

MINUTES of a meeting of the CABINET held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2015

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 J Clarke, N Clarke, D Everitt, T Eynon, F Fenning, J Geary, D Harrison, R Johnson, J Legrys, S McKendrick and M Specht

Officers: Mr S Bambrick, Mr R Bowmer, Ms C E Fisher, Mr G Jones, Mrs M Meredith and Miss E Warhurst

24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

25. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no interests declared.

26. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

No questions were received.

27. MINUTES

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Reason for decision: To comply with the Constitution.

28. REVIEW OF THE OLDER PERSONS SUPPORT SERVICE

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented the report to members. He highlighted the proposed changes to the delivery of the older persons support service, which would reduce the costs to the service user and would mean that the service was elective.

Councillor T J Pendleton commented that the proposals would ensure that the service was responsive and demand led.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet approves the introduction of a new service charge of £3.06 per week for all tenants connected to the control centre, and notes the outcome of the review of the older persons support service as detailed in this report.

Reason for decision: Leicestershire County Council has given notice that it will be terminating its older persons housing related support contract on 30 September 2015, which will end the £306k per year grant funding for the older person support service.

Chairman's initials

29. TENANT SCRUTINY PANEL REPORT - RENT ARREARS & EVICTIONS

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented the report to members, drawing their attention to the recommendations drawn up by the Tenant Scrutiny Panel as outlined in the report, and the action plan which had been implemented by the Housing service.

Councillor A V Smith congratulated the Tenant Scrutiny Panel on an excellent piece of work.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet approves the action plan prepared in response to the recommendations from the Tenant Scrutiny Panel's inspection of housing rent arrears and evictions.

Reason for decision: The Tenant Scrutiny Panel has concluded their inspection of rent arrears and evictions.

30. HRA SHELTERED HOUSING - DECOMMISSIONING OF WESTGATE, IBSTOCK

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented the report to members, and sought approval to formally decommission this scheme which had been vacant for a number of years.

Councillor R Blunt welcomed the proposals as this was a public asset which was not being benefitted from at present.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The contents of the report be noted; and
- b) The formal decommissioning of Westgate, Ibstock as a sheltered housing scheme be approved.

Reason for decision: The scheme needs to be formally decommissioned to complete the review of the future use of the site.

31. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) 2016/17 TO 2019/20

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report to members, highlighting the assumptions made in producing the report and the potential risks to income and the budget.

Councillor R Blunt commented that this had been a time of unprecedented change. He added that the Council would continue to be prudent with public money.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved as outlined in this report and the outline timetable for the 2016/17 budget process be noted.
- b) The transfer of £600k to a special projects reserve be approved, to be funded from the 2014/15 revenue budget underspending.

Chairman's initials

Reason for decision: Requirement of the budget setting process.

32. BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN COALVILLE - PROCURING SPECIALIST ADVISORS

The Leader presented the report to members, seeking their approval of the direction of travel for the project. He referred to the background work undertaken in 2010 by the Prince's Foundation, which had identified the four streets and squares in Coalville. He highlighted the successes so far in the regeneration of Coalville, including the redevelopment of the former Pick and Shovel site, the ongoing Shop Fronts Improvement Scheme, and the improvements to the market and car park area.

The Leader stated that the Council had a proven track record of working with public sector partners, and accommodating those partners within the Council Offices had worked well for all. He added that the willingness of public and private sector partners to participate in the project would need to be assessed. He advised that the Department for Work and Pensions had expressed an interest in moving into the Council Offices, and major works would be required to the building to ensure it was fit for purpose. He highlighted the timescales and stated that work would need to be completed quickly to accommodate this.

The Leader made reference to paragraph 2.6 in the report and advised that interviews had now taken place in respect of the newly created post and an appointment would soon be made, which would provide the impetus to move the project forward.

Councillor N J Rushton expressed support for the proposals and advised that the cost of the feasibility study was already provided for in existing budgets. He added that the interest from the DWP was good news and would provide an opportunity to deal with the layout of the reception area and to attempt to make the building greener.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The direction of travel for the Coalville project be approved;
- b) Access to the Scape major works framework be approved to commence the feasibility stage of phase 1 of the building confidence in Coalville project using existing budgets;
- c) Authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader to enter into all necessary agreements in support of recommendation 2;
- d) Authority be delegated to the Head of Finance and the Chief Executive to negotiate and agree heads of terms, lease and associated documents with the Department for Work and Pensions; and
- e) The proposed project update structure at part 6 of this report be approved.

Reason for decision: To seek Cabinet's authority to award the professional services contracts to support the Coalville project.

33. 2015/16 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Leader presented the report to members, highlighting key improvements in performance in respect of empty homes, revenues and benefits, major planning applications and the ICE project.

Councillor R D Bayliss advised that recruitment was ongoing for a financial inclusion officer who would give advice on the universal credit. He added that this was a temporary grant-aided post. He assured members that the performance indicators which were amber for his service area were being addressed and were under control.

Chairman's initials

Councillor T J Pendleton made reference to the additional income from planning applications and highlighted the performance indicator which had slipped to 83%, due to the sheer volume of applications. He highlighted that the national target was 60% and added that such a minimal slip in performance was phenomenal given the additional income produced.

Councillor N J Rushton expressed concerns about the amount of money set aside for planning appeals. He asked why this was so high. He highlighted the savings that would need to be made from frontline services going forward and added that if appeals could be prevented, this would significantly contribute towards this. It was agreed that further information be provided to the Cabinet members on the costs incurred in respect of planning appeals in the last four years.

Councillor A V Smith highlighted the success of the leisure centres in respect of the QUEST award, and the installation of the materials separation technology at the recycling depot which would lead to increased productivity and income.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The quarter one performance report (April - June 2015) be received and noted.

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

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

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report to members, highlighting one particularly high value case where the debtor was subject to a Company Voluntary Arrangement. He advised that the Council may recover approximately one third of the value in this case, however it was prudent to write the amount off at present. He added that attempts would still be made to recover debts which had been written off.

It was moved by Councillor N J Rushton, seconded by Councillor T J Pendleton and

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The write offs over £10,000 as detailed in the report be approved.
- b) The amounts written off under delegated powers be noted.

Reason for decision: To comply with proper accounting practices.

35. MINUTES OF THE COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY

Councillor A V Smith presented the report to members. She thanked Councillors J Geary and R Adams for taking the Chairman and Deputy Chairman positions on the working party. She commented that there appeared to be a number of task and finish groups emerging from the working party and expressed concerns about the amount of officer time being spent on these groups. She added that she had asked officers to ensure the task and finish groups were being managed efficiently, and she understood some of the groups had already concluded. She stated that she was pleased that a visit to Broomleys Allotment had been requested and stated that she would like to attend when this took place.

Chairman's initials

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the working party meeting be noted.

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

36. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

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.

37. EMERGING ISSUES AFFECTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented the report to members.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The recommendations outlined in the report be approved.

Reason for decision: To help address the lack of registered providers' financial capacity to purchase affordable housing units negotiated under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (s106), and ensure that development sites do not stall, and the delivery of both market, and affordable, housing across the district is maintained.

38. PROPOSAL TO ACQUIRE BROWNFIELD SITE FOR REDEVELOPMENT FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented the report to members.

Councillor N Clarke spoke in support of the proposals outlined in the report.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The recommendations outlined in the report be approved.

Reason for decision: To provide delegated authority to the Director of Housing to negotiate the acquisition of the site to support the delivery of new affordable homes.

39. APPLEBY MAGNA CARAVAN PARK - APPOINTMENT OF CONTRACTOR TO COMPLETE IMPROVEMENT WORKS

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented the report to members.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The recommendations outlined in the report be approved.

Reason for decision: The value of the contract exceeds levels of delegated authority.

The meeting commenced at 5.03 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 5.58 pm