

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, 29 November 2018 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor D Lloyd (Chairman)

Councillor R Jackson, Councillor B Laughton, Councillor P Peacock, Councillor D Staples, Councillor T Wendels and Councillor R Blaney (substitute for Councillor Girling)

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Mrs I Brown, Councillor M Cope, Councillor B Crowe, Councillor Mrs R Crowe, Councillor Mrs G Dawn, Councillor Mrs M Dobson, Councillor P Duncan, Councillor D Payne and Councillor Mrs P Rainbow

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor K Girling (Vice-Chairman)

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

There were no declarations of interest.

48 DECLARATIONS OF INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

The Chairman advised that the proceedings were being audio recorded by the Council.

49 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from the meeting held on 20 September 2018 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 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS TO THE COUNCIL

The Deputy Chief Executive presented a report which sought to approve the appointment process for two Independent Persons to the Council. At the meeting held on 8 March 2019 the Council resolved to renew the appointments of the two Independent Persons until the Annual Council Meeting scheduled for 21 May 2019. The report set out the proposed recruitment process for the appointment including a proposed timetable. It was suggested that the Independent Persons be appointed for a four year term.

The report also invited Members to consider the remuneration attached to the role. The current level of remuneration was £2,160 together with reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses. It was considered that this could be reduced as many

authorities offered a lower level of remuneration however it was acknowledged that the duties and responsibilities could potentially be onerous, particularly in the event of an Independent Panel being convened to deal with a disciplinary matter. It was accordingly recommended that the remuneration be reduced to £1,500 per annum, which was to be fixed for the four year term of appointment.

The Committee also referred to CIPFA guidance which recommended that an independent person be appointed on council audit committees. It was suggested that officers explore the feasibility of incorporating this role into these Independent Person posts, albeit there was an acknowledgement that there may be a different skill set required for the two roles.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Council appoint two Independent Persons for a four year term commencing immediately following the May 2019 Annual Meeting of the Council at a fixed remuneration of £1,500 per annum for the four year term together with reimbursement of reasonable travel and subsistence expenses in accordance with the Council's approved policies, with the recruitment process to follow the indicative timetable set out in the body of the report;
- (b) the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer be given delegated authority to draw up a shortlist of potential candidates;
- (c) an Interview Panel be constituted to interview shortlisted candidates to comprise the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Policy & Finance Committee (or their nominees) together with a representative from the major opposition group, together with the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer to select their two preferred candidates;
- (d) the recommendations of the Interview Panel as to the appointment of two Independent Persons to the Council be submitted to the Council Meeting on or before the May 2019 Annual Meeting of the Council for formal approval; and
- (e) an indicative date be identified in March 2019 for the Interview Panel to meet to interview shortlisted candidates and that this date be included in the advertisement for the role.

Reason for Decision

To agree a recruitment process for the appointment of two Independent Persons to the Council from May 2019.

The Business Manager – Strategic Housing and the Director – Safety presented a report which provided an update on the masterplan proposals developed for the Yorke Drive Estate and the Lincoln Road Playing Fields in Bridge Ward which had been brought about using funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government’s Estate Regeneration Programme.

The Members considered the detail and outcomes of the consultation exercises undertaken with residents by Campbell Tickell who had been appointed by the Council to project manage the process of community consultation, developing a masterplan, undertaking viability modelling, securing a planning consent and advising on development delivery options.

The resulting masterplan layout was based on 4 phases and was shown at Appendix A to the report. Overall, the scheme provided 325 new homes with a net gain of 195 new homes given that 130 homes would be demolished. 13 of the properties to be demolished were privately owned and would need to be acquired by the Council. The phases had been geared to facilitate decanting of residents based on the household survey outcome which indicated that 80% of residents wanted to stay in the area. The resulting mix continued to assume a base 30% rent and 70% sale tenure split, although this could be flexed if it turned out that more tenants wanted to remain on the estate.

The revised scheme was presented to the Residents Panel and was the basis of the scheme for which an outline planning application was sought. The overall timetable for the project was to obtain planning approval by March 2019 and reserved matters approval for Phase 1 by March 2020, with a start on site by November 2020. On this basis the first homes would be completed by 2022 and the whole project would take until 2028 to complete, at this stage the project timetable was very much indicative and subject to change.

