

CABINET

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

on Thursday, 15th March, 2018 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Cheryl Butler in the Chair;

Councillors Amanda Brown, Tim Brown,
Keir Morrison and Nicolle Ndiweni.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Don Davis and Jackie James.

Officers Present: Craig Bonar, Richard Crossland, Ruth Dennis,
Sharon Lynch, Robert Mitchell, Paul Parkinson
and Julie Robinson.

In Attendance: Councillor Jason Zadrozny and
County Councillor Samantha Deakin.

CA.63 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and Non-Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

CA.64 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 19th February and 5th March, 2018 be received and approved as a correct record.

CA.65 Corporate Scorecard - April to December 2017 Position

Members were asked to consider and review the Quarter 3 (April to December, 2017) outturn for corporate performance scorecard, which is aligned with the Corporate Priorities.

RESOLVED

that Cabinet notes the levels of performance achieved against the Corporate Scorecard as at Quarter 3 2017/18, in order to facilitate delivery of the Corporate Plan and improved performance of the organisation.

Reasons:

The Council's ambitions for the next three years are clearly identified in the Corporate Priorities which are presented in the Corporate Plan 2016 - 2019. In March, 2016 Cabinet agreed the use of a balanced scorecard methodology to enhance the organisations performance framework and ability to understand how successfully the Corporate Priorities are being delivered, the approach providing a more rounded view on performance with a greater emphasis on customer satisfaction and quality.

As the report relates to the delivery of the Corporate Plan priorities there were no alternative options to consider.

(Councillor Nicolle Ndiweni entered the meeting at 6.33 p.m. during consideration of the above item.)

CA.66 Change to Procurement Service

Members were asked to consider the arrangements for the procurement services provided by Nottingham City Council effective from 1st April, 2018.

RESOLVED

that delegated authority be granted to the Director of Resources and Business Transformation to negotiate and agree a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with representatives of Nottingham City Council for the provision of procurement services to Ashfield District Council, as outlined in the report.

Members also considered the alternative option to bring the service in-house. Given the financial constraints facing the MTFS now and in the future, bringing the service in-house would necessitate the employment of staff to run the service. The costs of doing so would far exceed the costs of sourcing the service externally.

Reasons

Officers have investigated several potential lead authorities with regard to providing the service and delivering on the core objectives of spend efficiency and efficacy. Of those investigated, Nottingham City Council demonstrated the greatest ability to add value and expertise, with tangible evidence of delivery.

CA.67 Mobile Home Sites - Consultation on the Implementation of Licence Fees

Members were advised of the process the Council currently follows in respect of licensing mobile home sites and the need to consider the introduction of licensing fees to cover the costs incurred for delivering this process.

Members also considered the alternative option not to consider the introduction of licensing fees. This was not considered as the Council is incurring costs in respect of managing the licensing process and it is important that the Council considers recouping these costs by way of a licence fee. Currently residents Council Tax is used to subsidise this work rather than a fee paid by the recipients of the service.

RESOLVED that

- a) Cabinet endorse the proposed role of the Council with regards to the licensing of mobile home sites;
- b) a consultation exercise be undertaken with mobile home site owners and other stakeholders regarding the proposed implementation of licensing fees to cover the costs incurred by the Council in administering the licensing scheme;

- c) following the consultation period and full appraisal of the comments if the recommendation is that a licence fee should be introduced a further report be submitted to Cabinet to consider a proposed fee structure.

Reasons:

The Council has a duty to licence mobile home sites within the district. In addition to administering the licensing process, officers conduct two site visits per year and provide advice and assistance to site owners to ensure sites are correctly managed.

In view of the costs incurred by the Council it is reasonable to consider introducing a licence fee. This is in line with other Local Authorities in Nottinghamshire. As part of the consideration process the Council is obliged to consult with site owners and stakeholders, including site residents. Consultation should last for a period of 3 months.

CA.68 Homelessness Reduction Act 2017- Update

Members were updated on the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which will bring about fundamental changes to the way in which homelessness services are accessed and delivered.

