

MINUTES of a meeting of the CABINET held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2013

Present: Councillor R Blunt (Chairman)

Councillors R D Bayliss, T Gillard, T J Pendleton, A V Smith MBE and N J Rushton.

In attendance: Councillors J Geary, P Hyde and R Johnson.

Officers: Mr S Bambrick, Mr R Bowmer, Mrs V Eaton, Ms C Fisher, and Miss E Warhurst.

31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received.

32. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor N J Rushton declared a pecuniary interest in item 8 "Investment in Coalville Indoor Market" as owner of the indoor market in Ashby de la Zouch.

33. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

34. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2013.

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Reason for decision: To comply with the Constitution.

35. INTRODUCING A MORE EFFICIENT AND COORDINATED APPROACH TO DEALING WITH DAMP IN COUNCIL TENANTS' HOMES

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members. He stated that damp conditions in tenants' homes had been a growing concern to them, particularly as these conditions may be due to the way the properties were constructed. It appeared to be worse in older Council properties. It was therefore decided that Kier be nominated as the sole contractor to alleviate dampness in all its forms.

The Chairman added that dampness was also caused by the modern way of life and with people covering air vents, as many were worried about energy costs.

It was moved by Councillor R D Bayliss, seconded by Councillor T J Pendleton and

RESOLVED THAT:

- (1) the procurement process selected for the contract be noted; and
- (2) the contract be awarded to Kier under the Scape Framework Agreement

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Reason for decision: The level of potential expenditure exceeds the authority threshold in the Scheme of Delegation.

36. **GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET – DRAFT PROPOSALS 2014-15 AND 2015-16**

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members. He moved the recommendations on page 12.

He explained that Cabinet had agreed the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for the next four years at its meeting on 11 June this year. Since then the Government had announced its intention to consult with us and change the allocation of New Homes Bonus payments from 2015-16; this had made our challenging budget savings targets even more challenging. The Council needed to save £1.5m over the next two financial years and an estimated £2.8m by the end of the four year MTF period and this was after an assumed 1.5% increase in the District's Council Tax. This was a familiar picture across the country with similar budget savings needed in percentage terms.

Councillor N J Rushton added that the report updated on the progress of our Planning for the Future strategies, including early consultation on draft budget proposals for next year and the "direction of travel" for 2015/16 onwards. It also sets out the Council's General Fund revenue reserves and confirms the strategy of using reserves to invest to save rather than attempt to fund budget deficits in the short term.

Appendix 1 sets out the Cabinet's proposals for budget savings in 2014/15 and Appendix 2 sets out the Cabinet's approach to meeting future savings targets.

Following approval by Cabinet the proposals would be consulted on and the responses reported back to Cabinet in December so that formal budget recommendations could be developed for final approval by full Council in February 2014. The Council welcomed responses and asked that alternative savings proposals are put forward where the Cabinet was asked to withdraw any of its own proposals.

Cabinet would be kept informed of any revisions to our savings targets which were made possible by changes in Government funding and the outcome of the New Homes Bonus consultation in particular.

Councillor A V Smith asked for a further item to be added to the proposals for consultation which was our Community Grants and One-Off Grants programme.

She recognised that it was equally a difficult time for our partners and community organisations but the Council must prioritise what resources it had to ensure we got value for money from all that we do or give.

It was on that basis that she proposed the following;

Firstly, that the Council ask officers to annually review all of our partnership grants to ensure they are delivering agreed outcomes, that they represent value for money and with an exception that savings and/or efficiencies are continuously achieved.

Secondly, that the Council ceases from the end of this year our one-off community grants programme, which totalled £12,300 but involved significant administration time from officers and quarterly members meetings.

Councillor A V Smith explained that officers had amended appendix 1B which was distributed to all Members present.

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The Corporate Portfolio Holder added that these were difficult times for the Council.