The report also provided details of an opportunity to purchase one of the owner occupied properties within the area of the Yorke Drive estate proposed for demolition. This could be funded by the site acquisition fund within the HRA. The report also provided details of the key principles of the ‘Residents Offer’ which would provide rehousing and compensation options for owners and occupants of properties which were required for demolition should the scheme go ahead.

It was noted that the project had a current funding gap, the extent of which would only be know once the planning application had been approved, development delivery structures had been identified and the Council had selected a development partner. The current financial modelling for the project was detailed in an exempt appendix.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the progress made with the masterplan proposals for the regeneration and development of the Yorke Drive Estate and the Lincoln Road Playing Fields in Bridge Ward, using funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government’s Estate Regeneration Programme be noted;

- (b) the submission of an outline planning application on the basis of the masterplan proposals set out at Appendix A be approved, with delegated authority being given to the Director – Safety to agree any minor amendments;
- (c) the Principles of the “Residents Offer” as outlined in the report be approved and authorisation be given for the development of more detailed rehousing and compensation policies for households affected by demolition to be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee for final consideration and approval;
- (d) initial Demolition Notices be issued to tenants whose properties have been identified for demolition as part of the scheme, accompanied by an explanatory letter to those affected residents;
- (e) the acquisition of a non-resident owner property affected by the demolition, which has become available for sale, be approved, to be financed from the already allocated and approved HRA acquisition fund; and
- (f) the funding position of the scheme covered in the Exempt Item at Appendix B and the next steps in identifying a private developer partner to assist in taking the project forward, be noted.

Reason for Decision

To progress the ‘transformational project’, focussing on the regeneration of the Yorke Drive estate and Lincoln Road playing fields.

(Councillor Mrs I. Brown left the meeting during consideration of this item).

53 REVIEW OF HOUSING MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING STOCK

The Director - Safety presented a report concerning reviewing the housing management arrangements for the Council’s housing stock. In 2003 the Council set up Newark & Sherwood Homes (NASH) to secure funding to deliver the decent homes programme and manage the Council’s housing stock. The creation of NASH saw the delivery of a £49 million investment programme to bring the housing stock up to the Decent Homes Standard, which was completed on budget and by the target date of March 2010. At this time the Council then agreed to extend the management agreement with NASH for a further two years, whilst undertaking a stock options appraisal. The conclusion of the appraisal in 2012/13 resulted in the Council’s decision to continue the arrangement of NASH managing and maintaining the Council’s housing stock and also saw a refreshed management agreement being drawn up in 2013 covering a period of 30 years with 5 year break clauses.

As part of the Council’s duty to manage and maintain a sustainable HRA it was prudent to continually review the costs of operation, particularly in view of the

current economic climate and the strategic direction of the Council. Such a review included an assessment as to whether bringing the housing service back in-house would release funding that could be reinvested in the service, meeting both tenant priorities and the strategic priorities of the Council.

It was proposed that the Council commence a review of its housing management arrangements to determine how future housing services will be provided. There were four principal reasons why it was considered timely now for the Council to conduct such a review which were detailed in the report. It was proposed to use the existing Strategic Housing Liaison Panel to progress the review work with a view to reporting back in January / February 2019. It was suggested that the membership of the Panel be extended to include the Leader of the Independent Group to ensure cross party representation.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) a review of the housing management arrangements for the Council's housing stock as outlined in the report be initiated;
- (b) the current membership of the Strategic Housing Liaison Panel be amended to include the Leader of the Independent Group, Councillor Mrs Dawn, for the period and purpose for which the Panel is undertaking the review of the options for the future provision of housing management and not for any other matters within the Panel's remit; and
- (c) the remit of the Strategic Housing Liaison Panel be amended to include "to review the future options for the provision of housing management of the Council's housing stock" and that it be requested to report back to the January and/or February 2019 meetings of the Policy & Finance Committee with recommendations.

