appendix c as a departure from the current budget.

Reason for decision: To make recommendations to Council for funding to complete the Decent Homes Programme.

24. UPDATING THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

It was moved by Councillor R D Bayliss, seconded by Councillor T J Pendleton and

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet notes the contents of this report in the context of considering the request for additional funding for the 2014/15 Decent Homes Programme as detailed on this meeting agenda.

Chairman's initials

Reason for decision: The information provided in this report will influence the Cabinet's recommendations to Council for funding to complete the Decent Homes Programme.

25. COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY 2014 -17

The Regeneration and Planning Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

He informed Members that the strategy was reviewed every three years and that he was pleased to report that crime in the district had reduced by 7% and that anti-social behaviour was down by 4%. He advised Members that the strategy was supported by an outcome focussed action plan which would be monitored by the partnership.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet notes the North West Leicestershire Community Safety Strategy 2014-17.

Reason for decision: To comply with the Council's Constitution and statutory duty to produce a Community Safety Strategy every three years, refreshed annually.

26. PROVISIONAL FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2013/14

The Head of Finance presented the report to Members.

He advised Members that the figures had yet to be audited but he was pleased to inform Cabinet that there was a significant underspend for the year and as this was in excess of over and above the Council's minimum reserve there would be additional resources available for one-off investment, which Members would be asked to approve as part of the report. He explained to Members that the projected underspend was a result of increased income generated locally and increased efficiency across the directorates. He informed Members that the underspend had been achieved through officers managing allocated budgets effectively, taking any opportunities to capture in year savings, ensuring the best price was achieved through procurement challenges, significant increases in income through Planning applications and better prices for recyclable material, and significant savings on employee costs. He highlighted to Members the one-off expenditure items that they were asked to approve that included Supporting Affordable Housing, the Local Business Fund, Improving the Environment in Coalville and around the District and Investing in Our Communities and that following the allocation of these funds the General Fund balance would be a little over the minimum balance. He updated Members on the Value for Money Fund which would allow Cabinet to approve to allocate further funds for projects which could not be funded from existing budgets which included the next phase of the Customer Experience, Rural Broadband and Urban area Highway Verge Improvements.

Councillor R Blunt stated that the report was one of the best outturn reports that the Cabinet had considered during their term and that most of the community would benefit from the savings made.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet

1. Notes the provisional financial outturn position for 2013/14.

2. Approves the allocations of one-off funding detailed in paragraph 2 to be funded from the 2013-14 general fund revenue budget underspending.
3. Approves the additional allocations from the value for money fund detailed in paragraph 3.

Reason for decision: Requirement of Financial Procedure Rules.

27. INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITIES

The Community Services Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

She informed Members that it was recommended that £210,000 be made available to organisations such as Parish Councils and constituted community groups to help deliver some important community projects. She highlighted to Members how the fund would be divided and made available.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet agrees to invest £210,000 in the 'Investing In Our Communities' project as part of the 2013/14 provisional outturn report.

Reason for decision: To comply with the Council's financial regulations.

28. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STEWARDSHIP REPORT 2013/14

The Head of Finance presented the report to Members.

It was moved by Councillor R Blunt, seconded by Councillor R D Bayliss and

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet approves the report.

Reason for decision: Requirement of Treasury Management Policy.

29. UPDATE REPORT ON LOCAL PLAN PROGRESS

The Regeneration and Planning Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

He reminded Members that although the Local Plan Advisory Committee (LPAC) was a sub-committee of Council, Cabinet was responsible for drafting the Local Plan and making recommendations to Council. He advised Members that since the last meeting of the LPAC, the Member Advisory Group for Leicester and Leicestershire had met and it was felt that an end date for the plan of 2031 was more appropriate and asked Members to support the recommendation to Council.

Councillor R Blunt thanked the Members that had agreed to sit on the Advisory Committee and acknowledged the big task ahead of them.

It was moved by Councillor T J Pendleton, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet:

Chairman's initials

1. Notes the minutes of the Local Plan Advisory Committee of 18 March 2014 and 29 April 2014;
2. Notes the recommendations of the meeting of the Local Plan Advisory Committee of 3 June 2014; and
3. Recommends that the Local Plan Advisory Committee reconsiders the local plan, plan period on the basis of new evidence available in this report.

Reason for decision: For Cabinet to set out its views for consideration by Council.

30. 2014/15 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Leader presented the report to Members.

He highlighted to Members that the new website had been fully launched and this had been promoted through postcards in public areas and at a number of community events. He also advised Members that external improvement works had begun to Coalville Market during the quarter and that the performance indicators for Improving our Customer Experience were all good with the exception of answering call in 30 seconds. He explained that this was below target for the quarter, but was due to the several bulk mail outs that had generated an increase in phone calls. He stated that it was expected that performance would improve in quarter 2 as the demand had reduced.

Councillor T Gillard echoed Councillor R Blunt's comments about the market and advised Members that it was planned to hold more breakfast meetings.

Councillor R D Bayliss highlighted the average re-let times and advised Members that resources had been appointed to reduce the number of days it took to re-let and an improvement should be seen in quarter 2.

Councillor T J Pendleton he advised Members that Planning continued to bring in revenue, however due to the River Mease SAC this was delaying the process of applications in the area.

Councillor A V Smith advised Members that the Leisure Centres continued to exceed their targets.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The Quarter 1 Performance Report (April – June 2014) be received and noted.

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

31. SUPPORTING CYCLING IN ASHBY

The Community Services Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

She advised Members that the district had seen a lot of investments into the cycle networks around Coalville and that Leicestershire County Council had identified a high priority level 1 route within the draft strategy for Ashby that would link the town to Hicks

Lodge cycle centre. The County Council has requested that the authority makes a contribution towards the costs of introducing the route.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

Members approve £40,000 in cycling infrastructure in Ashby de la Zouch as part of the 2013/14 provisional outturn report.

Reason for decision: To enable residents in Ashby de la Zouch and North West Leicestershire to take advantage of improved access to Hicks Lodge Cycle Centre.

Having declared a Disclosable Non-Pecuniary interest in the item 16, Councillor R Blunt left the meeting and Councillor A V Smith took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

32. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

By affirmation of the meeting it was

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 Paragraphs 3 and 5 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.

33. WASTE RECYCLING CREDITS

The Community Services Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

She drew Members' attention to the additional information that had been circulated to them prior to the meeting advising them that the District Leaders had informed the County Council that they wished to enter into dialogue with them to enable them to work together to find a solution. She informed Members that a further report would be brought back to Cabinet at a later date and requested that recommendation 2 be amended to include consultation with herself as Portfolio Holder.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet:

1. Notes the legal advice concerning any changes to the payments of recycling credits; and
2. Authorises the Chief Executive and Director of Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to seek to negotiate a position with Leicestershire County Council which limits the long term financial impact of amendments to the recycling credits regime on the District Council within the parameters set out in this report.

Reason for decision: For Cabinet to authorise officers to seek a negotiated outcome which limits the long term financial impact on the Council.

Chairman's initials

Councillor R Blunt left the meeting at 6.05pm before consideration of item 16.

Councillor S Sheahan left the meeting at 6.05pm before the consideration of item 16.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 6.10 pm