Councillor N J Rushton moved the recommendations on page 12 with the amended Appendix 1B, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT:

- (1) the draft budget savings proposals schedule set out at Appendix 1, with the amended Appendix 1B, for consultation be approved; and
- (2) the proposals for officers to seek further solutions of funding outlined in Appendix 2 (paragraph 3) be approved

Reason for decision: Required to commence consultation on 2014/15 draft budget proposals and "direction of travel" for 2015/16.

37. IMPROVING OUR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Leader presented the report to Members as Performance and Customer Services Portfolio Holder. He explained that the Improving our Customer Service Experience (ICE) was progressing according to plan. The deliverable options were:-

- more self-service options on the Council's website;
- improvements to the telephony and other systems used in Customer Services;
- an improved waste management system;
- more electronic payment options;
- oversight of strategic and financial planning and customer consultation

Councillor R Blunt added that this was a major investment for the Council and the return would be expected by year 3 with faster call process times.

Councillor R D Bayliss, as previous portfolio holder, stated that the problem of multi queries could be incredibly long and frustrating for customers and he was pleased that the Council were investing in this programme.

Councillor R Blunt moved the recommendations on page 26, seconded by Councillor N J Rushton and

RESOLVED THAT:

the progress of the ICE Programme be noted.

Reason for decision: To update Cabinet on progress with the Improving our Customer Experience (ICE) Programme.

38. INVESTMENT IN COALVILLE INDOOR MARKET

Councillor N J Rushton left the meeting and did not take part in the discussion or decision thereof.

The Business Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members and highlighted the following:-

He explained that the Indoor Market was a key facility in Coalville which the Council could use to help regenerate the Town Centre by attracting more footfalls. It was

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important that the market was a success and attracted more customers and traders. In turn more traders would also generate an income for the Council to ensure that the market had a sustainable economic future. The Council therefore wanted to invest in the market to ensure that it created these economic and regeneration benefits.

Improvements which would enhance trading at the market had been identified with traders. The highest priority was to better promote the market and improve the appearance and approaches to the market.

It was proposed to re-locate the public toilets into the market which would in turn enable the demolition of the unsightly toilet block – improving visibility of the market from the Belvoir Shopping Centre. An improved forecourt would then be used for additional traders to hold events. A new access to the side of the market would also ensure that the popular café in the market could remain open on non market days.

The estimated costs of improvement works was £168,000. Funding would mainly come from Council reserves (£122,000) plus grant from the County Council and private planning agreement funds available for the regeneration of the town centre.

Councillor T Gillard put this investment forward to Cabinet as outlined in the report.

Councillor T Gillard then outlined some of the events and initiatives that he had been and would be supporting as Portfolio Holder for Business during a busy September.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Gillard for his update and was pleased that he was getting more involved in this project. He asked him to come back to Cabinet Briefing and update Members on progress.

The Chairman referred to the return on investment, as mentioned in the previous item, and asked, if the return in investment only applied to increased footfall, what about the 40% unoccupied units? Councillor T Gillard reassured the Chairman that the occupancy of these units would definitely increase once these improvements had been made.

It was moved by Councillor T Gillard, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and;

RESOLVED THAT:

- (1) a Private Sector partner is no longer sought for the development and management of the indoor market be noted;
- (2) the investment of up to £168,000 for the development and improvement of the indoor market and its surroundings as set out in paragraph 2.3 with funding contributions as set out in paragraph 3.1 be approved.
- (3) delegated authority be given to the Director of Services to award the contract for the development and improvement of the indoor market and its surroundings.

Reason for decision: To agree to capital investment and service enhancement works.

39. LEICESTERSHIRE ENVIRONMENT BOARD - JOINT STRATEGIC WORKING IN WASTE

The Community Services Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members, drawing their attention to the conclusion in the Stage 1 review report which recommended that

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more work was required to understand if savings could be found for all partnership members. She asked Cabinet for their agreement that the Council participates in Stage 2. She stated that Council had made no commitment so far, and would only be “dipping its toe in the water”.

Councillor R D Bayliss was pleased that the Authority had not yet committed as the collection of rubbish was the flagship for this Authority and he hoped that the quality of work would continue.

