

CABINET

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

on Thursday, 19th January, 2017 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Cheryl Butler in the Chair;

Councillors Jim Aspinall, Tim Brown, Don Davis,
Jackie James, Keir Morrison and
Nicolle Ndiweni.

Officers Present: Craig Bonar, Carol Cooper-Smith,
Edd deCoverly, Ruth Dennis, David Greenwood,
Alan Maher, Robert Mitchell and Carys Turner
Jones

In Attendance: Councillor Christine Quinn Wilcox

CA.53 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Non Disclosable Pecuniary / Other Interests

There were no Declarations of Interest.

CA.54 Minutes

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2016 be approved as a true record.

CA.55 Corporate Scorecard: Quarter 2 Performance

Members were reminded that Cabinet had agreed in March of last year to adopt a 'Balanced Scorecard' methodology for measuring how well the Council was performing. This methodology placed greater emphasis on customer satisfaction and service quality and so should provide a more rounded way of measuring how the Council's new Corporate Priorities are being delivered.

The report to Cabinet set out the Balanced Scorecard information for the period April to September 2016. Members heard that 78% of the measures had improved compared to the same period of 2015 and that 83% of the measures had been achieved or exceeded their targets. These included the amount of waste recycled in the District, which had recorded improvements over the three summer months. Cabinet welcomed this.

Members discussed the report and the specific performance measures set out in the Scorecard. As part of this discussion they reviewed the significant improvements in performance that had been achieved and the areas where further action was still required. In particular, they were pleased with the positive views about the Council's staff. Local residents saw them as helpful and friendly. Cabinet noted the work which had taken place to find out the views of service users and looked forward to this being developed further.

RESOLVED

- a) That Cabinet approves the proposed Corporate Scorecard;
- b) That Cabinet notes the Quarter 2 Performance Levels.

Reasons

To monitor and manage performance outturn information for the Corporate Scorecard.

CA.56 Feasibility Studies

Cabinet then considered a report on the funding of Feasibility Studies to deliver priority projects linked to the Corporate Plan. The report explained that grant applications had been submitted to the Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee in late 2016 to fund six specific studies. The Committee had now considered these applications and had decided to approve them. As a consequence, the Council had been offered £156k of grant aid.

Cabinet welcomed the Economic Prosperity Committee's decision and made it clear that it wished to accept the grant aid. Members discussed briefly the priority projects that this grant aid would help to progress. These ranged from the remodelling of the Council's own leisure service through to important regeneration projects, such as the redevelopment of the Fox Street site in Sutton.

Cabinet noted that the Council would not have been able to make progress on these studies without this support. Members felt that the Council would have to increasingly seek out grants and funds from other organisations in this way if it was to continue to achieve its corporate priorities and objectives.

RESOLVED

- a) That Cabinet approves acceptance of the £156k grant offer from the Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee for the procurement of feasibility studies and evidence based work to support delivery of Ashfield District Council's priority projects;
- b) That Cabinet approves an increase in the Council's budget to accommodate match funding requirements, of up to £17,250;

- c) That Cabinet authorises the Chief Executive and the relevant Portfolio Holder to enter into funding agreements with the Accountable Body, Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC);
- d) That Cabinet authorises the Chief Executive and the relevant Portfolio Holder to vary funding agreements, where necessary.

Reasons

To help take forward 6 priority projects linked to the Corporate Plan.

CA.57 Update of the Ashfield Local Development Scheme

Members were informed that the Council was legally required to maintain an up to date Local Development Scheme. An updated scheme had been produced, which was attached to the report.

Cabinet considered and discussed the updated Local Development Scheme. Cabinet heard that whether the Council had produced and agreed a Local Development Scheme would be one of the tests of legal compliance investigated at any formal examination of the Local Plan.

At the conclusion of the discussion Cabinet endorsed the updated scheme.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet approves the Ashfield Local Development Scheme, as appended to the report and that it is brought into effect from 1 February 2017.

Reasons

To adhere to the legal requirement to maintain an up to date Local Development Scheme under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

CA.58 Fees and Charges Review

The report to Cabinet explained that a review of the Council's Fees and Charges had taken place. The purpose of this review had been to make sure that the Council recovers fully the cost of its services rather than to run them at a loss. Members recognised how important it was to do this, given the need to make substantial financial savings.

Cabinet reviewed the specific changes that had been proposed. Members noted the proposed increase in cemetery charges. They were pleased to hear that this would be in line with the increases proposed by other Nottinghamshire councils.

