

MINUTES OF THE CABINET HELD ON

3 December 2020

7.30 - 9.45 pm

PRESENT

Committee Members

Councillor Mark Ingall, Leader of the Council
Councillor Eugenie Harvey, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Resilience and Recovery
Councillor Mike Danvers, Portfolio Holder for Resources
Councillor Tony Durcan, Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity
Councillor Danny Purton, Portfolio Holder for Environment
Councillor Chris Vince, Portfolio Holder for Community and Wellbeing
Councillor Mark Wilkinson, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Other Councillors

Councillor David Carter
Councillor Simon Carter
Councillor Joel Charles
Councillor Tony Edwards
Councillor Andrew Johnson

Officers

Brian Keane, Chief Executive
Andrew Bramidge, Head of Environment and Planning
Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Property and Deputy to the Chief Executive
Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing
Simon Hill, Head of Governance
Andrew Murray, Head of Housing
Adam Rees, Governance Support Officer

53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Frances Mason.

54. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Simon Carter declared a pecuniary interest in Item 14 as a remunerated Council appointed Director of HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd. He would leave the meeting whilst the item was considered.

Councillor Eugenie Harvey declared a pecuniary in item 9a as her husband was the Chair of the Michael Roberts Charitable Trust. Having taken advice from the Monitoring Officer she would remain in the meeting whilst the item was considered.

Councillor Joel Charles declared a pecuniary interest in Item 14 as a remunerated Council appointed Director of HTS Group Ltd and HTS (Housing and Regeneration) Ltd. He would leave the meeting whilst the item was considered.

55. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2020 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

56. **MATTERS ARISING**

a) **Minute 46 - Recent Relevant Decisions Taken by The Leader, Deputy or Portfolio Holder(s)**

Councillor Mark Ingall said that following the request that Essex be moved into the High Covid-19 tier, there had been further changes with a move into a national lockdown and a return to the tiered system on 2 December. The infection rate in Harlow was very high at over 200 cases per 100,000 and was rising. He said it was important that people continued to follow the Government's Hands, Face, Space advice, even with the good news surrounding Covid-19 vaccines.

57. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

58. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

None.

59. **PETITIONS**

None.

60. **FORWARD PLAN**

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan is noted.

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

RESOLVED that the following decision is noted.

a) **Portfolio Holder for Community and Wellbeing - 26 October 2020**

62. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2020/21: MID-YEAR REVIEW**

Cabinet considered a report on the mid-year review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2020/21.

Proposed by Councillor Mike Danvers (seconded by Councillor Mark Ingall) it was:

RESOLVED that:

- A The Mid-Year Review of the Treasury Management Strategy, attached as Appendix A to the report, be noted and referred to Council for consideration.

63. **JOINT FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER 2 2020/21**

Cabinet received the quarter two joint finance and performance report for 2020/21, which set out the Council's financial and operational performance between July and September 2020.

Proposed by Councillor Mark Ingall (seconded by Councillor Mike Danvers) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- A Noted the projected outturn position set out in sections three and four of Appendix A to the report for the second quarter (July – Sept) of 2020/21 as follow:
 - i) An adverse variation on controllable budgets of £1,455,000 representing 2.5 per cent of the gross General Fund Budget.
 - ii) A total projected overspend of £345,000 representing -0.6 per cent of the gross General Fund Budget.
 - iii) The Council performed on or above target for 41 out of 49 (84 per cent) of its monthly and quarterly performance indicators.
 - iv) The Council also successfully completed 19 (11 per cent) of its revised service milestones.

64. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT, QUARTER 2 FINANCE REPORT 2020/21**

Cabinet received a report which provided an update on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the second quarter of 2020/21 and asked that

Cabinet noted variances in the HRA budget, as well as the forecast budget of the HRA and the Major Repairs Reserve.

