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CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 15 March 2021 remotely via Zoom at 10.00 am

Committee

Members Present:

Mrs A Fitch-Tillett
Mr G Hayman
Mr N Lloyd
Miss L Shires

Ms V Gay
Mr R Kershaw
Mr E Seward
Mr J Toye

Members also attending:

Mr C Cushing
Mr N Dixon
Mr J Rest

Officers in Attendance:

Chief Executive, Democratic Services Manager, Director for Resources/Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and Democratic Services and Governance Officer (Scrutiny)

Also in attendance:

Press and Public

Apologies for Absence:

Mrs S Bütikofer (Chair)

40 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st February and the Special meeting held on 23rd February were approved as a correct record.

41 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

None received.

42 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None received.

43 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman drew Members' attention to the flowchart that was attached. This would be included in all committee agendas from now on to assist members with the declaration of interests. Cllr G Hayman sought clarification on the criteria for declaring pecuniary interests, specifically that the flowchart only made reference to the member and their spouse / partner's financial position. He queried whether this should be widened out to include other family members. The Monitoring Officer replied that the current legislative requirements for the declaration of pecuniary interests related only to the affected member and their spouse / partner. At present, declarations regarding any other family member may fall into the category of related

pecuniary interests. She said that Members could seek advice from the Monitoring Officer if they were unsure as to what should be declared.

Cllr Hayman said that he would like to see the flowchart reviewed to include wider interests.

44 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

None received.

45 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET WORKING PARTIES

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement, Cllr J Toye, introduced this item. He said that the officers had worked very hard on all of the proposals and he recommended them to Cabinet.

It was proposed by Cllr Toye, seconded by Cllr Gay and

Resolved:

Local Plan Draft Policy HOU1: Housing Targets

- A. That the Authority uses the 2016 based National Household Projections as the starting point for deriving a Local Plan Housing Target
- B. That the Plan includes a target to deliver a minimum of 460 dwellings on average in each year of the Plan period.
- C. That the Plan includes policies and proposals which will ensure that more than the minimum target, and up to 560 new dwellings per year, could be delivered.
- D. That Working Party recommends revised Policy HOU1 to Cabinet.

Local Plan Draft Policy Approaches to Housing Standards

To endorse the revised Policies below, recommending to Cabinet and delegating responsibility for drafting such an approach, including that of finalising the associated policies to the Planning Manager:

HOU8: Accessible and Adaptable Properties;

HOU9: Minimum Space Standards;

HOU10: Water Efficiency;

HOU11: Sustainable Construction, Energy Efficiency & Carbon Reduction.

Local Plan Draft Policy Approaches to Sustainable Development

To endorse the revised Policies below, delegating responsibility for drafting such an approach, including that of finalising the associated policies to the Planning Policy Manager:

SD13: Pollution & Hazard Prevention and Minimisation;

SD14: Transport Impact of New Development;

SD15: Parking Provision;

SD16: Electric Vehicle Charging;
SD17: Safeguarding Land for Sustainable Transport.

46 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Cllr N Dixon, confirmed that there were no recommendations.

47 BUDGET MONITORING 2020/21 PERIOD 10

The Director for Resources introduced this item. He explained that the report summarised the budget monitoring position for the revenue account and capital programme to the end of January 2021. The report also provided an update on the financial impact of Covid-19 on the Council's financial position.

He said that the revenue budget was showing an estimated full year overspend for the current financial year of £164,729 and it was anticipated that the overall budget for the current year would be achieved. It was proposed that the deficit would be funded from the General Fund reserve, if required. The Director of Resources went on to say that the Council had submitted a fees and charges support claim for £750,000 which included the loss of car parking income.

On a positive note, he said that investment income had held up well in recent months. In addition, the Government had provided the funding for Covid support grant payments in advance and this had meant that in excess of £60m had been received to finance the grant scheme. Consequently, the Council had not had to borrow to finance projects such as the Splash Leisure Centre and the purchase of additional waste vehicles, as there had been the cashflow available. This meant that the interest that would have been paid on the additional borrowing had been saved.

It was proposed by Cllr E Seward, seconded by Cllr J Toyne and

Resolved to:

- 1) note the contents of the report and the current budget monitoring position;**
- 2) agree to fund any deficit from the General Fund reserve at the year-end if required**
- 3) Approve the capital programme funding as identified from reserves.**

Reason for the decision:

To update Members on the current budget monitoring position for the Council.

48 PROJECT GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Chief Executive introduced this item. He explained that a new project management and governance framework had been developed following receipt of a number of Internal Audit Position Papers and reports prepared during 2019 and 2020. In August 2020, the Chief Executive proposed the creation of a Corporate Delivery Unit (CDU) to improve project governance and management across the

Council. He then outlined the process for the management of projects and explained that they would be divided into categories for large, medium and small projects. Large projects are those that aimed to directly deliver the Corporate Plan. They would involve multiple stakeholder and required corporate sign off and an allocated lead member. There would be a themed panel for overview and scrutiny which would monitor and review these projects as they progressed.

He concluded by saying that the proposals aimed to provide a workable framework for improved project management across the organisation. The clear governance and reporting processes would ensure a solid foundation going forwards whilst also offering the flexibility to refine and improve as projects came forward.

