

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Wednesday, 12 June 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Nunn (Chair); Councillors Eldred, Hadland, Hallam, J Hill, Hibbert and King

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Larratt.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd May 2019 were agreed and signed by the Leader.

3. INTENTION TO HOLD PART OF THE MEETING IN PRIVATE IF NECESSARY

There were no items to be considered in private.

4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

6. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were none.

7. PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS RELATING TO ADULT SOCIAL CARE PROVISION

Councillor Hibbert as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report seeking approval for three schemes providing supported living accommodation within the Borough, in partnership with Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) and Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH). The assumptions and business cases from a provision of homes perspective had been tested, with the biggest risk being abnormal voids. This had been addressed from a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) through the underwriting of excess voids by NCC who would benefit from nomination rights over some of the properties.

Councillor Stone considered that these projects were well thought through and demonstrated unified working. She asked whether progress was being made with St Edmund's. Councillor Hadland reported that progress was good. The facility would be a private care home, but would add to the overall stock.

In response to Councillor Stone's question regarding the scale of need in Northampton and the monitoring of the support provided, the Head of Housing and Wellbeing advised that a county-wide needs analysis had been undertaken, to which each of the seven districts and boroughs had contributed. Supported living schemes improved quality of life for residents and provided good value for money. Quality monitoring of support was important and the separation of accommodation from support was helpful.

The Head of Planning stated that in terms of provision, work was being undertaken with partner authorities to establish needs. It was hoped that a supplementary planning

document on specialist housing would be brought to Cabinet in July.

The Chief Executive pointed out that adult social care provision was managed and led by NCC, who would ensure that appropriate due diligence and care was monitored.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 Cabinet approved the Scheme known as Eleanor Lodge, as detailed in Appendix B.
- 2.2 Cabinet approved the Scheme known as Moray Lodge, as detailed in Appendix C.
- 2.3 Cabinet approved the scheme known as Billing Brook Road, as detailed in Appendix D.
- 2.4 Cabinet delegated to the Head of Housing and Wellbeing in consultation with the Cabinet Member of Housing and Wellbeing, the Borough Secretary and Chief Finance Officer the authority to approve the terms of the lease and any associated documentation.
- 2.5 Cabinet delegated to the Head of Housing and Wellbeing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing and the Borough Secretary authority to regularise and to create a pathway through which property transactions, such as is proposed herein and related to Adult Social Care in the community can be appropriately managed and supported by both authorities.
- 2.6 Cabinet delegated to the Borough Secretary in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing, the Head of Housing and Wellbeing and the Chief Finance Officer, the authority to approve any variations required to be made to the Management Agreement between Northampton Borough Council and Northampton Partnership Homes dated 5 January 2015 that may be required to implement any Cabinet approvals arising from this report.

8. PERFORMANCE OUTTURN REPORT QUARTER 4

In the absence of Councillor Larratt, the Leader asked Councillor Hallam to comment on the environmental issues in the report. Councillor Hallam reported that ESC01n (missed bins) was reported as red primarily because of data issues relating to the change of contractor. It had been difficult to get comparable data in respect of ESC04 (% of household waste recycled and composted) since it included the time of the previous contractor and before roll-out of the new recycling bins in September – although the 4% year on year increase was likely to go up. ESC07 (graffiti) had experienced a backlog of inspections, which was being resolved. PP53a (response to service requests) had been affected by long term staff sickness.

Councillor Birch expressed concern in relation to three of the indicators:

BV012 (sickness absence) – The Chief Finance Officer pointed out that payment for the first day of sickness absence had resulted in an increase in days lost. However, there had been no evidence of increased absence due to issues surrounding uncertainty linked to the local government process. Programmes relating to health and wellbeing and preparing for change had been put in place for staff.

HML01 (households in temporary accommodation) – The Head of Housing and Wellbeing reported that the time households spent in temporary accommodation before being re-housed had increased, and was typically 12-18 months. The Temporary Accommodation

Action Plan, which Cabinet approved in April 2019 should reduce this.

MPE01/2 (NWEZ businesses/jobs) – Councillor Hadland reported that following the boost from the new University campus, viability had been more of an issue, although the situation was now improving. Councillor Nunn pointed out that individual sites were being looked at and work commissioned to overcome barriers to development. This would then stimulate jobs in the Enterprise Zone. The Chief Executive stated that two new staff members were being added to the team because of the demand experienced, which was positive. This had been budgeted for in the restructure last year.