The alternative option to not update Members or enable the grant funding to be utilised to meet the new requirements of the Act was not considered as Members wish to be kept informed of the new requirements and the actions required, to ensure the shared homelessness service provided via Mansfield District Council remains compliant with all homelessness legislation.

RESOLVED that

- a) Cabinet endorse the proposed amendments to the delivery of the Council's statutory homelessness service, as outlined in the report;
- b) delegated authority be granted to the Director of Housing and Assets to implement the proposals, as outlined in the report, and make use of the additional grant allocation to ensure the Council's service is compliant with the Act.

Reasons:

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 comes into force in April 2018 and places additional responsibilities on local authorities. Our existing shared homelessness service, provided by Mansfield District Council, needs to adapt to ensure it reflects the new requirements and that the service provided is compliant with the Act.

The Council has been awarded an additional £228,545 grant funding by MHCLG for the period 2017-2020 to implement the Act.

CA.69 Enforced Sale of Empty Properties

Members were asked to consider the introduction of the Enforced Sales Procedure which is a process that can be used to recover costs incurred by the Council when dealing with long term empty properties.

The alternative option to not introduce the Enforced Sales Procedure was not considered to be feasible as it is important that the Council seeks to recover debts owed and empty properties are brought back into use.

RESOLVED that

- a) the report be received and noted;
- b) approval be given to a budget of £20,000 for 2018/19 to implement and administer the Enforced Sales Procedure (ESP) and enable the Public Sector Enforcement Team to undertake minor works to properties in disrepair, including empty and derelict properties and for other costs associated with operating the procedure.

Reasons:

The Council has a responsibility to ensure that empty properties in the District are maintained in a good condition and that prompt action is taken if a property owner fails in their obligation to maintain their home(s).

The Council has a number of statutory powers to deal with disrepair associated with empty properties and officers normally work alongside property owners to ensure works are completed in a timely manner. However, if a property owner fails to comply with requests the Council may need to take action including undertaking minor works at the property. It is important the Council is able to recover all costs associated with such action and the ESP will be the mechanism for ensuring the Council is fully reimbursed if the property owner fails to pay the debt.

As a consequence of action to recover monies owed the empty property will be sold and so brought back in to use. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, that becomes law in April 2018, will intensify this need as the Council will be obliged to assist more homeless applicants access accommodation suitable for their long term needs. The more properties that are available for occupation in the District, the better chance we have of assisting those in need.

CA.70 Section 100A Local Government Act 1972; (Exclusion of the Press and Public)

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 consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act and in respect of which the Proper Officer considers that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

CA.71 HRA Acquisitions
(Exempt by virtue of paragraph 3)

Members were asked to consider making HRA funds available within the capital programme to purchase new or existing properties in order to add them to the existing social housing stock.

Members also considered the alternative options to continue with the existing processes for reinvestment into existing stock and the acquisition of new properties.

RESOLVED that

- a) the earmarked capital budget from within the HRA funds for the purchase of new or existing properties in order to add them to the existing social housing stock, as identified in the report, be agreed and recommended to Council for approval;
- b) the Director of Housing and Assets be granted delegated authority to approve such purchases, on the basis that the properties meet the requirements of the viability business case as outlined in the report and, that the purchase process is undertaken by the appropriate officers.

Reason:

To set funds aside within the capital programme to purchase new or existing properties in order to add them to the existing social housing stock.

CA.72 Write-Off Amounts over £5000 for Non-Domestic Rates
(Exempt by virtue of paragraph 3)

Members were asked to consider the write-off of irrecoverable amounts over £5,000 for Non-Domestic Rates.

There were no alternative options for Members to consider as further recovery action was not feasible.

RESOLVED

that Cabinet notes and agrees to the write-off of the irrecoverable amount for Non-Domestic Rates, as outlined in the report.

Reasons:

Recovery action has been taken in respect of this case up to and including legal and court action where appropriate. There was no prospect of further recovery work being successful.

The meeting closed at 6.50 p.m.

Chairman.