

Cabinet Minutes

Date: 2 December 2013

Time: 7.00 - 7.46 pm

PRESENT: Councillor R J Scott (Executive Leader of the Council - in the Chair)

Councillor M A Foster	- Cabinet Member for Finance
Councillor J Gibbs	- Cabinet Member For Community
Councillor A R Green	- Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Regeneration
Councillor M Hussain JP	- Cabinet Member for HR, ICT & Customer Services
Councillor N B Marshall	- Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainability
Councillor Mrs J E Teesdale	- Cabinet Member for Environment

By Invitation

Councillor D A Johncock	- Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability
Councillor I Bates	- Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor A Turner	- Leader of the Independent Group

Also present: Councillors J L Richards OBE and M Hussain

56 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H McCarthy (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy), I McEnnis (Chairman of the Council) and S Parker (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group).

57 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4 November 2013 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

58 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr J Gibbs declared a pecuniary interest in relation to Minute 61 and withdrew from the Chamber during the discussion.

Cllr R Scott declared an other interest in Minute 65 by virtue of his position at Bucks County Council as Vice Chairman on the Pension board.

59 REFERRAL FROM THE HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE - MUSLIM BURIAL VAULTS

The report before Cabinet set out the recommendations from the High Wycombe Town Committee, that funds from Special Expenses reserve be released to enable the concrete burial vaults to be respaced.

The following decisions were made, to enable the burial vaults to be used by Wycombe's Muslim community, which required further work to respace the vaults. It was recommended that the work be undertaken to enable the Committee to bring the vaults into use.

RESOLVED: That (i) £57,605 from the Special Expenses Account be approved for the project; and

(ii) Delegated authority be given to the Head of Community, in consultation with the Chairman of the High Wycombe Town Committee, to make amendments to fees and charges relating to new concrete chambers for Muslim burials.

60 HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2014-2019

Cabinet was asked to recommend to Council the adoption of the renewed Homelessness Strategy which considered the homelessness demand in the district as well as the provision of services and set out priorities for the future together with an action plan.

The following recommendation was made as the Council was required to adopt a homelessness strategy at least every 5 years. The previous Strategy expired in 2011 with interim Homelessness Strategy Action Plans in place from 2011-2013. The Strategy aimed to prevent, relieve and address homelessness in the District over the next 5 years.

Recommended: That the Homelessness Strategy 2014-2019 be adopted.

61 PROPOSAL FOR COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT GRANT 2014/15

Cabinet were reminded that the Government had abolished the Council Tax Benefit Scheme and local authorities were required to set their own locally run service called Council Tax Support. The Cabinet was asked to consider the options for paying Council Tax Support Grant to Parish Councils for 2014/15.

The report before Cabinet outlined the proposals including details of the financial impact on each Parish Council and High Wycombe Town Committee Special Expenses.

The following decision was made as under the Council's Constitution and Budget Strategy, the Council reviewed and set a balanced budget each year in line with corporate priorities.

RESOLVED: That Option 2 as set out in paragraph 15 of the report be adopted from 2014/15, on the basis that this represents the most equitable way of distributing future grant allocations to Parishes and High Wycombe Town Special Expenses.

62 BUCKS HOME CHOICE POLICY AMENDMENTS

The report before Cabinet sought approval of revisions to the Bucks Home Choice Policy which enabled all four district authorities to access applications to the housing register. The policy had been amended to incorporate legislative changes from the Localism Act and to assist with the allocation of affordable housing within the district. Members noted that significant consultation had been undertaken with Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils regarding the proposed changes to the countywide policy.

The following recommendations were made to allow affordable housing to be allocated to people in need in accordance with powers given via the legislative framework brought in by the Localism Act 2011.

Recommended: That (i) delegated authority be given to the Head of Environment in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community to agree and adopt the final version of the revised Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy; and

(ii) delegated authority be given to the Head of Environment in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community to make any necessary amendments to the adopted Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy.

63 2013/14 SERVICE PERFORMANCE: Q1 & Q2

Cabinet had before it the Council's performance position as of 30 September 2013, in respect of both national and local performance indicators, as well as progress made on the key projects identified by Cabinet for improvement focus.

The meeting was informed that the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Finance had requested a review of performance measures and that this would be conducted during the 2014 Service Planning process.

The following decisions were made to review the performance position as at 30 September 2013 to ensure that the Council was performing at the appropriate level.

RESOLVED: That (i) the performance of the measures identified by Cabinet for performance focus through 2013/14 be noted; and

(ii) the summary of the first and second quarter outturns for service performance be received.

64 BUCKS ADVANTAGE

The report before Cabinet sought approval to establish Bucks Advantage, a company limited by guarantee, as a delivery mechanism for Bucks (Thames Valley) Local Enterprise Partnership.

The following decisions were made to ensure the Council continued to play an active role in the work of the Bucks (Thames Valley) Local Enterprise Partnership to stimulate growth within Wycombe District.

Recommended: That (i) the Council be a founding member of Bucks Advantage, which was being established as a Company limited by guarantee to be a delivery mechanism for the Bucks (Thames Valley) Local Enterprise Partnership;

(ii) the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be granted delegated authority to agree any detailed arrangements required to set up the Company; and

(iii) the Council be appointed as a Member of the Company, with the Leader as our Representative, and the Chief Executive appointed as a Director of the Company.

65 DRAFT PENSION FUND: RESTRUCTURING LIABILITIES

Cabinet were asked to consider proposals for the restructuring of the Council's Pension Fund liabilities. After due consideration, Cabinet supported the option of buying out the current pension fund deficit of £5.1m and reducing the pension contribution rate to 13.8%.

The following decisions were made as the Council faced significant budgetary pressures over the medium term from both a combination of government cuts and residual costs from the Housing Stock Transfer. The Council still needed to identify savings of £2.4m by 2019/20 and also needed to address an estimated £588k residual cost left from the Housing Transfer in 2011. The proposed buy-out of the pension deficit would enable the Council to remove most of the residual costs relating to the Housing Stock Transfer (£588k).

RESOLVED: That the restructuring of the Council's pension fund liabilities by making a one-off payment of £5.1m to the pension fund, thereby removing the deficit assessed by Barnett Waddingham as at 31st March 2013 be approved, resulting in a reduction in on-going employer pension contributions of £490k per annum.

66 FILE ON ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

Cabinet received the following files on actions taken under delegated powers:

Community C/60/13 – C/65/13

Economic Development & Regeneration EDR/3/13

Environment E/10/13

67 INFORMATION SHEET

The Cabinet received the following Information Sheet issued since the last meeting:

06/2013 Complaints/Comments/Compliments – Information and Improvements
Quarter 2 (July – September 2013)

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items as they contain exempt information as defined in Regulation 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, more particularly as follows:

Minute 68 – Off Street Parking

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information (Paragraph 3, Part 1 of schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972)

[The need to maintain the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure because disclosure could prejudice the Council's position in any future tender process or negotiations]

Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings (Paragraph 5, Part 1 of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972)

[The need to maintain the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure, because the Council's legal position is likely to be prejudiced by disclosure]

Minute 69 – Acquisition of 6-8 Frogmoor and 9-10 Church Street, High Wycombe

Minute 70 – File on Exempt Actions Taken under Delegated Powers

**Economic Development & Regeneration Sheet Nos:
EDR/70/13 – EDR/75/13**

Environment Sheet Nos: E/1/13

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information (Paragraph 3, Part 1 of schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972)

[The need to maintain the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure because disclosure could prejudice the Council's

position in any future tender process or negotiations]

68 OFF STREET PARKING

Cabinet approval was sought to implement Automated Number Plate Recognition systems at off street car parks across the district to enable a more efficient service.

The following decisions were made as following a trial in Easton Street Multi Storey Car Park and Railway Place, the Council wished to roll out ANPR across other off-street car parks in the Wycombe District. In order to roll out ANPR the Council would need to revise and update its Off Street Parking Places Orders.

RESOLVED: That (i) the September 2008 and May 2013 Off-Street Parking Places Orders made under s.35 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 be revoked and replaced with an up to date Off-Street Parking Places Order excluding car parks where Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) was to be used;

(ii) Enforcement using contract and trespass law be rolled out to all car parks using ANPR; and

(iii) Parking charges (relating to non-payment and over staying) and minor amendments to the Off-Street Parking Places Order be delegated to the Head of Environment in consultation with the Head of Democratic, Legal and Policy Services and Head of Finance and Commercial Services and the respective Cabinet Members.

69 ACQUISITION OF 6-8 FROGMOOR AND 9-10 CHURCH STREET, HIGH WYCOMBE

Cabinet approval was sought to allocate funding to purchase 6-8 Frogmoor and 9-10 Church Street. This would enable the Council to assemble properties for regeneration purposes.

The following recommendation was made to acquire 6-8 Frogmoor and 9-10 Church Street.

Recommended: That the budget referred to in paragraph 3 of the report be added to the Major Projects programme and released to fund the purchase of the freehold of 6-8 Frogmoor for the sum set out in paragraph 3 of the report and take an assignment of the long leasehold of 9-10 Church Street in High Wycombe town centre on the terms set out in paragraph 8 of the report.

70 FILE ON ACTION TAKEN UNDER EXEMPT DELEGATED POWERS

Cabinet received the following files on exempt actions taken under delegated powers:

Economic Development & Regeneration Sheet Nos: EDR/70/13 – EDR/75/13

Environment Sheet Nos: E/1/13

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

- Karen Satterford - Chief Executive
- Ian Hunt - Democratic Services Manager
- Catherine MacKenzie - Principal Democratic Services Officer
- Caroline Hughes - Head of Environment