

CABINET

Virtual Meeting held on Tuesday, 13th October, 2020 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor Jason Zadrozny in the Chair;

Councillors Kier Barsby, Samantha Deakin,
Tom Hollis, Rachel Madden, David Martin,
Matthew Relf, Helen-Ann Smith,
Daniel Williamson and John Wilmott.

Apology for Absence: Pete Hudson

Officers Present: Phillip Bennett, Craig Bonar, Bev Bull,
Lynn Cain, Carol Cooper-Smith, Ruth Dennis,
Katherine Green, Theresa Hodgkinson, Mike Joy
and Paul Parkinson.

In Attendance: Councillors Jim Blagden and David Hennigan

CA.33 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and Non Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

CA.34 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 September 2020 be received and approved as a correct record.

CA.35 Announcement from the Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council took the opportunity to update Cabinet in relation to the latest Government guidelines in relation to Covid Alert Levels. A three tier alert system was being implemented and Nottinghamshire had been designated a tier two, high level alert for the foreseeable future with a review period every four weeks.

Tier two rules included the following:

- households not allowed to meet indoors;
- friends and family could continue to meet in gardens and outdoor places;
- Maximum limit of 6 on any gatherings;
- travel discouraged where unnecessary;
- 10pm curfew for pubs and restaurants;
- workers to continue to work from home where possible.

The tier two restrictions were due to commence the following day as the virus was increasing in all parts of Nottinghamshire. Students return to the two universities in Nottingham had been a contributory factor but most of the increases were being seen within the 21-45 age range. Accessing tests was still proving to be an issue but it was hoped this would be resolved in the near future.

The Leader reiterated the message that although the local lockdowns would be challenging, it was everybody's responsibility to abide by the rules to reduce the spread of the virus. The Council would continue to provide a full range of services and residents would be updated on any changes as they became known.

To conclude, the Leader expressed his disappointment at the local MP's lack of support for Ashfield and his recent unhelpful media narrative, blaming local Leaders in Nottinghamshire for the tighter measures rather than offering support and guidance to his constituents.

CA.36 COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel - Verbal Update

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Panel gave an update to Cabinet regarding the work undertaken at the latest meeting of the Panel.

Key Worker Memorial

The Vice Chairman of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Panel reported on progress regarding the potential development of the Key Workers' Memorial.

Following discussions with officers, it had been acknowledged that there was potential for allocating funding from S106 monies to fund the installation of the memorial and a communications strategy had also been agreed to place an article in the next 'Ashfield Matters' publication to encourage residents to offer their views regarding the potential style and location for the memorial thus enabling the Council to gauge public opinion and progress the project accordingly.

Residents would be asked to respond via a dedicated email address and complete a short questionnaire and in addition, letters would also be sent out to local schools, colleges, voluntary groups, churches and faith groups asking for their involvement in the process. The publication was due to be circulated (to around 120,000 residents) with the annual bin calendars week commencing 23 November 2020.

It was hoped that firm proposals would be submitted to Cabinet in January 2021 with a view to unveiling the memorial in the autumn of 2021. The Council's Place Team Leader would also be in attendance at the next Scrutiny Panel meeting in 5 November 2020 to discuss the proposals further.

COVID-19 Response and Recovery Panel Meeting – 6 October 2020

The third meeting of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel was held last Tuesday, with a primary focus on small business recovery in Ashfield. The meeting was very well attended by officers and the Panel also welcomed attendance from Martin Rigley, the Chairman of Discover Ashfield and the owner of an engineering firm in Sutton in Ashfield.

Discussions centred on difficulties businesses faced during lockdown, the work of the recently established Economic Development Team and the purpose of the draft Economic Recovery Plan in supporting businesses within the District.

Following discussions, the Panel unanimously agreed to approve a set of recommendations for submission to Cabinet and these were read out accordingly.

Preparations were already being made for the next meeting of the Panel, which would again focus on small business recovery due to Panel Members identifying it as a key theme of the recovery process. The Panel were hoping to welcome attendance from the Director for Public Health Nottinghamshire, Jonathan Gribbin, to be advised in relation to the development of a countywide response to the pandemic, subsequent recovery plans and details of a potential local lockdown.

Invitations were also being extended to representatives from businesses in Ashfield operating in a diverse range of sectors, as Members seek to gain a further understanding of the challenges facing businesses and the role the Council can play in assisting recovery.

RESOLVED that

- a) the draft Economic Recovery Plan be approved with the proviso that the Plan is updated accordingly as circumstances change;
- b) work be undertaken to consider establishing a scheme to recognise local businesses that have excelled at adapting to guidelines and providing a COVID-secure environment for customers, in conjunction with key partners such as Discover Ashfield;
- c) the Council continues working toward the establishment of a Key Workers Memorial, including consultation with Ashfield residents and key partners;
- d) the Council's established Business Support Hub offers support for those looking to set up new businesses or reinvent existing businesses as a result of the pandemic;
- e) Cabinet be commended for the decision to implement 2 hour free parking in all town centre car parks to aid the longer-term recovery of Ashfield's local economy;
- f) congratulations be extended to the Planning and Economic Development Team, the Environmental Health Team, and the Discover Ashfield Board for their continued efforts to ensure that local businesses sufficiently adapt to COVID-19 measures and survive the ongoing economic difficulties brought about by the pandemic;

- g) the Council looks at all options to use all of the 'ring-fenced 'reopening High Streets' Fund, innovatively.