Proposed by Councillor Mike Danvers (seconded by Councillor Mark Wilkinson) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet noted:

- A** The contents of the report and appendices A and B.
- B** That the forecast HRA general working balance as at 31 March 2021 will be £13.308 million and the balance on the Major Repairs Reserve will be fully utilised to finance the 2020/21 capital programme.
- C** The balance of £9.8 million of retained Right to Buy (RTB) receipts held as at 30 September 2020 in order to finance the new build capital programme and house purchase scheme.

65. **CAPITAL PROGRAMMES, QUARTER 2 FINANCE REPORT 2020/21**

Cabinet received a report which provided an update on the Council's Housing and Non Housing Capital Programmes.

Proposed by Councillor Mike Danvers (seconded by Councillor Mark Wilkinson) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- A** Noted the progress in the delivery of the Council's Housing and Non Housing Capital Programmes as at Quarter 2 as follows:
 - i) The Housing Capital Programme (HCP) current budget is £48.642 million following the amendments approved by Cabinet in September 2020. The projected outturn is currently £31.968 million.
 - ii) The Non-Housing Capital Programme (NHCP) current budget is £15.175 million following the amendments approved by Cabinet in September 2020. The projected outturn is currently £15,124 million.
- B** Approved the inclusion in the 2020/21 HCP an additional £1.8 million to finance newly required cladding at Joyners Field Towers (61-88) and (95-122) to meet updated fire safety advice and obtain the latest fire safety certificates. This capital expenditure is to be financed from HRA making a direct revenue contribution.

- C** Approved the removal from the HCP the £1.305 million Readings new build project because it is no longer affordable and reallocate the resources to other new build projects which are being developed and submitted for approval in the future.
- D** Approved the inclusion in the 2020/21 NHCP an additional provision of £1.5 million to finance the equity shareholding and loan to HTS Ltd previously approved under delegated authority by the Chief Executive on the 24 April 2020 and reported to Cabinet on the 10 September 2020. The purpose of this expenditure being for HTS Ltd to purchase five properties for which the Council has nomination rights.
- E** Approved the inclusion in the 2020/21 NHCP an additional provision of £1 million to finance the East Gate project. This project is funded by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government Towns Fund accelerated Funding grant.
- F** Approved the inclusion in the 2020/21 NHCP an additional provision of £122,000 to finance the upgrading of the existing IT equipment which is essential to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic.
- G** Approved the inclusion in the 2020/21 NHCP an additional provision of £1.25 million to support the Future High Streets Fund bid as set out in the report.
- H** Approved the proposed re-profiling of capital budgets as set out in the report.

66. **PADDLING POOL HEALTH AND SAFETY WORKS BUSINESS CASE AWARD**

Councillors Simon Carter and Joel Charles left the meeting for the consideration of this item.

Cabinet considered a report to award a business case to HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd to carry out health and safety works on paddling pools in Harlow.

Proposed by Councillor Eugenie Harvey (seconded by Councillor Chris Vince) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- A** Awarded the following Business Case to HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd subject to clarification and agreement on the terms and conditions, and a contract are entered into not exceeding the values set out below:

- i) Bush Fair
Sumners
Norman Booth
Town Park

Total: £333,053.26

- B** Noted that works at Staple Tye will be addressed through separate contract connected to agreed installation of a new Splash Park.

67. **SELECTION OF A CONTRACTOR FOR BUILDING NEW COUNCIL HOMES AT BUSHEY CROFT**

Cabinet received a report to appoint a contractor (subject to formal contract) to develop new Council homes at Bushey Croft.

Proposed by Councillor Tony Durcan (seconded by Councillor Mark Wilkinson) it was:

RESOLVED that:

- A** Cabinet approved (subject to formal contract) the appointment of Contractor A for Council new build works at Bushey Croft for the sum of £2,601,141 plus provision for contingency sums as contained in this report.

68. **DEVELOPMENT OF OPTIONS FOR A HARLOW METRO SYSTEM**

Cabinet received a report which sought the endorsement of the principle of establishing a sustainable transport system and to commission a first stage feasibility study.