Cllr V Gay said that she was supportive of the recommendations. She welcomed the separation of power throughout the project management process. She added that large projects required a great deal of support – from both within and outside the Council and she felt that these proposals facilitated this. She thanked everyone associated with the North Walsham Heritage Action Zone Working Party for their hard work and input to date.

Cllr A Fitch-Tillett said that she had been involved as Portfolio Holder for two successful multi-million pound schemes that had been delivered on time and within budget. She felt that some less successful projects may not have faltered if this proposed framework had been in place.

Cllr G Hayman said that there had been previous projects that had not been successful and it was important to learn how and why these had failed. He asked if match-funding was withdrawn from a project, whether there would be an opportunity for the Council to walk away from it without repercussions. He also asked whether projects could be 'insulated' from the personal interests of both officers and members. The Chief Executive replied that the Council needed to balance ambition with strong governance and this framework sought to achieve the difficult balance between delivering ambition and managing risk.

Cllr C Cushing said that he felt the framework was positive overall. He wanted reassurance regarding the tracking of projects and ensuring that they were achieving what they set out to do. He said that most project management frameworks were based on a 'gating' system. This meant that the funding was released in tranches as each stage of the project progressed and the business case was reviewed. He sought reassurance that gating milestones would be implemented. The Chief Executive agreed that this was the pathway that would be followed. A detailed business case would be drawn up and scoped and the relevant risks would be identified within a 'gating' system.

Cllr N Dixon said that he was supportive of the proposals. He sounded caution about seeing them as a 'silver bullet' though. It was important not to be under any illusion that medium and large projects could be delivered without problems and challenges and the Council needed to be mindful of this.

Cllr L Shires said that she welcomed the political balance element of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their comments. He said that there could also be a role for local members during the early stages of a project proposal as they would be able to indicate whether it was likely to be supported within the community.

It was proposed by Cllr V Gay, seconded by Cllr A Fitch-Tillett and

RESOLVED:

1. To approve the project management and governance processes detailed within this report.
2. To agree to establish a Cabinet Working Party to oversee key projects that form the delivery of the Corporate Plan, making recommendations to Cabinet as and when required and to agree the Terms of Reference for the Working Party as outlined on page 5 of the report
3. That the North Walsham Heritage Action Zone Working Party be dissolved, with oversight of the project now being undertaken by the Cabinet Working Party for Key projects

Reason for the decision:

To improve and formalise project management practice across the Council.

49 PURCHASE OF FURTHER TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION UNITS - USING UNDERSPENDS

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Cllr G Hayman, introduced this item. He explained that support was sought to use £546,270 of underspends from other housing-related budgets in the 2020/21 Capital Programme to be used to fund the purchase of further properties as temporary accommodation for homeless households. He said that using the Disabled Facilities Grant underspend from 2020/21 to purchase accessible homes was in line with the Council's agreement regarding 'Better Care Fund' spending.

Cllr L Shires said that she welcomed the proposals. It was very difficult for people with additional needs and mobility issues to access suitable temporary accommodation. Homelessness didn't discriminate and these proposals ensured that everyone was able to access suitable housing.

Cllr E Withington said that having been involved with Sheringham community support in recent months, she had seen the need for such accommodation. Whilst the high cost of provision should be acknowledged, the emotional cost to those needing to access temporary accommodation should also be recognised as it was often not pleasant.

It was proposed by Cllr G Hayman, seconded by Cllr L Shires and

RESOLVED

1. To allocate £546,270 of budget in the 2020/21 capital programme to be used for future purchase of temporary accommodation.
2. That Cabinet gives delegated authority to a Chief Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Benefits, for the purchase of the specific properties within the overall re-allocated budget of £546,270 (with all purchases subject to an independent valuation and survey).

Reason for the decision:

To provide authority for expenditure over £100,000.

50 MANAGING PERFORMANCE QUARTER 3 2020/2021

The Chief Executive introduced this item. He explained that it provided an overview and assessed the impact that Covid-19 had had on delivery against objectives in the Corporate Plan and operational service performance. He said that with the second national lockdown during November 2020 and then a third beginning in January 2021, the pandemic had continued to have a significant impact on the Council's capacity and its ability to achieve all of the objectives in the Corporate Delivery Plan as well as across service area performance during Q3 (October – December 2020).

The Chief Executive said that performance was measured against the six themes of the Corporate Plan. Despite the continued impact of the pandemic, good progress had been made with the Sheringham Leisure Centre project and the North Walsham Heritage Action Zone. In addition, two new posts had recently been appointed to that would help deliver the Climate, Coast and Environment objectives.

Members' attention was drawn to operational performance which had been impacted by the Covid situation – particularly around access to the Council's country parks and woods and income generation in areas such as Building Control.

He concluded by saying that the report had been considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 10th February.

It was proposed by Cllr R Kershaw, seconded by Cllr J Toye and

RESOLVED

To note the report and endorse the actions being taken by the Corporate Leadership Team.

Reason for the decision:

To ensure that the objectives of the Council are achieved.

51 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

52 PRIVATE BUSINESS

The meeting ended at 10.42 am.

Chairman