

CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 14 MAY 2020

Present:

Councillor Martin E Thacker MBE JP (Chair) (in the Chair)
Councillor Alex Dale (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Charlotte Cupit
Councillor Barry Lewis
Councillor Alan Powell

Councillor Jeremy Kenyon
Councillor Paul Parkin
Councillor Carolyn Renwick

Also Present:

G Callingham	Director of Growth and Economic Development
K Hanson	Director of Environment and Enforcement
L Hickin	Director of Corporate Resources
J Dethick	Head of Finance and Resources
S Sternberg	Joint Head Of Service - Corporate Governance & Monitoring Officer
L Shaw	Managing Director - Rykneld Homes Ltd
N Clark	Director of Property Services and Regeneration - Rykneld Homes Ltd
S Lee	Strategic Partnership Co-ordinator
N Calver	Governance Manager
A Maher	Senior Governance Officer

615 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

616 Declarations of Interest

Members were requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or other interests, not already on their register of interests, in any item on the agenda and withdraw from the meeting at the appropriate time.

Councillors C Cupit and A Dale declared an Interest in Item 6 – Rykneld Homes Ltd (RHL) Board Arrangements - as members of the RHL Board of Directors. They indicated that they would not take part in Cabinet's discussion or determination on this matter and would leave the meeting when it was being considered.

617 Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 12 March 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

618 Older People's Strategy 2020 -2023 (Ref: LH)

Cabinet considered a report of Councillor A Dale, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Council Services, on the proposed Older People's Strategy 2020 to 2023.

Members were reminded that the Council Plan included commitment to produce a specific strategy for Older People. The proposed strategy would provide a framework for helping to improve various aspects of older people's lives, including personal finances, health and tackling social isolation. By working alongside the Council's other strategies, it would help to ensure that the available resources had the greatest positive impact for older people.

Cabinet discussed the Older People's Strategy. Members welcomed the widespread consultation which had taken place with representative groups, including Age Concern, Derbyshire Voluntary Action, Parish Councils and those Old Age Pensioner Clubs funded by the Council. There was a consensus that these groups had made an important contribution and that they had added value to the Strategy.

Cabinet made clear that the Older People's Strategy ought to be kept under review and revised as necessary, so that it could respond to changing circumstances. In particular, Members stressed that the Strategy should help meet the challenges facing older people following on from the Coronavirus (Covid-19). In this context Cabinet asked to receive an annual progress report on the Strategy.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That Cabinet approved the proposed Older People's Strategy 2020-23 and that this strategy be now published.
- (2) That Cabinet review progress on the Older People's Strategy 2020-23 in May 2021.

REASONS FOR DECISION:-

Adoption of the Strategy has achieved the priority set out in the Council Plan 2019 – 2023 to develop an Older People's Strategy for the District.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED:-

The option of not agreeing and publishing the Older People's Strategy was considered but rejected. Failure to adopt the strategy would have meant not achieving one of the priorities of the Council Plan 2019 – 2023

619 Visitor Economy Update (Ref: KH)

Cabinet considered a report of Councillor C Renwick, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, on the progress which had been made towards preparing a Tourism Strategy 2020-2023. Members considered the draft Tourism Strategy. They also considered the additional work required in order to complete it.

Members highlighted the valuable contribution which tourism had made to the District's economy and the potential for this contribution to increase significantly in future years. Cabinet also discussed how important it would be to progress the strategy collaboratively. In this context, Cabinet considered the role which parish and town councils might play in promoting visitor attractions. Some possible events were highlighted, which, it was suggested, could form the basis of a District-wide programme of attractions. In addition, Members discussed wider partnership working at a regional and sub regional level, specific projects such as the restoration of the Chesterfield Canal and the need for appropriate officer support within the Council to help promote the visitor economy.

Cabinet recognised the damage to tourism which had been caused by the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak. Members discussed specific examples of the impact. They stressed that the final Strategy should set a clear goal of helping the sector recover from this impact.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That Cabinet noted the progress made on preparing the draft Tourism Strategy 2020-2023 and Action Plan.
- (2) That Cabinet authorised further work to be undertaken on the contribution of the visitor economy sector to the recovery of the District, following the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak and that this be included within the Strategy and Action Plan.
- (3) That the Director of Growth and Economic Development review the draft Tourism Strategy 2020-2023 with the Portfolio Holder prior to its submission to Cabinet for further consideration and approval.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The development of a Tourism Strategy is a required outcome of the Council Plan 2019-2023, which has even greater relevance following the outbreak of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak and its impact on local businesses.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

No alternative options were considered. The development of a Tourism Strategy will be critical to the recovery of the visitor economy sector following the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak.

620 Rykneld Homes Limited: Board Arrangements (Ref: LS)

Councillors C Cupit and A Dale left the meeting for this item

Cabinet considered a report of Councillor A Powell, Portfolio Holder for Communications and Housing on the Rykneld Homes Limited (RHL) Board Arrangements.

Members were reminded that Cabinet had endorsed a new approach to the governance arrangements for the Council's housing services in November 2019.

Following on from this, changes had been made to the Board of RHL. Councillor A Dale had been appointed as the Chair of the Board, with Councillors C Cupit, S Clough and D Ruff now serving as the Council's other representatives. Other changes to the Board Members appointed from the wider community had also been made. Cabinet heard that the reconfigured Board would remain in place until the new Housing governance arrangements had been established.