Reason for Decision

To enable the Council to review the most appropriate means of delivery of the Housing Management Services for its Council housing.

54 GENERAL FUND AND CAPITAL PROJECTED OUTTURN REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2019 AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2018

The Business Manager – Financial Services presented a report which compared the Revised Budgets for with the Projected Outturn forecast for the period to 31 March 2019. The forecast to the year end was based on the six months performance to 30 September 2018 on the Council's revenue and capital budgets. The accounts showed a projected favourable variance against the revised budget of £0.168m on service budgets, with an overall favourable variance of £0.123m. The variances projected in service areas and other budgets were summarised in Appendix A. The level of underspending on service budgets managed by Business Managers was £0.168m which represented a 1.21% of the total service budgets. Non-Service expenditure was expected to be overspent against the revised budget by £0.045m. This was due to

the corporate savings target of £0.084m which the Council's Commercial Project Team were looking to achieve.

The report also summarised the first six months position for the Capital Programme. Additions and amendments to the Programme were detailed in Appendix B to the report. If approved the variations would increase the revised budget to £32.482m.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the General Fund projected favourable outturn variance of £0.123m be noted;
- (b) the variations to the Capital Programme at Appendix B, totalling £0.073m, be approved; and
- (c) the Capital Programme projected outturn and financing of £32.482m be noted.

Reason for Decision

To advise Members of the projected outturn monitored against service budgets for the period ending 31 March 2019, as at 30 September 2018.

55 ARMED FORCES COVENANT UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Director- Resources which advised Members of the signature of the Armed Forces Covenant at the 'Great War Commemoration Service and Armed Forces Covenant Signing' event and the updated 'Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan'.

Nottinghamshire County Council hosted the 'Great War Commemoration Service and Armed Forces Covenant Signing' on 6 November 2018 at Southwell Minster. A revised version of the 'Armed Forces Covenant' was also signed on the day by every local authority in Nottinghamshire to reaffirm Nottinghamshire's commitment to the Armed Forces Community. In light of this the 'Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan' had been refreshed. This Action Plan would be used to focus work across the district and would be reviewed and updated annually. The action plan would be shared with the Nottinghamshire Civil and Military Partnership Board to aid the creation of a county wide action plan.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the revised Armed Forces Covenant signed on 6 November 2018 be noted; and
- (b) the updated Newark & Sherwood Armed Forces Action Plan be noted.

Reason for Decision

To fulfil the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces community.

56 URGENCY ITEM - RESIDENT AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION SURVEY

The Committee noted the decision to approve expenditure of around £30,000 for printing and postage costs for a resident survey.

AGREED (unanimously) that the urgency item be noted.

Reason for Decision

To inform future priority setting for the Council.

57 URGENCY ITEM - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT

The Committee noted the decision to approve an increase in the current Capital Programme by £18,000 in respect of the Information Technology Programme.

AGREED (unanimously) that the urgency item be noted.

Reason for Decision

To improve performance in relation the Council's firewall.

58 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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 1, 3 and 4 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

59 UPDATE REGARDING PAY AND GRADING ARRANGEMENTS 2019 FOR EMPLOYEES ON NJC TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

The Committee considered the exempt report from the Business Manager - HR, OD & Legal, regarding the pay and grading arrangements 2019.

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

60 LAND ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF MOOR LANE, SOUTH CLIFTON

The Committee considered the exempt report from the Deputy Chief Executive/Director – Resources and the Business Manager, Growth & Resources regarding land on the south side of Moor Lane, South Clifton.

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

61 THE FORMER ROBIN HOOD HOTEL - PROPOSED JOINT VENTURE WITH MF STRAWSON LTD

The Committee considered the exempt report presented by the Deputy Chief Executive relating to the former Robin Hood Hotel.

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

62 MODULAR POOL AT THE DUKERIES LEISURE CENTRE

The Committee considered the exempt report presented by the Director - Customers regarding a proposed modular pool at the Dukeries Leisure Centre.

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

63 THE BUTTERMARKEt, NEWARK

The Committee considered the exempt report presented by the Chief Executive regarding the Buttermarket, Newark.

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

Meeting closed at 8.25 pm.

Chairman