

**MINUTES OF THE CABINET
HELD ON**

16 February 2023

7.30 - 8.40 pm

PRESENT

Committee Members

Councillor Russell Perrin, Leader of the Council

Councillor Joel Charles, Portfolio Holder for Business and Community Resilience

Councillor Alastair Gunn, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Councillor Michael Hardware, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Strategic Growth

Councillor James Leppard, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Councillor Nicky Purse, Portfolio Holder for Environment

Councillor Stacy Seales, Portfolio Holder for Governance

Additional Attendees

Councillor Matthew Siggers

Other Councillors

Councillor Tony Durcan

Councillor Tony Edwards

Councillor James Griggs

Councillor Daniella Pritchard

Councillor Lanie Shears

Councillor Chris Vince

Councillor Nancy Watson

Councillor Mark Wilkinson

Officers

Andrew Bramidge, Chief Executive

Jane Greer, Director of Communities and Environment

Simon Hill, Director of Governance and Corporate Services

Andrew Murray, Director of Housing

Simon Freeman, Deputy Chief

Executive and Director of Finance

Adam Rees, Senior Governance Support Officer

Tanusha Waters, Assistant Director - Planning and Building Control

98. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

99. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Stacy Seales declared a pecuniary interest in item 18, as a remunerated Council appointed Director of HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd. She would leave the room whilst the item was considered.

100. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2022 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

101. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

102. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

103. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

The questions, together with the answers, are appended to the minutes.

104. **PETITIONS**

None.

105. **FORWARD PLAN**

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan is noted.

106. **RECENT RELEVANT DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE LEADER, DEPUTY OR PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S)**

RESOLVED that the following decisions be noted.

- a) Leader of the Council - 19 January 2023
- b) Leader of the Council - 6 February 2023

107. **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023/24 - 2025/26**

The Cabinet received the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26.

Proposed by Councillor James Leppard (seconded by Councillor Alastair Gunn) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommended to Full Council that:

- A** The General Fund element of Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2023/24 to 2025/26 (attached as appendix B to the report) is adopted.
- B** The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) element of the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2023/24 to 2025/26 (as attached as Appendix C to the report) is adopted.
- C** The planned Council Tax freeze for 2023/24 for the Harlow Council element of the 2023/24 Council Tax demand is approved.

D That the anticipated New Homes Bonus for 2023/24 of £572,205 be used to increase the funds available within the Budget Stabilisation Reserve to a projected balance of £1.35million when combined with other proposals set out in this and the General Fund Budget report.

E That movements in reserves set out in the report are approved.

108. **GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2023/24**

Cabinet received a report on the General Fund Budget for 2023/24.

Proposed by Councillor James Leppard (seconded by Councillor Alastair Gunn) it was:

RESOLVED that it was recommended to Full Council that:

A The General Fund estimates for 2023/24, as set out in Appendix A to the report, are approved.

B The proposed transfers between the General Fund and Earmarked Reserves, referred to within the report and set out in Appendix C to the report, are approved.

C The proposed Fees and Charges, as set out in Appendix E to the report, are approved.

D The Pay Policy Statement, as set out in Appendix F to the report, is approved.

E The Council's Band D Council Tax for 2023/24 is set at £288.90 representing a 0% increase as set out in the 2023/24 MTFS.

109. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2022-2052**

Cabinet received the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2022-2052.

Proposed by Councillor James Leppard (seconded by Councillor Alastair Gunn) it was:

RESOLVED that it was recommended to Full Council that:

A The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan, as set out in Appendix A to this report, is approved.

B Authority is delegated to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to make minor

amendments and finalisation of the Plan and Appendices, following consultation.

110. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2023/24**

Cabinet received a report on the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2023/24.

Proposed by Councillor James Leppard (seconded by Councillor Alastair Gunn) it was:

RESOLVED that it was recommended to Full Council that:

- A** Approve the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) estimates as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
- B** Approve a working balance of £3.529 million for the HRA (set out in paragraph 23 of the report).
- C** Approve that tenant rents are increased by 7 percent with effect from 3 April 2023. This equates to an average weekly rent of £104.18 an increase of £6.82 (set out in paragraph 3 of the report).
- D** Approve that the rents and personal charges for temporary accommodation are increased with effect from 3 April 2022 as set out in paragraph 4 of the report.
- E** Approve that garage rents within the 'retain and invest' category are increased by 5 percent with effect from 1 April 2023. This equates to an average weekly rent of £12.35, an increase of £0.56. Also approve the proportionate increases for other garages, car ports and car spaces (set out in paragraph 5 of the report).
- F** Approve that tenant service charges are increased to recover full cost with effect from 3 April 2023 (see paragraphs 6 to 8 of the report and Appendix 2 attached to the report).
- G** Approve that other housing related support charges for sheltered accommodation are increased to recover full cost with effect from 3 April 2023 (see paragraphs 9 to 13 of the report and Appendix 2 attached to the report).
- H** Approve that the leasehold service charges are increased with effect from 1 April 2023 to ensure that all leaseholder costs are recovered (see paragraphs 16 to 19 of the report and Appendix 2 attached to the report).

- I Approve that all other tenant charges are increased with effect from 3 April 2023 in order to recover cost (see Appendix 2 attached to the report).

111. **CAPITAL AND TREASURY REPORT 2023**

Cabinet received a report on the Capital and Treasury Report 2023.

Proposed by Councillor James Leppard (seconded by Councillor Alastair Gunn) it was:

RESOLVED that it was recommended to Full Council that:

A The following Capital and Treasury Reports be approved:

- i) The Capital Strategy Report (Appendix A to the report).
- ii) The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023/24 (Appendix B to the report).
- iii) The Investment Strategy Report 2023/24 (Appendix C to the report).
- iv) The MRP Statement 2023/24 (Appendix D to the report).

112. **CAPITAL PROGRAMMES 2022/23 - 2024/25**

Cabinet received a report on the Capital Programmes 2022/23 – 2024/25.

Proposed by Councillor James Leppard (seconded by Councillor Alastair Gunn) it was:

RESOLVED that it was recommended to Full Council that:

- A** Approve the 2023/24 Housing Capital Programme (HCP) totalling £38.891 million as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
- B** Approve of the inclusion in the Housing Capital Programme of an additional £18 million over 3 years for a Housing “Catch up Stock Need” as set out in Table 2 of the report.
- C** Approve the updated New Build programme as set out in Table 3 of the report.
- D** Approve the 2023/24 Non-Housing Capital Programme totalling £13.471 million (attached as Appendix 2 to the report), noting the additional £2.789 million investment in response to Business Cases received as detailed in Table 11 of the report.

113. **LOCAL PLAN REVIEW**

Cabinet received a report on the Local Plan review.

Proposed by Councillor Michael Hardware (seconded by Councillor Nicky Purse) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- A** Endorsed the revised approach set out in the report together with the updated timetable for the preparation of the Harlow Local Development Plan Review.
- B** Agreed that the development plan for Harlow town centre will now be contained within a consolidated, single plan for the whole district.
- C** Approved the Local Development Scheme (LDS) as set out in Appendix B to this report.

114. **COMMERCIALISATION FRAMEWORK**

Cabinet received a report to approve the Commercialisation Framework.

Proposed by Councillor Stacy Seales (seconded by Councillor Alastair Gunn) it was:

RESOLVED that the Commercialisation Framework, attached as Appendix A to the report, be adopted.

115. **AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR CORPORATE CLEANING AND JANITORIAL SERVICES**

Councillor Seales left the meeting.

Cabinet received a report to award a contract for corporate cleaning and janitorial services.

Proposed by Councillor James Leppard (seconded by Councillor Michael Hardware) it was:

RESOLVED that:

- A** A building cleaning and janitorial services contract is entered into with HTS (Property & Environment) Limited (HTS) for a period of three years commencing on 1 April 2023, subject to agreement of the terms and conditions with an option, at the sole discretion of the Council, to extend the contract for three years; and

- i) so far as any new sites are concerned, the conclusion of mandatory formal consultation with the transferee's existing employees and confirmation that HTS will provide pension protection which is the same as, broadly comparable or better than those they had the right to acquire prior to the transfer; and
- ii) clarification on the final cost of the new services taking into account the matters referenced above and any necessary minor adjustments to the Council's cleaning specification.

B Delegated authority be given to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, to finalise the terms and make the necessary legal and financial arrangements.

Councillor Seales returned to the meeting.

116. **CABINET APPOINTMENTS**

RESOLVED that appointments be approved as appended to the minutes.

117. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS/PARTIES AND PANELS**

None.

118. **MINUTES OF PANELS/WORKING GROUPS**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following meetings are noted.

- a) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 23 November 2022 of Safety Committee
- b) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 10 January 2023 of Harlow Local Highways Panel

119. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Cabinet – 16 February 2023

Questions from Councillors

1 Councillor Chris Vince to Councillor Russell Perrin (Leader of the Council):

In the Shareholders Sub Committee meeting the HTS business plan, which was agreed in principle, albeit with critique from some Councillors present, was agreed, that was in March 2022.

Since 2022 we have not had a single Sub Committee meeting, being told that there was a review going on into the governance of HTS. Can you please tell me when the results of this review will be share with members and in the meantime since March 2022 what scrutiny and dialogue has gone on between HTS and the council as the opposition have not been involved in this dialogue?

Reply from Councillor Russell Perrin (Leader of the Council):

Councillor Vince is correct that a number of reviews have been undertaken and these have now been completed.

The reviews that have been undertaken included –

- Housing and Regeneration
- Governance arrangements
- Construction Company
- Workforce Strategy
- Housing Repairs,
- Grass Cutting.

The majority of this work was undertaken during the September - December 2022 period with the Housing Repairs Review having been concluded in January 2023.

There are a number of proposals that have been raised in these reviews and findings and action plans will be reported to the Shareholder Subcommittee for approval or recommendation to Cabinet once they have been completed.

The Share Holder Subcommittee has not met while these reviews have been conducted but will now resume its meetings in the new municipal year if not before.

Supplementary question from Councillor Chris Vince:

What is the progress on the implementation of the Business Plan.

Supplementary reply from Councillor Russell Perrin (Leader of the Council):

I will arrange for a written response to be provided.

Changes highlighted in bold

Cabinet Appointments 2022/23

Constitution Panel (5)	Shareholder Sub Committee (7)
Alastair Gunn (c)	Joel Charles (c)
Simon Carter	Russell Perrin (vc)
Nick Churchill	Alastair Gunn
Bob Davis	Nicky Purse
Tony Durcan	Lanie Shears
	Chris Vince
	Nancy Watson
HTS Group Ltd (3)	HTS (Property and Environment) Board of Directors (3)
Bob Davis	Bob Davis
Eddie Johnson	Eddie Johnson
Stacy Seales	Stacy Seales
HTS (Housing and Regeneration) Board of Directors (3)	Harlow Local Highways Panel (4)
Jodi Dunne	David Carter
Colleen Morrison	Kay Morrison
Clive Souter	Daniella Pritchard
	Bob Davis
Housing Standards Board (3)	Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Board (1+1 sub)
Alastair Gunn (c)	Michael Hardware
Matthew Saggars	Russell Perrin (sub)
Mark Wilkinson	
Growth Board (1+1 Sub)	Essex Flood Partnership (1+1 Sub)
Michael Hardware	Nicky Purse
Russell Perrin (sub)	Ash Malik (sub)
Harlow Health and Wellbeing Board (1)	UK Innovation Corridor (1+1 Officer)
David Carter (c)	Michael Hardware
North Essex Parking Partnership (1+1 Sub)	Harlow Bus Users Group (1)
Stacy Seales	Simon Carter (c)
Alastair Gunn (sub)	