

CABINET

Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,

on Thursday, 22nd June, 2017 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Cheryl Butler in the Chair;

Councillors Amanda Brown, Tim Brown,
Don Davis, Jackie James and Nicolle Ndiweni.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Keir Morrison.

Officers Present: Craig Bonar, Edd deCoverly, Ruth Dennis,
Sharon Lynch, Alan Maher, Robert Mitchell and
Paul Parkinson.

In Attendance: Cllrs Tom Hollis and Rachel Madden

CA.01 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and Non-Disclosable Pecuniary / Other Interests

No Declarations of Interest were received.

CA.02 Minutes

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Thursday 23 March 2017 were approved as a correct record.

CA.03 Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge Report and Updated Corporate Plan

Cabinet was reminded that the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge review of the Authority had taken place in March 2017. Following on from this, the LGA had produced a report setting out its findings and recommendations for action. Cabinet was told that one of the review's main findings was that the Council's political leadership and culture had improved significantly. Members and Senior Officers were now seen as working well together. The review team also concluded that the Council had embraced partnership working and that other organisations saw it as a good partner to do business with.

Cabinet considered the Peer Challenge Report and discussed its recommendations, which were welcomed as very positive. There was a consensus that the review had been right to highlight the productive Member-Officer relationship which now exists; especially the relationships between Cabinet Members and senior Officers. This had resulted in more effective political and managerial leadership and made the Council better able to meet

the financial and other challenges facing it.

Members welcomed the fact that the Corporate Plan had been reviewed and that updated priorities had been identified, in line with the Peer Challenge report's recommendations. Cabinet also supported the recommendation that the Council should look again at its community engagement processes. There was agreement that a new approach was required, which should be less resource intensive and better able to reach out to the whole community.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Cabinet agreed the suggested response to the LGA's recommendations. Members were keen that progress and improvements be maintained. Cabinet felt that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could play an important role in ensuring this by monitoring the changes made following on from the LGA review.

RESOLVED

- a) That Cabinet endorses the findings of the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge as set out in the report;
- b) That Cabinet approves the actions from the LGA Peer Challenge as detailed in the report;
- c) That Cabinet asks the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to monitor the implementation of these actions during the 2017/18 municipal year;
- d) That Cabinet approves the updates made to the Council's Corporate Plan as attached to the report;
- e) That the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to make any minor alterations to the Corporate Plan prior to publication.

Reasons

The Peer Challenge Review is designed to support Councils and is part of a sector led improvement programme. There is an expectation from the LGA and government that the findings will be used to support improvements. It was therefore determined at the outset of the review that the results would be presented to Cabinet to ensure transparency and to sanction any actions arising from the report.

CA.04 Place and Corporate Score Cards - Year End 2016/17 Position

The report to Cabinet set out the latest Balanced Scorecard information. This made it clear that during 2016-17 performance had improved on 80% of the measures and that 91% of the measures had been achieved or exceeded their targets.

The report highlighted specific key achievements. In particular, it explained that the New Cross and Broomhill Support Teams had been very effective. This new, multi-agency, way of working had enabled the different partners to co-ordinate their support and assistance to local people. It had also enabled them to make real and substantial savings. Across the two areas, the partner agencies expected to collectively save £3.6M by the end of 2018. Members

welcomed this.

Cabinet was informed that there had been a significant increase in homelessness prevention activity, that rent collection levels were at the highest level in six years (99.74%) and that the Garden Waste scheme had been successfully delivered. This had resulted in a 30% increase in the amount of household waste being recycled. Ashfield's household waste recycling figures were the second highest in Nottinghamshire.

Similarly, Members heard that the way in which people access Council services was being modernised, with far greater use now being made of direct debit and other online options by local people when accessing services or paying Council Tax and other bills.

Cabinet discussed the report. There was a consensus that the improved corporate performance reflected the wider improvements within the Council. In particular, the increasingly productive Member-officer working relationships and focused political / managerial leadership were seen as key drivers for the improved performance.

Members also reiterated their collective view that improvements to performance ought to be matched by greater customer and resident satisfaction with the Council and its services. In this context, Cabinet heard that a range of new measures around customer satisfaction had been included in the scorecard, which would be closely monitored to ensure that they were met. Cabinet welcomed the approach.

RESOLVED

- a) That Cabinet notes the Place Scorecard position at the 2016/17 year end;
- b) That Cabinet notes the levels of performance achieved against the Corporate Scorecard at the 2016/17 year end in order to facilitate delivery of the Corporate Plan and improved performance of the organisation.

Reasons

In March 2016 Cabinet agreed the use of a balanced scorecard methodology to enhance the organisation's performance framework and ability to understand how the new Corporate Priorities are being delivered, the new approach providing a more rounded view on performance with a greater emphasis on customer satisfaction and quality.