RESOLVED

- a) That Cabinet agrees to increase cemetery charges in line with neighbouring authorities. This is expected to generate additional income of £10k;
- b) That Cabinet agrees to increase allotment fees by 2% for 2017/18, which is expected to generate additional income of £1,000;
- c) That Cabinet agrees the revised Fees & Charges booklet for 2017/18, with all the applicable increases taking effect as soon as practically possible after 1 April 2017.

Reasons

Additional income raised will contribute towards the Council's savings targets and continue to support the financing of a range of services.

CA.59 Consideration of the Future of Cash Collection Following Budget Consultation

Cabinet was asked to agree a new, more modern, approach to how the Council collects money. This new approach would involve a move away from collecting cash at local offices towards greater use of electronic methods, such as Direct Debit, online and telephone payments or payments made at 'Pay-Points' in shops and post offices across the District.

Cabinet was told that many other organisations – including most utility companies and a significant number of other local authorities now handle their transactions in this way. The proposed changes would bring the Council into line with what has increasingly become best practice. The new approach would also be less expensive to run and so allow the Council to make an annual saving.

Members discussed and welcomed the proposals, which they felt would improve the service by providing more payment options and help to meet the financial shortfall facing the Council. However, there was a clear consensus that the move away from collecting cash at the Council's own premises should be handled sensitively. Cabinet made it clear that it wanted those residents who still pay their bills in cash to be supported, so that their transition to more modern payment methods causes them as little confusion and inconvenience as possible.

RESOLVED

- a) That Cabinet agrees that cash collection should be modernised, to make full use of the most efficient channels, including Direct Debit, cash payments via Pay Point, electronic and telephone payments;
- b) That Cabinet agrees that a timetable be developed for the ending of direct cash collection through Council offices;

- c) That Cabinet agrees that the Project Team set up to implement this project ensures that residents are supported through the process, so that the transition is easy to manage for residents who have been used to paying cash at Council offices.

Reasons

This initiative is forecast to save £64k annually from the General Fund, with an additional saving of £28k per year from the Housing Revenue Account.

CA.60 Review of Community Engagement

The report to Cabinet proposed that an independent review take place of how the Council engages with the community. The aim of this review would be to find out what ways of engaging people work best and which of them offer the best value for money. In this context, the meeting was told only 9% of residents had attended Members Surgeries and that only 7% had attended Area Committee meetings.

Members discussed the report. They were especially interested in the role which social media could play in engaging local people. Specific mention was made of Twitter and how it had been successfully used to engage people during Overview & Scrutiny Committee and other meetings. Cabinet hoped that greater use could be made of social media in the future as a practical way of getting people involved in the work of the Council.

- a) That Cabinet agrees to an independent review of community engagement methodologies, to include Member Surgeries and Area Committees;
- b) That a report be brought to a future Cabinet meeting setting out recommendations for revised engagement methods.

Reasons

Ashfield Council is engaged in an ongoing programme of service reviews in the light of the need for continuing efficiency savings due to budget cuts and Community Engagement forms a key part of the ongoing review.

CA.61 Support Team Progress and Financial Update Report

Members received an update on the work and progress made by the multi-agency Support Teams for the New Cross and Broomhill areas of the District. They were reminded that the purpose of the Teams was to bring together the Council and its partners, so that they could integrate their activities and address more effectively the often complicated and interrelated problems affecting people in these areas.

Members discussed the report. They welcomed the success of the teams and the way in which they had worked with residents to address their complicated problems as a whole – rather than just focusing on the immediate, pressing,

issues facing them. This approach had not only been cost effective it had also helped to provide real support to those individuals and families in overcoming their difficulties.

Members felt that the work of the teams had been greatly beneficial and should continue to be supported. They hoped that the partner agencies, who had made a significant contribution to the work of the teams to date, would continue to do so.

RESOLVED

- a) That Cabinet acknowledges the progress made through Support Team working and recognises that the principles underpinning it are now being mirrored as part of the Integrated Service Hub review;
- b) That Cabinet acknowledges the leadership Ashfield District Council is showing as part of the public sector reform debate and in informing the county-wide integrated locality working project;
- c) That Cabinet confirms Council funding arrangements to fund the New Cross and Broomhill Support Teams in 2017/18 and beyond recognising the potential this creates to deliver further efficiencies through the integrated service hub review and wider public sector reform;
- d) That Cabinet agrees to continue to pursue funding arrangements with partner agencies;
- e) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Service Director – Place and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Engagement to vary resource levels and structures in both teams once partner contributions for 2017/18 have been confirmed.

Reasons

In establishing the Support Team approach, Ashfield District Council has positioned itself at the forefront of public sector reform in Nottinghamshire. The service, and the learning from working in this inter disciplinary way is helping inform service reform and integration at a County-wide level. The initiative has been judged to be 'Highly Commended' at the prestigious Municipal Journal Awards for reinventing Public Services 2016.