CA.37 Affordable Housing Development - Maun View, Sutton in Ashfield

Cabinet was requested to consider and approve an opportunity to develop affordable family housing on an undeveloped plot of Council owned land at Maun View, Sutton in Ashfield.

Members considered alternative options for the site including declining to utilise the land at the present time, developing the land for industrial units or selling the land for private housing development.

RESOLVED

that the following be approved, subject to Planning consent and confirmation of Homes England funding:

- a) the use of the undeveloped section of the Council-owned Maun Valley site for family housing, let on an affordable rent basis;
- b) delegated authority being granted to the Director of Housing and Assets, in conjunction with the Director of Legal and Governance and the Chief Finance Officer, to agree the appropriation of the Maun Valley site from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account based upon best consideration of the land value and the parameters of the social housing viability model;
- c) Council is recommended to duly approve the use of Housing Revenue Account reserves to fund the construction of 17 new affordable homes as detailed in the report;
- d) delegated authority being granted to the Director of Housing and Assets, in conjunction with the Director of Legal and Governance, and the Chief Finance Officer, to negotiate and formalise final scheme costs, specification and delivery;
- e) delegated authority being granted to the Director of Housing and Assets, in conjunction with the Director of Legal and Governance and the Chief Finance Officer, to procure and appoint a contractor to develop the site;
- f) delegated authority being granted to the Director of Housing and Assets to contract, on behalf of the Council, with Homes England for the purposes of receiving subsidy to ensure that developments are viable and fall within the Council's 30 year business plan model.

Reason:

The development helps to achieve the Council's Corporate Plan objective of delivering much needed additional good quality affordable housing in the District and the development will bring in to use in an extremely positive way an under-used brownfield site.

CA.38 Green Spaces Capital Investment Programme

Cabinet considered approving some additional investment earmarked for green space improvement projects this financial year.

Members considered the alternative option of declining to allocate additional investment to a number of green space improvement projects but this was not recommended, as a number of sites required intervention this financial year to ensure that the quality the District's green space provision provides remains high.

RESOLVED that

- a) Council is recommended to duly allocate £193k General Fund Capital Receipts and £173k Section 106 Public Open Space monies for a number of green space improvement projects;
- b) delegated authority be granted to the Director Place and Communities to allocate the funding to specific projects as required;
- c) it be noted that the proposed improvement projects will be available for consideration by Council at its next meeting when approval to add these schemes to the Capital Programme will be sought.

Reason:

There a number of sites in the District which require additional investment in order to increase the quality of provision.

CA.39 War Memorials Management Plan

Cabinet was updated on the progress of Scrutiny review recommendations regarding ongoing cleaning and maintenance of Ashfield's war memorials and approval was sought for the creation of a cleaning schedule and associated budget along with the approval of a community protocol.

To ensure readiness for the 2020 remembrance events across Ashfield, Members were asked to agree an additional recommendation to those contained in the report, requesting that all 10 war monuments under the Council's control be professionally cleaned by the end of October at a cost of £4,780.50 + VAT.

It was also acknowledged that the Council's Environment and Housing Teams had been busy undertaking peripheral work around the monuments (i.e. repair work to railings and walls and pruning/cutting back bushes) to ensure the sites were looking immaculate for the upcoming remembrance services.

Members considered alternative options of declining to approve the content of the proposed War Memorials Community Protocol and leaving the 10 war monuments in their present state for the 2020 remembrance events.

RESOLVED that

- a) progress against the Scrutiny review recommendations regarding the ongoing cleaning and maintenance of Ashfield's war memorials, be received and noted;
- b) a budget of £3k per year to carry out a rolling programme of maintenance to War Memorials for which Ashfield District Council is responsible, be approved;
- c) the proposed schedule of maintenance for War Memorials for which Ashfield District Council is responsible, as outlined in the report, be approved;
- d) the War Memorials Community Protocol, as appended to the report, be approved and adopted;
- e) delegated authority be granted to the Director of Place and Communities to approve any cleaning or restoration works to war memorials as required;
- f) approval be given for all 10 war monuments under the Council's control within the Ashfield District, to be professionally cleaned by the end of October at a cost of £4,780.50 + VAT, in readiness for the 2020 remembrance events.

Reasons:

1. The Council is responsible for ten war memorials; previously they have been cleaned upon request or in line with remembrance service events. This has led to some memorials being cleaned more frequently than others and some being cleaned by community groups, which has caused some degree of damage to the memorials due to the delicate material they are constructed from.
2. The Council recognises the need to preserve these war memorials, some of which are listed, and to ensure that a programme of cleaning is carried out in a sensitive and effective way.
3. These recommendations have provided the Council with the best opportunity to maintain and therefore preserve the life of war memorials whilst providing clear guidance on how interested parties and community groups can continue to be involved in these highly valued assets.

The meeting closed at 11.15 am

Chairman.