It was moved by Councillor A V Smith, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT:

- (1) the information supplied from the Stage 1 review be noted;
- (2) the Authority’s participation in Stage 2 be agreed; and
- (3) the Director of Services be appointed to the Task and Finish Group.

Reason for decision: The Stage 1 review has identified that further work is required to understand if savings can be found for all partners within the Waste Partnership.

40. **AUTHORITY TO AWARD BANKING CONTRACTS**

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members. He moved the recommendations on page 44 with the amendment to recommendations 2 & 3 that “delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive and Head of Finance, in consultation with the Corporate Portfolio Holder.”

It was moved by Councillor N J Rushton, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT:

- (1) the tender process selected for the banking services contract be noted;
- (2) delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive and Head of Finance, in consultation with the Corporate Portfolio Holder, to award the Main Banking Services Contract in accordance with evaluation criteria set out in Appendix 1 of this report; and
- (3) delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive and Head of Finance, in consultation with the Corporate Portfolio Holder, to award the Paypoint Services Contract as outlined in paragraph 2.5.

Reason for decision: The level of potential expenditure exceeds the authority threshold in the Scheme of Delegation.

41. **SUPPORTING BUSINESS GROWTH THROUGH THE "BETTER BUSINESS FOR ALL" PROGRAMME**

The Community Services Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members and highlighted that the “Better Business for All” Programme launched in 2011 had made significant progress.

It was moved by Councillor A V Smith, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

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RESOLVED THAT:

the contents of the report be received and noted.

Reason for decision: To endorse the work of the “Better Business for All” Programme.

42. MINUTES OF THE GRANTS REVIEW WORKING PARTY

The Community Services Portfolio Holder was delighted to present the report to Members and moved the recommendations on page 64. She referred to her amendment to the budget proposals previously discussed in item 6, and stated that funding received within the area from outside bodies was detailed on page 67.

It was moved by Councillor A V Smith, seconded by Councillor T J Pendleton and

RESOLVED THAT:

the recommendations made by the Grants Review Working Party as detailed within the minutes attached at Appendix 1 be approved.

Reason for decision: To enable community and voluntary organisations in the District to receive financial assistance for projects that meet the Council’s priorities.

43. MINUTES OF THE COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY

The Community Services Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members and took the opportunity to thank members of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party and officers involved, for all their hard work. She was looking forward to all the forthcoming events in 2014 as listed in the minutes.

The Chairman referred to the £5,000 grant to the Broom Leys Allotment Society and the work that Councillor M B Wyatt had put into this very worthwhile project. There was a great sense of pride in the community and this was an exemplar of using money wisely.

It was moved by Councillor A V Smith, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT:

The recommendations made by the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party as detailed within the minutes attached at Appendix 1 be approved.

Reason for decision: To progress Coalville Special Expenses projects and programmes.

44. DELIVERY OF THE DECENT HOMES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME 2014/15 – STOCK CONDITION SURVEY PROCUREMENT

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations on page 77. He explained that the current Decent Homes Improvement Programme was now half way through and it was important to maintain this standard. He added that the cost of the stock condition survey would be funded from the current capital projects budget and therefore no new money was involved.

It was moved by Councillor R D Bayliss, seconded by Councillor T J Pendleton and

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RESOLVED THAT:

the contract for the Decent Homes Improvement Programme Preparatory Surveys 2014/15 via the Places For People Framework Agreement be awarded to Savills.

Reason for decision: To ensure the Councils' Decent Homes Improvement Programme is delivered in an effective and efficient manner.

45. EXEMPTION TO COUNCIL'S CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES -HRA SERVICE CHARGES ADMINISTRATION

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

It was moved by Councillor N J Rushton, seconded by Councillor T Gillard and

RESOLVED THAT:

the report be noted.

Reason for decision: The CPR require that the exercise of the Statutory Officers' discretion to apply exemptions is reported to Cabinet.

The meeting commenced at 5.00pm and closed at 5.30pm

Councillor N J Rushton left the meeting, during Item 8, at 5.18pm and returned at 5.20pm.