CA.62 Ashfield Community Partnership (Formerly Known as Ashfield Community Safety Partnership) Strategic Plan 2014-17 (Annual Refresh 2016)

Cabinet considered the Annual Refresh of the Ashfield Community Partnership Strategic Plan. The meeting was told that the Council has a legal duty to develop and keep up to date a strategy with its partners setting out how they will work together to tackle crime and disorder issues and to improve the quality of life for local residents.

Cabinet considered and welcomed the Annual Refresh of the Strategic Plan. In particular, Members welcomed the continued focus on improving the quality of life for local residents. They also welcomed the closer working relationship between the Council and the Police and the commitment in the Strategic Plan for even greater co-operation, especially on tackling Anti-Social Behaviour.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet recommends approval of the annual refresh (2016) of the Ashfield Community Partnership Strategic Plan 2014-2017 to Council.

Reasons

Approval of the annual refresh of the Ashfield Community Partnership Strategic Plan will ensure that legislative requirements have been met.

CA.63 Leisure Review - Huthwaite

The report to Cabinet provided an update on the Council's Leisure Facilities Review. It explained that there had been extensive public consultation about the review. This had shown public support for the strategy of concentrating resources on the three main leisure centres in the District – Lammas, Hucknall and Kirkby – rather than on the smaller facilities.

Members were told that the Huthwaite Leisure Centre was quite small and comparatively few people used it. As a consequence, the Centre was far more expensive to run per user than the other leisure centres. This was no longer financially sustainable.

The report proposed that the Council cease to operate the Centre. Instead, it should be offered to community groups or other third parties to see if they would like to run the Centre. The report recommended that if no one was prepared to do this then the Centre should close.

Members also heard that the public consultation had shown clear community support for retaining swimming facilities in Hucknall. For this reason it was now proposed that a review into swimming provision in Hucknall as a whole should take place, which would cover the Edgewood Leisure Centre. The Centre would continue to operate as normal while the review was carried out.

Cabinet discussed the report. There was a consensus that the closure of Huthwaite Leisure Centre would be a regrettable decision, but that the Council could no longer afford to run it. Members hoped that others would be prepared to take over the facility and felt that any group which came forward should be given advice and access to expertise in order to help them make a success of it.

RESOLVED

- a) That Cabinet agrees that bids should be invited from the Community or other interested parties for a sustainable future use of the Huthwaite

Leisure Centre site. That whilst exploring these alternative options, the operator Sport Leisure Management Ltd (SLM) be given six-months' notice;

- b) That Cabinet agrees to review the provision of swimming in Hucknall and that operations at the Edgewood Leisure Centre will remain the same whilst the review takes place and that a further report be brought to Cabinet in due course.

Reasons

To update Cabinet on a key Project from the Leisure Review within the Council's Corporate Plan (2016-2019).

CA.64 Consideration of Glass Collection Proposals Following Budget Consultation

The report to Council set out proposals for the Council's glass collection service. These involved a move from a four weekly collection of the small 55 litre boxes to an eight weekly collection of 140 litre bins. The change had been supported by the Council's Cross Party Waste Group. The report made it clear that the new approach would have many benefits. In particular, it would be easier and less messy for people to use than the existing box. It was also hoped that it would increase greatly glass recycling rates in the District.

Cabinet was told that the new approach would require a significant, once only, capital investment, but that this would be offset by an ongoing annual revenue savings of £50k per annum.

Members discussed the proposed changes. They noted that there had been extensive public consultation about the proposal to use bins to collect glass and that this had been strongly supported. Cabinet welcomed this. Cabinet also welcomed the continued use of special arrangements to collect glass from those who did not have the space to store the bins.

RESOLVED

- a) That Cabinet agrees that the method of collection be changed for glass bottles and jars from 44 to 55 litre blue boxes to 140 litre wheeled bins (multi-dwelling premises will continue to receive bespoke provision as necessary);
- b) That Cabinet agrees that the glass collection cycle for each property be changed from 4 weeks to 8 weeks;
- c) That Cabinet acknowledges that residents will be advised to retain their existing blue boxes;
- d) That Cabinet recommends to Council that a 2017/18 capital budget of £750k be created for the purchase and distribution of new 140 litre bins for glass (£710k) and associated management and communication costs (40k). £40k will be contributed from the Corporate Improvement

Fund towards funding the scheme;

- e) That Cabinet agrees that revenue budgets should be adjusted and reduced accordingly to enable a net annual saving of £50k to be realised;
- f) That Cabinet agrees to reduce the employee structure by 1 crew comprising 1 Waste Collection / Relief Driver and 2 Waste Collectors, and the vehicle fleet by 1 vehicle in order to deliver the required saving;
- g) That Cabinet acknowledges and approves the project approach, including risks and mitigations, as set out within the report;
- h) That to ensure timely and effective decision making Cabinet delegates authority to the Service Director – Places and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder – Environment, to vary the implementation timetable in line with the practical and logistical requirements of the project;
- i) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Service Director – Place and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder – Environment to finalise the policy regarding opting out and sharing bins with neighbours.