Cabinet discussed the changes which had been made to the Board of RHL, the proposed Housing Group Companies and how the Council would be represented on them. Members reiterated their support for the new approach to Housing Management. They felt that by confirming the Council's lead role in managing housing services they would enable significant operational benefits to be achieved.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet noted the progress made in relation to changes to the Board of Rykneld Homes Limited.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The relevant changes had been made following Cabinet's decision on 14 November 2019.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED:

No alternatives were considered. The report was intended to update Cabinet on the actions taken on the Rykneld Homes Ltd Board Arrangements following its decision on this matter in November 2019

621 Clay Cross Town Deal Update (Ref: LH)

Councillors C Cupit and A Dale returned to the meeting at this point.

Members considered a report of Councillor M.E. Thacker, MBE J.P, which provided an update on the Clay Cross Town Deal Board. In particular, they heard that the Town Deal Board was currently recruiting consultants to help prepare a bid for grant funding from Central Government. Cabinet learned that although the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak had delayed slightly this recruitment process, the board hoped to be able to conclude the recruitment process and appoint its consultants imminently.

Cabinet welcomed the progress which had been made with the Clay Cross Town Deal Board and the measures taken to prepare its funding bid. Members also reaffirmed their support for the Clay Cross Town Deal Board's vision for how the grant aid should be used to benefit the local community.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet noted the actions taken by the Clay Cross Town Deal Board as set out in the report.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

To apprise Cabinet of the progress made by the Clay Cross Town Board (CCTDB) and in particular, the procurement exercise for suitably qualified and experienced consultants, to work with the Council and the Town Board on the preparation of the bid for resources from Central Government

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED:

No alternative options were considered.

622 'AccessAble' - Disability Access Guides (Ref: LH)

Cabinet considered a report of Councillor M.E. Thacker, MBE J.P. on the possible provision of Access Guides for disabled people on services, community facilities and visitor attractions in the District.

Members heard that the Council had contacted an external organisation, 'AccessAble' about the Access Guides which they produce, specifically aimed at people with disabilities. Cabinet learned how earlier in the year initial contact had been made with Parish and Town Councils to explore whether they would support these Access Guides for their areas. Unfortunately, as a consequence of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak no further progress had since been made.

Cabinet discussed the report. Members felt that the Access Guides would both benefit people with disabilities and the District's visitor economy. They asked that further work now take place to determine the possible costs and other issues that would have to be addressed. Cabinet concluded that if agreement was reached to produce Access Guides, then they should be made available in time for the new visitor season, in early 2021, when they would have the greatest impact in helping the visitor economy to recover from the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Cabinet approved the re-commencement of the Access Able Disability Guides initiative in the spring of 2021 as part of the Council's Coronavirus (Covid-19) Recovery Plan.
- (2) That a further report be submitted to Cabinet, once the final cost position for implementing the scheme had been determined.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The initiative will help address the current lack of accessibility information, with many areas currently providing almost no detailed information, making them, in effect, 'no-go zones' for people with disabilities.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED:

No alternative options were considered.

623 Urgent Items

There was no urgent business to be considered in the public session at this meeting of Cabinet.

624 Exclusion of Public

RESOLVED - That the public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the following items of business to avoid the disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006). [The category of exempt information is stated after each Minute].

625 The Redevelopment of the Avenue Project - Progress Report

Cabinet considered a report of Councillor M E Thacker, MBE JP, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Overall Strategic Leadership on 'The Avenue' regeneration project in Wingerworth. Members heard about the recent work with partner organisations on the project to ensure that the right vision for redevelopment was in place and to address a range of outstanding governance and operational issues about the redevelopment.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Cabinet approved the governance arrangements for the 'Avenue' project on the terms specified in the report.
- (2) That Cabinet authorised the initiation of negotiations in relation to land, planning and partnership working, on the terms specified in the report.
- (3) That Cabinet receive further update reports on the Avenue project on a quarterly basis
- (4) That Cabinet receive individual reports for decision or information purposes on the project, as required.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

A renewed long-term vision, master plan and commitment to the Avenue has the potential to bring investment, and new opportunities to enhance the reputation of the district as a place to live, work and visit in the region.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED:

Other options were considered but rejected for the reasons specified in the report.

626 Management of Corporate Debt - Write-off of Outstanding Amounts (Ref:JD)

Cabinet considered a report of Councillor P Parkin, Portfolio Holder for Finance, on the Management of the Council's Corporate Debt. The report sought Cabinet's approval for the write off of outstanding debts.

Cabinet discussed the report. Members asked for and received an assurance that everything possible had been done to recover the debts before determining that

they could not be recovered and had to be written off.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet agreed to write-off the debts as specified in the report

REASONS FOR DECISION:

All available options to recover these debts had been explored. The write off was the final option in the debt management process.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED:

Other options were considered, but rejected for the reasons specified in the report.

627 Coronavirus (Covid-19): Contingency Planning Update (Ref:KH)

Cabinet received an update on the contingency planning arrangements that were now in place at a regional and national level to help combat the outbreak of the Coronavirus (Covid19).

628 Urgent Items

There was no urgent business to be considered in the private session at this meeting of Cabinet.