

CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 18 JULY 2024

Present:

Councillor Nigel Barker (Chair) (in the Chair)
Councillor Pat Kerry (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Jayne Barry
Councillor Stephen Pickering

Councillor Joseph Birkin
Councillor Kathy Rouse

Also Present:

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| L Hickin | Managing Director - Head of Paid Service |
| M Broughton | Director of Growth and Assets |
| J Dethick | Director of Finance and Resources & (Section 151 Officer) |
| S Sternberg | Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer |
| D Thompson | Assistant Director of Planning |
| A Maher | Governance Manager |
| N Ellis-Hall | Temporary Senior Governance Officer |

CAB/ Apologies for Absence

19/2

4-25 There were no apologies for absence.

CAB/ Declarations of Interest

20/2

4-25 There were no declarations of interest.

CAB/ Minutes of the Last Meeting

21/2

4-25 RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2024 were approved as a true record.

CAB/ Stonebroom Regeneration Update

22/2

4-25 The report to Cabinet provided an update on the regeneration project in the Cleveland Road area of Stonebroom. Members were reminded that as part of the project to replace 50 prefabricated homes with 74 new bungalows, it had now been proposed to include land currently occupied a community building within the layout for the project. A new, fit for purpose, community facility would be built to replace the existing building on Council-owned land at Cleveland Road. Cabinet heard that a feasibility study on this new building had now successfully taken place and that the local community had been consulted on the proposal. This consultation revealed strong support for the proposed new community facility.

Members noted that as the proposed new community building was not included in the original scheme costs, additional funding would be required. Cabinet was asked to recommend to Council at its meeting on 22 July 2024 that this additional funding should be provided for the new community building.

Cabinet discussed the update. Members welcomed the progress which had been made. They reflected on how the regeneration project would benefit Stonebroom and, in particular, the value which the new building would have for local people.

RESOLVED –

1. That Cabinet agreed to progress with the development of the replacement community facility at Cleveland Road Stonebroom subject to Council approval of funding.
2. That Cabinet recommended to Council the approval of additional borrowing of £0.650m for the development of the community facility at Stonebroom.
3. That Cabinet recommended to Council the inclusion of the changes to the scheme in the HRA Capital Programme.

REASONS FOR DECISION – The regeneration scheme at Stonebroom supports the Council's commitment in its Council Plan to build, acquire and facilitate the delivery of more high-quality social housing for rent in the district.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED - Not to build the community facility. This was rejected due to strong community support for the facility and the regeneration benefits to the wider scheme.

CAB/ Pre-Application Planning Advisory Service

23/2

4-25

The report to Members asked Cabinet to agree the creation of a chargeable Pre-Application Planning Advice Service. The report explained that the value of effective pre-application advice was recognised by the National Planning Policy Framework, which stated that early engagement has significant potential to improve the effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties.

Members heard that the Council currently provides pre-application advice in an informal way. By establishing a formal advisory service, the Council could make clear how much officer time it would make available when providing this advice and what information the service users would be expected to provide in order to receive it.

In addition, the Council would be able to charge for this formal Service. At the moment, all of the costs for pre-application advice were met from the Council's General Fund budget. In this context, Cabinet heard how levying charges for pre-application planning advice was now fairly common and that most of the planning authorities in the East Midlands Combined County Authorities already did so.

Cabinet welcomed the proposed Pre-Application Advisory Service. Members felt that the new Service would help the planning application process to run more smoothly for all those involved. It would also help ensure that the service could be provided in a more cost-effective way for the Council.

RESOLVED – That Cabinet approved the implementation of a chargeable pre-application advice service, in accordance with the charging schedule attached at appendix 1 to the report and the draft service standards at appendix 2 to the report

REASONS FOR DECISION – The charge will provide an income stream to support proposals for additional resources within the Planning Service and will reduce reliance on the general fund to subsidise the cost of delivering pre-application advice. This will give customers greater clarity about the depth of advice they will receive and the timeframes that their items will be responded to.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED - The option of not charging for advice and/or not to introduce a more structured service with clear expectations on and for customers was considered but rejected. The charge represents an opportunity for the Service to become more financially resilient and facilitate the shift in time and resources to the pre-application stage, in conjunction with a much shorter turn-around time for formal applications.