Reasons

The proposal will deliver a number of environmental, operational and financial benefits to the Council.

CA.65 Consideration of Selston Golf Course Following Budget Consultation

The report to Cabinet explained that the Council could no longer meet the operating cost of Selston Golf Course. It set out two options for the future. Either a community or other group could take over the golf course, or if this did not happen then it should close and be converted into a community park.

Members discussed the report. This was seen as another difficult decision that the Council would have to take. Cabinet welcomed the co-operation with Selston Parish Council to try and find an alternative operator. Members also supported the proposal that the site should be converted into a community park if no other operator came forward to run the golf course.

RESOLVED

- a) That Cabinet formally advises Nottinghamshire County Council that Ashfield District Council would be prepared to surrender its lease for the site should an alternate provider be found who would like to enter into a new lease with the County Council, or purchase the site outright;
- b) That Nottinghamshire County Council be supported in identifying any alternate interested parties in the site and assisting in the development of

any new agreement as required;

- c) That Cabinet authorises that should it be necessary to facilitate recommendation a) and b) above, the lease for the site known as Selston Golf Course be surrendered;
- d) That Cabinet confirms that should insufficient progress in both identifying and reaching agreement with the new provider have been made by 31 March 2017 that the golf course and café will be closed and the site turned into a community park;
- e) That Cabinet acknowledges the human resources and financial implications of this decision;
- f) That to ensure timely and effective decision making Cabinet delegates authority to the Service Director, Place and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder – Environment, to determine whether the threshold for 'sufficient progress' has been met and to decide at which point recommendation d) above should be enacted. This also includes a decision about whether the building and porta cabin should be removed from the site.

Reasons

To provide positive options for addressing the future of the Selston Golf Course site.

CA.66 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 it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and in respect of which the Proper Officer considers the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

CA.67 Sale of Land - Plot 2 Butlers Hill Industrial Development Site, Hucknall

The report to Cabinet asked Members to agree the sale of Plot 2 of the Butlers Hill Industrial Development Site in Hucknall.

RESOLVED

- a) That Cabinet approves the sale of Plot 2 (approximately 1.7 acres) at Butlers Hill Industrial Estate;
- b) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Interim Service Director

Planning & Economic Development or the Chief Executive to conclude negotiations relating to the heads of terms of sale in conjunction with the Assistant Chief Executive (Governance);

- c) That Legal Services be instructed to draft the necessary legal documentation;
- d) That Legal Services sign and seal any documents required to finalise the transaction.

Reasons

The sale will provide a capital receipt, employment in the District and enable the development of part of the Butlers Hill site.

CA.68 Sale of Land - Plot 3 Butlers Hill Industrial Development Site, Hucknall

Cabinet was asked to agree the sale of Plot 3 of the Butlers Hill Industrial Development Site in Hucknall

RESOLVED

- a) That Cabinet approves the sale of Plot 3 (approximately 0.84 acres) at Butlers Hill Industrial Estate;
- b) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Interim Service Director Planning & Economic Development or the Chief Executive to conclude negotiations relating to the heads of terms of sale in conjunction with the Assistant Chief Executive (Governance);
- c) That Legal Services be instructed to draft the necessary legal documentation;
- d) That Legal Services sign and seal any documents required to finalise the transaction.

Reasons

The sale will provide a capital receipt, employment in the District and enable the development of part of the Butlers Hill site.

CA.69 Sale of Land Plot 5 Butlers Hill Industrial Development Site Hucknall - Sale of Land - Revision of Sale Terms

Cabinet was asked to agree the sale of Plot 3 of the Butlers Hill Industrial Development Site in Hucknall

- a) That Cabinet approves the revised sale price of Plot 5 (approximately 0.86 acres) at Butlers Hill Industrial Estate;

- b) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Interim Service Director Planning & Economic Development or the Chief Executive to conclude negotiations relating to the heads of terms of sale in conjunction with the Assistant Chief Executive (Governance);
- c) That Legal Services be instructed to draft the necessary legal documentation;
- d) That Legal Services sign and seal any documents required to finalise the transaction.

Reason

The sale will provide a capital receipt, employment in the District and enable the development of part of the Butlers Hill site.

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm

Chair.