Proposed by Councillor Danny Purton (seconded by Councillor Mark Ingall) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- A** Endorsed the principle of establishing a sustainable transport system to meet the modal shift and climate change aspirations to support the future growth of the town.
- B** Approved, subject to C below, the commissioning of a first stage feasibility study to explore different innovative transport technologies that a 'Harlow Metro' might bring and to advise the Council on operational and business models.
- C** Delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with Leader of the Council, and Portfolio Holder for the Environment to identify a budget and scope for the first stage feasibility study

to be commissioned in conjunction with the Council's external partners.

69. **1-15 ALTHAM GROVE - EXTERNAL REFURBISHMENT OF FLAT**

Cabinet received a report to award a contract to carry out external refurbishment works at 1-15 Altham Grove:

Proposed by Councillor Mark Wilkinson (seconded by Councillor Danny Purton) it was:

RESOLVED that:

- A** The most advantageous tender in consideration of price and quality combined as submitted by Contractor A be accepted in the sum of £269,996.47 for the delivery of this external refurbishment works programme subject to contract and Leaseholder consultation.

70. **CORNER BLOCKS FULLERS MEAD ESTATE - EXTERNAL REFURBISHMENT OF THE CORNER FLAT BLOCKS**

Cabinet received a report to award a contract to carry out external refurbishment of the corner blocks at Fullers Mead Estate.

Proposed by Councillor Mark Wilkinson (seconded by Councillor Mike Danvers) it was:

RESOLVED that:

- A** The most advantageous tender in consideration of price and quality combined as submitted by Contractor C be accepted in the sum of £379,000.00 for the delivery of this external refurbishment works programme subject to contract and Leaseholder consultation.

71. **FIRE SAFETY WORKS - WILLOWFIELD TOWER, NICHOLLS TOWER AND MOOR TOWER**

Cabinet received a report which recommended the award of a contract to carry out fire safety works at Willowfield Tower, Nicholls Tower and Moor Tower.

Proposed by Councillor Mark Wilkinson (seconded by Councillor Mike Danvers) it was:

RESOLVED that:

- A** The most advantageous tender in consideration of price and quality combined as submitted by Contractor D be accepted in

the sum of £1,468,271.00 for the delivery of updated Fire Compartmentation between floors, in service duct and ventilation system, internal and front entrance fire doors programme, subject to contract and Leaseholder consultation.

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

a) **Referral from Covid-19 Recovery Working Group - Funding Allocations: Recovery Budget**

Cabinet received a referral from the Covid-19 Recovery Working Group to approve a process for allocated funding for recovery measures.

Proposed by Councillor Eugenie Harvey (seconded by Councillor Mike Danvers) it was:

RESOLVED that:

- A** The process for the approval of the allocated funding for Recovery measures be approved as set out in Appendix A to the report.
- B** That the proposed allocation criteria, set out in Appendix B to the report, be approved.
- C** Final allocation of the recovery budget is delegated to Work Stream lead officers in consultation with Workstream appointed Councillors and the relevant Portfolio Holder.

b) **Referral from Cabinet Policy Development Working Group - Local Council Tax Support Scheme Proposals**

Cabinet received a referral from the Cabinet Policy Development Working Group. This sought a recommendation to Full Council that the Local Council Tax Support Scheme remained unchanged for 2021/22.

Proposed by Councillor Eugenie Harvey (seconded by Councillor Mike Danvers) it was:

RESOLVED that:

- A** Cabinet recommended to Full Council that the Local Council Tax Support Scheme remains unchanged for 2021/22.

- c) Referral from Cabinet Policy Development Working Group - Treasury Management Review

Cabinet received a referral from the Cabinet Policy Development Working Group which recommended that the impact of Covid-19, and changes in interest rates were considered in the development of the Treasury Management Strategy.

Proposed by Councillor Eugenie Harvey (seconded by Councillor Mike Danvers) it was:

RESOLVED that:

- A** The impact of the Covid-19 virus, and changes to interest rates be considered in the development of the Treasury Management Strategy.

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following meetings are noted.

- a) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 8 September 2020 of Harlow Local Highways Panel
- b) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 29 September 2020 of Shareholder Sub Committee
- c) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 14 October 2020 of Safety Committee

74. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL