

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Policy & Finance Committee** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Notts NG24 1BY on Thursday, 28 November 2019 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor D Lloyd (Chairman)
 Councillor K Girling (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor B Clarke-Smith, Councillor R Jackson, Councillor P Peacock,
Councillor T Wendels and Councillor R White

47 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS AND AS TO THE PARTY WHIP

Councillor P Peacock declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item No. 11 – Discretionary Grants Review Future Proposals – as the Council’s nominated representative on Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire.

Councillor T Wendels declared a personal interest in respect of Exempt Agenda Item No. 18 – Proposed Extension of the Fitness Suite and Consideration of Alternative Management Arrangements at Southwell Leisure Centre – Update – as a Council appointed Trustee of the Southwell Leisure Centre Trust.

48 DECLARATIONS OF INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

The Chairman advised that the proceedings were being audio and video recorded by the Council with the footage to be streamed for public access after the meeting.

49 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2019

The minutes from the meeting held on 26 September 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

50 FORWARD PLAN OF POLICY & FINANCE ITEMS

The Committee noted the Forward Plan items to be considered by the Committee over the next 12 months.

51 COUNCIL MANAGEMENT OF OPEN SPACE AT FERNWOOD

The Director – Growth & Regeneration presented a report which provided an update on the Council taking on the management and maintenance of Public Open Space at the next phase of development by Barratt David Wilson Homes (BDW) at Fernwood. Historically the Council had taken on the maintenance of such public open spaces following completion of development alongside a one-off commuted sum payable to cover a set number of years maintenance. However, for some years now there had been a trend for developers to decline any agreement for the Council to take on the maintenance of open space with the replacement vehicle being a Management Company. Such a Management Company would be paid for by each house on a new development paying an annual charge.

Some Management Companies were perceived to operate less ethically, which had resulted in residents being dissatisfied, raising concerns with charges levied for issues such as re-mortgaging and seeking permission for conservatories etc. Such concerns were cited by Fernwood Parish Council and given the level of development associated with the greater Fernwood strategic urban extension, it was considered that there was a danger of multiple management regimes each operating at different times in different areas, to different standards.

In order to negate the concerns at Fernwood officers had negotiated (following consultation with the appropriate Members) with BDW, the developer of the next phase of development, that there would not be a Management Company for this phase of the development. As an alternative BDW had agreed, under terms detailed separately as an exempt item, that after each phase of development the open space be transferred to the Council to maintain.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Committee note the urgent decision to enter into an agreement with Baratt David Wilson Homes to ensure that the proposed Management Company be replaced by the Council taking on the ownership and maintenance of the open space at the end of each phase of the development.

Reason for Decision

To enable the provision of future open space to be maintained by the District Council, ensuing a single and transparent maintenance regime.

52 ESTATE REGENERATION - YORKE DRIVE ESTATE AND LINCOLN ROAD PLAYING FIELDS

The Business Manager – Housing Strategy & Development presented a report which updated the Committee on progress with the Yorke Drive estate and Lincoln Road playing fields regeneration proposals and sought the necessary approvals to enable the project to move into the next phase of delivery.

The report provided an update on planning, procuring a development partner and proposals for a decant policy. The final draft Decant policy was attached as Appendix A to the report. Minor changes to the original 'Resident Offer' were highlighted in the draft policy.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the 'Yorke Drive Estate: Resident Decant Policy', as set out at Appendix A to the report, be approved; and
- b) the request for an additional meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee to be held on 5 March 2020, to consider the outcome of the procurement process to select a preferred development partner, be approved.

Reason for Decision

To progress the transitional project, focusing on the regeneration of the Yorke Drive estate and Lincoln Road playing fields.

The Business Manager – Housing Strategy & Development presented a report which sought approval for capital finance to support the ongoing delivery of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) development programme.

Recent work had been undertaken to review the capacity and nature of the remaining HRA sites within the programme to deliver 335 units, which showed that there was a predicted shortfall of 45 units. In the search for sites the Council had been presented with the opportunity to acquire a parcel of land at the former fire station site located off Boundary Road, Newark. Officers had commissioned a valuation of the site based on an affordable housing development and through this had negotiated a price for the land with the fire authority. The price, detailed in an exempt report, also reflected a requirement of the fire authority to ensure that the disposal offered both a market and social value return. It was considered that the site could deliver 10 units.

The report also detailed acquisition parameters with an appropriate measure to ascertain whether a site acquisition offered value for money to the HRA Business Plan by determining a price per unit cost. The report also provided an update in respect of the redevelopment proposals for the fire damaged properties at Forster Avenue, Newark and set out proposals for £485,607.81 to be deposited into a 'Recycled Capital Grant Fund' at the point of acquiring 9 PA Housing units at Yorke Drive, Newark.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the acquisition of the former fire station site off Boundary Road, Newark, at the price detailed in the Exempt Item, and subject to the conditions as set out at paragraph 3.6 of the report, be approved;
- b) delegated authority be given to the Director - Governance & Organisational Development and/or Section 151 Officer to approve the acquisition of additional sites for inclusion in the approved HRA development programme within the parameters detailed at paragraphs 3.10 – 3.13 of the report;
- c) a sum of £720,000 from HRA Capital Receipts be approved and added to the HRA acquisition fund to aid delivery of the HRA development programme;
- d) approval be given to increase Phase 3 of the HRA development programme to £108,231, financed by HRA Capital Receipts to enable the development of 4 x 1 bed 2 person apartments at Forster Avenue, Newark; and
- e) a sum of £485,607.81 from the HRA Major Repairs Reserve be approved to be deposited into a 'Recycled Capital Grant Fund' at the point of acquiring the 9 PA Housing units at Yorke Drive, Newark so to meet Homes England grant funding conditions and be utilised to support the capital financing of the ongoing HRA development programme.

Reason for Decision

The HRA development will meet the Council's strategic objective set in the Community Plan to 'Accelerate the supply of new homes including associated facilities', address the evidenced housing need across the District for affordable housing and maintain a viable HRA Business Plan.

54 POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF ADDITIONAL LAND AT BOWBRIDGE ROAD, NEWARK

The Director – Growth & Regeneration presented a report which set out an opportunity to purchase land adjacent to Newark Hospital off Bowbridge Road. There were two parcels of land (identified in Appendix A to the report) which made up the site which was potentially available for freehold purchase. The land had been vacant for some time and had been presented to the market on previous occasions.

It was reported that the NHS Foundation Trust which managed the hospital were keen to address the lack of parking at the site but were lacking significant capital funds to be able to affect any land purchase. Discussions with the Trust had explored the possibility of the Council progressing with a freehold purchase, with the Trust taking a long-term lease in order to allow the Council to recover any capital outlay. Any capital purchase by the Council would need to cover not only any purchase cost, but any capital works to implement the car park. The proposed terms of a possible freehold offer was provided to the Committee under exempt information.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Chief Executive be given delegated authority to negotiate the purchase of the two freehold interests detailed at Appendix A to the report, under the terms of the exempt item for consideration later in the agenda.

Reason for Decision

To secure additional car parking in order to support the function and reputation of Newark Hospital.

55 GENERAL FUND, HRA & CAPITAL PROJECTED OUTTURN REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2020 AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2019

The Business Manager – Financial Services presented a report which compared the revised budgets for the General Fund Revenue, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital Programme, for period ending 31 March 2020, with the Projected Outturn forecast for the period based on three months performance information.

The appendices to the report detailed anticipated performance against budget for the period to 31 March 2020. The overview of the General Fund Revenue budget showed a projected favourable variance against the revised budget of £0.411m on Service budgets, with an overall favourable variance of £0.145m. The main variations from the revised budget were detailed in the report.

The HRA budget showed a projected favourable variance against the approved budget of £0.052m. In respect of the Capital Programme the report summarised the latest position up to the end of September 2019. The additions and amendments which

required approval were detailed in Appendix B to the report. If these variations were approved the revised budget would be reduced to £32.869m. The Committee were also advised of capital grant funding which had been awarded for the Buttermarket.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the General Fund projected favourable outturn variance of £0.411m be noted;
- (b) the Housing Revenue Account projected favourable outturn variance of £0.052m be noted;
- (c) the variations to the Capital Programme at Appendix B be approved;
- (d) the Capital Programme projected outturn and financing of £32.869m be noted; and
- (e) the grant of £659k received for the Buttermarket be added to the Capital Programme.

Reason for Decision

To update Members with the forecast outturn position for the 2019/20 financial year.

56 DISCRETIONARY GRANTS REVIEW FUTURE PROPOSALS

The Business Manager – Housing, Health & Community Relations presented a report which provided the Committee with an overview of the current discretionary grants the Council provides to a limited number of voluntary sector partners, presented findings from a review of discretionary grants and proposed a three year grants programme (2020 – 2023) to four core third sector partner organisations.

Following the launch of the Community Plan 2019 to 2023 it was considered timely to review the current Service Level Agreements (SLA's) and the Council's relationship with voluntary sector partners, namely Sherwood and Newark Citizens Advice; Newark & Sherwood CVS Volunteer Centre; Newark & Sherwood Play Support Group; Home Start Newark and Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire (RCAN).

Having reviewed performance outcomes compared to targets, the scope of the current SLA's and position of the Council in terms of its resources, skills competencies and capacity to deliver these services, it was felt that the community/voluntary sector partners were best placed to deliver these; with the exception of the RCAN agreement. In respect of RCAN, the rationale for this view was based on the creation and proposed expansion of the Council's in-house 'Community Relations' function to deliver community based projects and initiatives.

It was therefore proposed that the Council terminates its SLA relationship with RCAN at the end of March 2020 and re-negotiated its retained SLA's with the remaining four core voluntary sector partners. It was also proposed that the savings from the termination of the RCAN agreement of £16,720 per annum were to be re-invested in the remaining SLA partnerships with these agreements being extended for a three year period.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the grant support SLA relationship with RCAN be terminated at the end of March 2020;
- b) savings from the termination of the RCAN agreement (£16,720 per annum / £50,160 over 3 years) be reinvested and re-negotiate SLA's with the retained four core voluntary sector partners for an extended period of three years (2020/21 to 2022/23); and
- c) the precise distribution and allocation of funds to each partner be agreed by the Business Manager – Housing, Health & Community Relations/Director – Communities & Environment following consultation with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson of the Policy & Finance Committee and will not exceed the budget available, which was £110,650 per annum / £331,950 over 3 years.

Reason for Decision

To enable the Council deliver a discretionary grants programme that's aligned to the Councils Community Plan 2019 – 2023 and provide three year grant certainty to core voluntary sector partners to ensure the delivery and sustainment of much needed services to those members of our community that are most in need.

57 OLLERTON HALL

The Director – Growth & Regeneration presented a report concerning the disposal of Ollerton Hall. It was reported that marketing of the property had been concluded and interviews had taken place with three possible purchasers. The full details of how each of the bidders had been appraised, including financial offers were provided in an exempt appendix.

Two of the preferred bidders were promoting residential apartments with the third bidder promoting an office use. The two bids for residential development were the clear preference with one of these bidders offering the highest scoring in respect of a combination of price, commitment to a conservation restoration led project, experience and a programme that offered confidence of delivery. Officers were now to undertake a due diligence stage.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the update provided be noted, particularly the proposals to progress with the due diligence approach as detailed at paragraph 1.11 of the report; and
- (b) any capital receipt secured from the sale of the freehold of Ollerton Hall (net of any associated fees, including the Council's Clerk of Works) be ring fenced towards regeneration proposals within the Ollerton and Boughton areas which are currently being developed within the Housing Strategy and Development Business Unit.

Reason for Decision

To dispose of Ollerton Hall and secure the long term future for the building.

58 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

AGREED (unanimously) that, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

59 COUNCIL MANAGEMENT OF OPEN SPACE AT FERNWOOD

The Committee considered the exempt element of the report of the Director – Growth & Regeneration concerning the maintenance of open space at Fernwood.

(Summary provided in accordance with Section 100C(2) of the Local Government Act 1972).

60 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the exempt element of the report of the Director – Governance & Organisational Development the Housing Development Programme.

(Summary provided in accordance with Section 100C(2) of the Local Government Act 1972).

61 POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF ADDITIONAL LAND AT BOWBRIDGE ROAD, NEWARK

The Committee considered the exempt element of the report of the Director – Growth & Regeneration concerning the possible purchase of land at Bowbridge Road, Newark.

(Summary provided in accordance with Section 100C(2) of the Local Government Act 1972).

62 URGENCY ITEM - OLLERTON HALL - SETTLEMENT OUTCOME

The Committee noted the exempt Urgency Item in respect of Ollerton Hall.

(Summary provided in accordance with Section 100C(2) of the Local Government Act 1972).

63 PROPOSED EXTENSION OF THE FITNESS SUITE AND CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS AT SOUTHWELL LEISURE CENTRE - UPDATE

The Committee considered the exempt report of the Director – Communities & Environment concerning the proposed extension of the fitness suite and consideration of alternative management arrangements at Southwell Leisure Centre.

(Summary provided in accordance with Section 100C(2) of the Local Government Act 1972).

64 NATIONAL CIVIL WAR CENTRE UPDATE

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

Meeting closed at 7.13 pm.

Chairman