RESOLVED:

2.1 Cabinet reviewed the contents of the performance report (Appendix 1).

2.2 Cabinet agreed that the Annual Performance Report will be presented in June of each year to the Audit Committee.

9. DERNGATE CONSERVATION AREA REVIEW

Councillor Hill as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report. The Council had a statutory duty to reappraise all Conservation Areas. As part of the consultation it was suggested that the area be increased. However, it was felt this would dilute the historic character and appearance of the area, so the existing boundary was proposed to be retained

Councillor Birch thanked those who put the report together and noted that Conservation Area reviews engaged the community and helped them appreciate their heritage.

RESOLVED:

2.1 Cabinet approved the adoption of the Derngate Conservation Area Re-appraisal and Management Plan (Appendix B).

10. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

Councillor Nunn as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report and noted that 17 risks were recorded on the Corporate Risk Register as at March 2019, 12% red, 76% amber and 12% green. Two items had had the risk rating reduced – Risk 1 (failure to deliver a balanced budget) and Risk 7 (regeneration of Northampton). Monitoring risk was an important part of NBC's culture.

Councillor Stone requested an annual briefing to provide members with more information on this important area. The Chief Finance Officer pointed out that the finance and governance briefing (which Councillor Stone had attended) also covered risk, although attendance at this had been low.

Councillor Stone also expressed concern regarding IT and how this would be harmonised with the move to a unitary council. She believed the problems with Children's Services were compounded by inadequate IT, and a more proactive approach needed to be taken towards the safeguarding of children and adults. The Head of Housing and Wellbeing advised that the safeguarding policy had been updated, Overview and Scrutiny had been briefed regarding plans for a safeguarding and child sexual exploitation information pack for members, and training was being refreshed. All members and officers were being encouraged to participate in online safeguarding training.

Councillor Stone asked whether a serious case review into deaths of homeless people

needed to be undertaken. It was well known that the life expectancy of homeless people was low, and their outcomes poor. In a recent case, numerous agencies had flagged concerns and it was difficult to ensure a partnership approach. The Head of Housing and Wellbeing stated that in the event of the death of a person who was or had recently been homeless, a named individual from the relevant authority was responsible for co-ordinating a multi-agency meeting at which a light-touch review would be carried out and lessons learned. Where appropriate, cases would be referred to the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board for a formal review.

Regarding risks around Brexit, the Chief Executive confirmed that monitoring was being undertaken, but the Q4 risk was considered to be minimal.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 Cabinet reviewed, commented and where appropriate, confirmed the risks contained in the register and the related risk exposures and mitigating actions were relevant.

11. FINANCE AND MONITORING - PROVISIONAL OUTTURN REPORT 2018/2019

Councillor Eldred as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report. There had been a General Fund overspend of £732,000. This was considerably better than the position a few months ago, reflecting the hard work by staff to reduce the overspend and obtain grants where possible. Reserves were available to cover the overspend and would be used wisely. There had been a major overspend on temporary accommodation for homelessness last year, for which the budget had been enhanced this year.

Councillor Stone questioned how NBC was managing the issue of being sued in respect of pension contributions. The Borough Secretary pointed out that at the end of the Enterprise contract there had, unusually, been excess money in the LGPS pension fund. Enterprise were suing NCC as the fund administrator (not NBC) for the surplus of £6.5 million. This was being robustly defended by the Councils involved and the Borough Secretary stated that as there were live proceedings in place he did not want to go into too much detail on the case but he would be happy to brief members on this issue.

Councillor Stone expressed concern at service underspends reflecting staff vacancies because of the knock-on effect on quality of work and efficiency. It was pointed out that the recent loss of a Head of Service was being covered by recruitment of other staff and positions were currently being advertised.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1. Cabinet noted the provisional outturn for the general fund and HRA for the financial year 2018/19 as set out at **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 5**.
- 2.2 Cabinet approved the proposed revenue budget carry forwards detailed in **Appendix 2**.
- 2.3 Cabinet approved the use of and contributions to general fund revenue earmarked reserves as shown in **Appendix 3**.
- 2.4 Cabinet approved the net movement in HRA reserves and working balances as set out at **Appendix 6**.
- 2.5 Cabinet noted the outturn for the Council's general fund and HRA capital programmes for 2018/19 and how the expenditure was financed as set out at **Appendix 4** and **Appendix 7**.
- 2.6 Cabinet approved the proposed capital carry forwards into 2019/20 set out in **Appendix 4** and **Appendix 7**.

- 2.7 Cabinet delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer to agree any retention of underspends by NPH.

The meeting concluded at 6.50 pm