CAB/ Productivity Plan

24/2

4-25

Members were informed that the Council, along with other local authorities, had been requested by the Minister for Local Government under the previous Government, to produce a 'Productivity Plan'. In particular. Councils were asked to consider a number of themes about existing and future service transformation, financial savings, and the barriers to further change. They were also asked to address a range of specific questions relating to these themes.

The report to Cabinet explained that a draft Productivity Plan had been produced in response to the Government's request. This highlighted what the Council had done to improve its services and to make better use of resources, how it had made better use of technology and its ongoing work to help continue to achieve further efficiencies and service improvements.

Cabinet discussed the draft Productivity Plan. Members felt that much of the work and analysis which had gone into preparing the Plan would be of ongoing value to the Council. They thanked the officers for their efforts on this.

RESOLVED - That Cabinet adopted the proposed Productivity Plan as set out in the report and publish in line with Government expectations.

REASONS FOR DECISION – Whilst the timing of the Productivity Plan has been dictated by government, the intent of the plan aligns with the Council's own improvement plans identified through the Council Plan and the Emerging Engagement and Improvement Strategy.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED - The option of not publishing the Productivity Plan was considered but rejected as this would be ignoring the request of the government department and given that the Plan has been produced there would be little or no value in this approach.

CAB/ Treasury Management Financial Outturn 2023-24

25/2

4-25

With the agreement of the Chair the following additional item was taken.

The report to Cabinet set out the Treasury Management Outturn position for 2023-24. Members were reminded that the Treasury Management function covers

the borrowing and investment of Council funds, all transactions which are conducted in accordance with the Council's approved strategy and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants (CIPFA) Code of Good Practice.

The report provided information on the overall borrowing requirement of the Council and the amount of Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) debt which had previously been accrued. It also made clear that no new PWLB borrowing had been undertaken during the 2023-24 financial year.

RESOLVED - That Cabinet noted the outturn position in respect of the 2023-24 financial year.

REASONS FOR DECISION – The Council operated in line with its agreed Treasury Management Strategy during the 2023/24 financial year. This ensures that lending and borrowing arrangements were prudent and sustainable, minimising the risk of financial loss to the Council. Effective management of these arrangements ensured that interest costs during the year were minimised to assist the Council's revenue position whilst interest receivable increased slightly above budget due to increased interest rates.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED - This report is primarily a factual report detailing the actual position against the Council's previously approved treasury management strategy. Accordingly, the report does not set out any options where a decision is required by Members.

CAB/ Medium Term Financial Plan Financial Outturn 2023-24

26/2

4-25

With the agreement of the Chair the following additional item was taken.

The report to Cabinet set out the outturn position of the Council for the 2023-24 Financial Year and the proposal to carry forward capital budgets totalling £17.93M. In particular, Members were informed that the Council had been successful in the need to use the Resilience Reserve to fund the General Fund Budget Shortfall, but rather was able to contribute £0.244M to the Resilience Reserve at Outturn. Cabinet welcomed this.

RESOLVED –

1. That Cabinet noted the for the outturn position in respect of the 2023-24 financial year.
2. That Cabinet approve the proposed carry forward of capital budgets detailed in **Appendix 4** totalling £17.193m.

REASONS FOR DECISION – During 2023/24 the Council managed its budget effectively securing a favourable financial position on net cost of services of £0.525m underspend despite a continuing challenging financial backdrop. This underspend has meant that rather than having to call on reserves it has been possible to make a contribution of £0.244m to the Resilience reserve at outturn from efficiencies identified during the year.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED - The financial outturn report for 2023/24 is primarily a factual report detailing the actual position compared to previously approved budgets therefore there are no alternative options that need to be considered.

CAB/ Urgent Items

27/2

4-25 There were no urgent items.