

CABINET

Wednesday, 18 September 2019

Attendance:

Councillor Thompson (Chairperson)	– Leader and Cabinet Member for Communications and Transformation
Councillor Cutler (Vice-Chair)	– Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Risk
Councillor Learney	– Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management
Councillor Murphy	– Cabinet Member for Environment
Councillor Porter	– Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Wellbeing
Councillor Prince	– Cabinet Member for Sport, Leisure and Communities
Councillor Weir	– Cabinet Member for Local Economy

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Brook and Horrill
Monica Gill (TACT)

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillors Clementson and Evans
David Chafe (TACT)

1. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Councillor Porter declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in relation to various items on the agenda, due to her role as County Councillor.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held 28 August 2019 be approved and adopted.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Two members of the public spoke under general public participation as summarised below. In addition, Ian Tait spoke regarding Report CAB3160 and CAB3184 and his comments are summarised under the relevant minutes below.

Teresa Skelton welcomed the record of her comments made at the previous Cabinet meeting on 28 August as contained in the minutes thereon. She asked three questions:

- Were there proposals for a liaison officer between the City Council and the Police?
- The Council's views on the arrest of 11 Hampshire police officers for a variety of offences?
- Was the Council aware that local people's medical records had been unlawfully accessed by authorities, including the Police (resulting on one occasion of damages payable by Southern Health Trust)?

Mark Rowe spoke as Chairman of the local English Democrats and a Council tenant and asked the following:

- The Council's views on the introduction of Universal Credit and in particular the potential for a large gap between payments ceasing under the old scheme and restarting;
- The Council's views on the ongoing drug and alcohol problems in the city centre.

4. **LEADER AND CABINET MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The following announcements were made:

- The opportunity for questions from the public at full Council meetings would be introduced at the Council meeting on 25 September 2019. In addition, the meeting would be audio recorded.
- The interactive budget simulator (launched on 4 September) was available on the Council's website until 29 September 2019.

5. **STATION APPROACH - SITE DISPOSAL PROCESS** (CAB3188)

Councillor Weir introduced the report and reminded Members that at the Cabinet meeting on 28 August 2019 it had been agreed to dispose of the Carfax site to a selected purchaser, subject to the award of an outline planning consent. Outline planning consent was subsequently granted at Planning Committee on 12 September 2019.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Horrill addressed Cabinet in support of the project, as she had at the previous Cabinet meeting and Planning Committee. It was her view that Station Approach presented a significant opportunity to boost to the local economy (estimated at approximately £80m) and also opportunities for improving the public realm in the area. She also welcomed the opportunity to participate in the evaluation process as detailed at Paragraph 11.10 of the report. In summary, she raised the following points:

- Regarding timing, could the proposal for the purchaser selection to be made in March 2020 be brought forward, particularly to avoid further pressure on securing the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) monies by March 2021?
- In their report, JLL indicated that there was a potential for broader interest in the site than from the local area and she therefore sought assurances

that the Council was taking adequate measures to access this wider market.

- What triggers were written into the process to take account of significant uncertainties, such as the impact of Brexit?

One Cabinet Member proposed that the requirements on a prospective purchaser to prove a demonstrable commitment to sustainability/carbon-neutral best practice be prioritised. The Council's legal advisor, Steven Matthew (BrowneJacobson) confirmed this was acceptable and was to be welcomed as offering further clarity to the market. In addition, Members requested that bidders have the opportunity to respond to the comments from the Regional Design Panel. Cabinet agreed to an amendment to recommendation 1 of the report to take account of both points (as set out in amended Resolution 1 below).

Members commented at that the recent meeting of the Station Approach Open Forum on 16 September 2019, some issues had been raised over the next steps of the process. The selection of the purchaser to develop the scheme was recognised as crucial to the process and Cabinet wished to be as transparent as possible in making this decision. Therefore, Members requested that a further report be submitted to a future Cabinet on the assessment process for the prospective purchaser(s). The report's recommendations were further amended accordingly, as set out below.

With regard to paragraph 11.10, Cabinet agreed that the Members included in the group to whom potential purchasers could make a presentation be expanded to include one Ward Councillor and also a Cabinet Member. It was clarified that only one Ward Councillor would be nominated (even though the proposed development fell within two wards).

With regard to comments made by Councillor Horrill, Cabinet were mindful of the potential impact and risks from the current Brexit uncertainties.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the arrangements detailed in this report for the marketing and Purchaser selection process for disposal of the Carfax site be approved, but that further emphasis be given to matters of sustainability, and that bidders respond to the comments of the Regional Design Panel.
2. That the Strategic Director – Place be authorised to finalise and undertake the marketing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Local Economy, based on the disposal methodology set out in this report.
3. That a further report be brought to Cabinet setting out the detailed purchaser selection process based on the disposal methodology in this report

4. That the Strategic Director – Place be required to bring a report to Cabinet for a decision on the disposal of the site to a purchaser once the marketing and selection process has been completed.

6. **ESTABLISHING THE WINCHESTER HOUSING COMPANY**
(CAB3160)

Councillor Learney introduced the report in support of the proposals to establish the Housing Company.

Ian Tait spoke during public participation and in summary, whilst generally welcoming the proposals, raised the following points:

- queried how many dwellings would be delivered each year and the likely tenure split.
- believed that the likely level of sub-market rents would remain unaffordable for many potential tenants.
- queried the availability of suitable land for new dwellings;
- raised that the profit figures quoted in the report were unrealistic.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Horrill addressed Cabinet in general support for the proposals. She raised a number of points as summarised below:

- raised queries regarding the proposed governance arrangements, including whether it was appropriate for the Housing New Build Panel to include a Director who was also a Board Member.
- A review of the success of the Housing Company should be undertaken in 12-18 months.
- Disappointment at the recommendation to reduce the Partnered Home Purchase (PHP) budget by £1.2m at this stage. A reassessment should have been undertaken following the district review of housing delivery.

In response to comments made, Councillor Learney emphasised that the Housing Company was intended to enable the Council to develop other types of housing tenure it was not currently able to under the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). It would operate as an ethical landlord and she believed it was appropriate to have housing officers on the Board due to the necessary commitment to deliver housing required.

Councillor Learney stated that the PHP funding would be reconsidered as part of the 2020/21 Council budget. The Strategic Director: Services (Interim) advised that the report's proposals to reduce the PHP budget would still enable the pilot scheme to be completed and the scheme would then be reviewed.

The Strategic Director: Services (Interim) explained that the predicted profit figures contained in the appendix were an example and not a proposal for a specific development. It was anticipated that approximately 50 dwellings could be provided with the initial investment level.

The Service Lead – Legal advised that it was not inappropriate for a Council Strategic Director to also be appointed as a Director of the Housing Company.

Councillor Learney agreed to the proposal to review the operation of the Housing Company in 12-18 months time.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the appointment of three senior officers to the Board of Directors be approved:
 - a) Strategic Director – Place
 - b) Corporate Head of Housing
 - c) Housing Finance & Resources Manager.
2. That the approval process for housing company development opportunities be approved; with authority to agree Terms of Reference for the Housing New Build Panel delegated to the Corporate Head of Housing in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Asset Management. This proposal was considered and supported by the Business and Housing Policy Committee on 18 June 2019.
3. That the £10 million General Fund expenditure be approved on the basis of a 25:75 equity/loan split, to be drawn down as the housing company requires the funds, and to be funded by capital receipts and prudential borrowing proportionally within each tranche.
4. That the Partnered Home Purchase budget be reduced by £1.2m in order to finance the equity purchase, noting that the Council may increase this budget in the future subject to future capital receipts.

RECOMMENDED:

5. THAT COUNCIL GIVES PERMISSION TO ESTABLISH A COMPANY LIMITED BY SHARES AND WHOLLY OWNED BY THE COUNCIL TO DELIVER AND MANAGE UNITS FOR SUB-MARKET RENT, SHARED OWNERSHIP ACCOMMODATION AND UNITS FOR OUTRIGHT SALE.

6. THAT THE COUNCIL APPROVES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HOUSING COMPANY SCRUTINY PANEL AND NOMINATES THREE MEMBERS TO SIT ON THE PANEL.

**7. LOCAL PLAN 2036 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT PROCESS
(CAB3191)**

Councillor Porter introduced the report and noted that its proposals had been supported by the Winchester Town Forum at its meeting on 11 September 2019.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Brook addressed Cabinet and in summary, raised the following points:

- Disagreement that £50,000 was to be allocated from the General Fund Local Plan budget to assist the Town Forum in updating the Vision for Winchester. She believed this was inappropriate as the Vision would not be relevant to the wider District. In addition, she questioned why a separate vision was required for the Winchester town area.
- Lack of consultation to date with parish councils – the focus instead appeared to be on the town area through the Winchester Town Forum;
- She considered that rural parts of the District were being ignored.

In response, Councillor Porter stated that parish councils would be fully involved at an appropriate time in the Local Plan process, based on evidence then available. Cabinet Members also commented that the Vision for Winchester document was of significance to a wide range of current Council major projects (such as the Station Approach development and proposals for Central Winchester regeneration) which did impact on the wider district and the Council's future finances more generally. Members also highlighted that funds had previously been allocated towards Parish Neighbourhood Plans, such as the Denmead Neighbourhood Plan.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the views of Winchester Town Forum in respect of development of a Vision for Winchester and its subsequent role in informing policies to achieve appropriate development in the Forum area be considered.
2. That the engagement model for the emerging local plan be agreed, as set out in the report.
3. That £50,000 be allocated from existing General Fund Local Plan budget to assist the Town Forum to prepare an update of the Vision for Winchester.

Councillor Porter left the meeting after this item (10.45am).

8. **PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY**
(CAB3184)

Councillor Learney introduced the report which proposed a refresh to the existing Strategy allowing the Council to continue offering a gold standard service. There remained a commitment to not using bed and breakfast accommodation and to end rough sleeping by 2023. She emphasised the ongoing importance of close partnership working with various agencies in achieving these aims.

Ian Tait spoke during public participation and in summary, raised the issue that it was sometimes difficult to differentiate between those who were homeless and

others who might be begging on the street due to their chaotic lifestyle and other dependency issues (whilst acknowledging all groups required help and assistance). However, he generally welcomed the report's proposals.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Horrill spoke in support of the report and congratulated the work of the Housing Team. She encouraged Officers to remain ahead of new statutory duties in order to maintain its gold standard service. She agreed that partnership working was vitally important and it was essential that the Council took a lead. Ensuring the sufficient supply of adequate accommodation to avoid the having to house people in bed and breakfast accommodation should remain at the heart of the Strategy.

In response to the points raised by Mr Tait, the Strategic Director: Services (Interim) confirmed that Council were aware of the majority of the individuals causing concerns. Officers were members of a cross organisation group which had been established to ascertain how these individuals could best be supported by the various agencies involved.

With regard to Mr Tait's comments regarding begging, Councillor Learney noted that the Diverted Giving Scheme would be relaunched. She welcomed the support of Councillor Horrill and agreed that adopting a "housing first" approach should continue.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 – 2024 be approved and formally adopted.

9. **FORMER POLICE STATION TWYFORD - APPROVAL OF TENDER TO CONSTRUCT COUNCIL HOMES**
(CAB3189)

At the invitation of the Leader, representatives of TACT (Monica Gill and David Chafe) were invited to the table for consideration of this item.

Councillor Learney introduced the report and advised that, if approved, construction would start straight away with an expected completion date of December 2020.

Mrs Gill (TACT) welcomed the provision of new homes, particularly outside of Winchester.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Horrill also expressed support for the proposal to build two new homes in a rural location.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Corporate Head of Housing be authorised to award and to enter into a build contract with Whitman Builders to construct 2 new properties at Dolphin Hill, Twyford for the sum of £441,635.
2. That the additional scheme cost of £167,611 to be funded by right to buy 1-4-1 receipts be approved bringing the total budget to £599,611
3. That, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rule 7.4, total capital expenditure of £599,611 as set out in Appendix 1 be approved.
4. That the Corporate Head of Asset Management be authorised to negotiate and agree terms and to enter into easements, wayleaves and related agreements with utility suppliers, telecom/media providers and neighbours in order to facilitate the development.

10. **QUARTER 1 FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING**
(CAB3183)

The Leader noted that the content of the report had been considered at the Scrutiny Committee on 9 September 2019 (report SC011 refers) where a number of points were raised, as detailed in paragraph 6.3 of the report. Cabinet Members provided the following responses to a number of the points raised by Scrutiny Committee:

- A review of the Guildhall business had been completed. Plans for converting the existing café into a stand alone facility had been drawn up and the unit was being marketed. Depending on the outcome of this, a further report to Cabinet would be required.
- Negotiations were continuing with the GP practice finalising the lease arrangements for the new surgery.
- The first Central Winchester Regeneration Open Forum would take place on 24 September 2019 where an update on the project as a whole would be provided.
- A stakeholder event on the future use of the River Park Leisure Centre (RPLC) site had taken place in March 2019 and the Winchester Town Forum was leading work on improvements to the North Walls green spaces, including a replacement pavilion. All kerbside glass collection boxes should now have been delivered and residents were asked to contact the Council if their box had not arrived. The new collection calendars and letters would shortly be posted out to all residents and additional staff would be placed in the Council's call centre to deal with the anticipated increase in customer calls.
- The new Leisure Centre project was progressing within budget.
- The structure of the quarterly report and possibility of providing comparisons with previous years' quarters would be considered.
- With regard to the EU LEADER funding, no alternative was currently available.
- Councillors Cutler and Porter were meeting with the Chief Executive to discuss staffing matters .

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

That the progress achieved during the first quarter of 2019/20 be noted and the contents of the report be endorsed.

11. **RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY 2019**
(CAB3176)

Councillor Cutler introduced the report.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Risk Management Policy for 2019, its Risk Appetite Statement for 2019/20 and the Corporate Risk Register be approved.

12. **FUTURE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

RESOLVED:

That the list of future items, as set out in the Forward Plan for October 2019, be noted.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 11.15 am

Chairperson