CA.05 Corporate Risk - Year End 2016/17 Position

Cabinet considered the Council's Corporate Risk Register. Members were told that the number of Corporate Risks had fallen as a whole and that the number of Significant Risks had reduced since 2012/13. Cabinet welcomed this. Members then discussed the remaining Significant Risks on the register and the actions that had or would, be taken to mitigate them.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet notes the significant items on the Council's Corporate Risk Register and the actions necessary to mitigate those risks.

Reasons

To prioritise and manage the mitigation of risk in order that the Council can achieve its objectives.

CA.06 Leisure Transformation Programme - Replacement Leisure Centre in Kirkby-in-Ashfield

Members were reminded that there had been extensive public consultation on the Council's Leisure Transformation programme during 2016. This had shown strong support for focusing resources on the larger leisure facilities within the District. Cabinet endorsed the findings from this consultation exercise at its meeting in October 2016 and had agreed that a feasibility study into establishing a replacement leisure centre in Kirkby-in-Ashfield be carried out.

The report to Cabinet explained that significant progress had been made. Consequently, Members were now asked to authorise the next steps towards delivering a replacement centre in Kirkby. The aim would be to build this on the Ashfield Health and Wellbeing site in Kirkby town centre. However, the report explained that if this was not possible, the Festival Hall site would be redeveloped instead – with the existing leisure centre remaining open as long as possible while the construction work took place.

Members discussed the report. They made it clear that they supported the Leisure Transformation programme and the proposal to build a new flagship leisure destination on the suggested site. Cabinet felt that it would make an important contribution to the ongoing re-development of Kirkby town centre. Members were also pleased that the new centre would focus attracting a wide range of users, for sport as well as more general leisure and entertainment activities.

Cabinet was told that the Council required support in order to move to the next stage of the project. The report recommended that the existing consultants should be appointed to provide this support. Members supported this approach, provided that it could be shown to be cost effective.

Finally, Members were told that the new contract to manage the Council's leisure centres would need to be in place by 1 April 2021. In order to start the process, the existing consultants had recommended that the Council should launch a 'shadow bid', followed by market testing, so that it understood fully the revenue implications of managing all of the future leisure centres. Members supported this approach.

RESOLVED

- a) That Cabinet agrees to progress to the next stage of determining the feasibility of the preferred option to replace the existing leisure centre with a new flagship leisure destination in Kirby-in Ashfield, on the

preferred town centre site identified in the evaluation and within the prescribed time frame;

- b) That if land acquisition of the preferred site cannot be achieved, Cabinet agrees to progress to the next stage of determining the feasibility of the redevelopment of the current Festival Hall site option (retaining the existing site for use during construction for as long as possible);
- c) That Cabinet agrees to commence the re-tendering of the Leisure Management Contract by producing a 'shadow bid' followed by soft market testing;
- d) That opportunities for obtaining external funding be explored in order to help meet the costs of the project;
- e) That Cabinet agrees an exemption under Part 11 of the Contract Procedure Rules to enable the Chief Executive (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder) to further commission the existing consultants for the recommended and associated works, subject to this commission being tested and found to represent value for money.

Reasons

To update Cabinet on key projects within the Council's Corporate Plan (2016-19) including the feasibility for a replacement for the Festival Hall Leisure Centre (informed by the Leisure Review).

CA.07 Adoption of Locality Plans

The report to Cabinet explained that the Area Committees had considered and agreed the revised Locality Plans for their areas towards the end of 2016. It recommended that these plans should be formally adopted.

Members discussed the report. There was agreement that the locality plans had helped to achieve tangible improvements across the District and that as a result of them a range of successful projects had been implemented.

Members also considered the wider benefits of adopting the plans, especially by helping to generate 'Section 106' contributions, or money paid to fund community and other improvements as a condition of successful planning applications. Cabinet welcomed this.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet adopts the locality plans for each of the four areas of the District.

Reasons

Adoption of the plans would help to raise awareness of the plans and locality working. Adoption would also ensure that they could be used to support negotiations for Section 106 contributions to fund projects within the plans. The Plans would also carry greater weight at planning appeals.

CA.08 Exclusion of Public and Press

RESOLVED

That in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting during the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act in respect of which the Proper Officer considers the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

CA.09 Write-off of amounts over £5,000 for Non-Domestic Rates, Council Tax and Overpaid Housing Benefit

Members were informed of cases where no further action could be taken to recover debts owed to the Council and which would have to be written-off.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet notes and agrees the amounts for write-off as set out in the report.

Reasons

To inform Members of the write-off of unrecoverable sums.

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm

Chair.