



**MINUTES**

**CABINET**

**5pm – 6.05pm**

**24 November 2010**

**Present:** Councillors Morpew (chair), Arthur (vice chair), Bremner, Brociek-Coulton, MacDonald, Sands, Waters and Westmacott

**Also present:** Councillors Stephenson and Wright (R)

**1. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the cabinet meetings held on 27 October and 10 November 2010.

**2. PHASED CLOSURE OF THE CITY HALL CASHIER SERVICE – UPDATE**

Councillor Sands, cabinet member for wellbeing, introduced the report and gave details of the latest statistics demonstrating the reduction in transactions.

Councillor Stephenson expressed concern about the number of people identified who had not yet found alternative payment methods. The head of customer contact explained that the council would continue to offer guidance to people who needed to identify alternative methods of payment and would seek to establish whether there were vulnerable cases which would require ongoing support after January 2011.

The chair reminded members that the closure of the cashier service was part of the council's efficiency savings programme and that the project needed to adhere to timescales in order to ensure that the required savings were achieved.

In response to a question, Councillor Sands explained the other methods of payment which were available. The head of customer contact referred to the considerable costs of individual transactions, details of which she would provide to members in due course.

**RESOLVED** to note the report on progress of the phased closure of the City Hall cashier service.

### **3. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON PLANNING FOR SCHOOLS DEVELOPMENT**

(Councillor Sands declared an interest and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.)

Councillor MacDonald, cabinet member for environment, introduced the report. The head of planning and regeneration presented the report and referred to the proposed response to the consultation.

**RESOLVED** to agree the proposed response to the consultation on planning for schools development as detailed in appendix 1 to the report.

### **4. HOUSING SERVICE CHARGES**

Councillor Arthur, cabinet member for housing, introduced the report and referred to a change to the district heating service charge which would increase by an average of 28p. She also reported that the Citywide Board had given support to the proposals.

**RESOLVED** to agree the following proposals for housing service charges:

- (1) sheltered housing service charge – no change in the current service charge and to refer this charge in April 2011 following the outcome of a sheltered housing service review;
- (2) premises management – the shortfall from 2009/10 be not recovered and the current service charge for static premises management service be increased by £2.86 per week, and by 70p per week for the mobile premises management service. A new charge to be applied from January 2011 and reviewed in October 2011; and
- (3) district heating – the weekly cost to be increased by an average of 28p. The new charge to be applied from January 2011 and reviewed in October 2011 following a review of the apportionment of the district heating charge.

### **5. CONSULTATION ON EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS**

The chair introduced the report, and referred, in particular, to the coalition government's intention to introduce new legislation arrangements during the current parliament.

In response to a question from Councillor Stephenson, the democratic services manager said that whilst the legislation required the leader of the council to be elected for a four year period, it was likely that the new legislation would be introduced prior to the end of this period of office.

**RESOLVED** to –

- (1) recommend the council to adopt the leader and cabinet executive model as the preferred option for executive arrangements on which to seek consultation;
- (2) consult the public on the preferred model through a newspaper advertisement, article in the *Citizen* and through the council's website; and
- (3) agree the timetable for the introduction of new executive arrangements as detailed in the appendix to the report.

**6. PETITION SCHEME**

The chair introduced the report and proposed that the scheme should be reviewed by the constitution working party after a period of six months.

During discussion, some members suggested that the thresholds included within the scheme should be reduced.

In response to a question, the democratic services manager said that the threshold of 50 signatures for a response for a cabinet member was already included within the council's current petition scheme.

**RESOLVED** to recommend council to adopt the revised petition scheme and amend the constitution accordingly subject to –

- (1) agreement by group leaders on the provisions for threshold limits included within the draft scheme; and
- (2) a review of the scheme by the constitution working party after a period of six months.

**7. NORWICH INDEPENDENT COMMISSION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (NICC) REPORT**

Councillor MacDonald, cabinet member for environment, introduced the report.

During discussion, Councillor Stephenson suggested that the council should also support the petition by Friends of the Earth on carbon omissions. Councillor Wright also suggested that the report should have been considered by the climate change working party. The chair said it was intended that consideration of the report was the first part of the process and that it would be referred to the climate change working party where further changes to the council's policies could be considered.

**RESOLVED** to –

- (1) note the research and the independent report on climate change as set out in annex A to the report and formally thank the Norwich Independent Climate Change Commission for their work;

- (2) support the further dissemination of the report to enable wider awareness and discussion in the city with regard to environmental issues; and
- (3) use the research and the report to help inform the future development of the council's environmental strategy for 2011/15.

## **8. PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING**

The head of local neighbourhood services presented the report and answered questions.

During discussion, members referred to the need for an appropriate level of resources to be allocated to participatory budgeting, in view of the overall financial position and the potential to utilise section 106 contributions and other skills and resources within the community to develop projects and services in the neighbourhoods.

Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources, performance and shared services referred to the potential for increased community involvement in decision making and referred to the considerable amount of preparatory work which had been completed by officers involved in the participatory budgeting scheme.

**RESOLVED** to –

- (1) approve the implementation of a participatory budgeting programme during the remainder of the financial year 2010/11 taking into account:
  - (i) the level of staffing resource within the community engagement team;
  - (ii) the timescales for achieving projects within the current financial year; and
  - (iii) the use of an online voting system as used in the Bowthorpe pilot programme.
- (2) ask the head of local neighbourhood services to investigate options for including other budgets within the participatory budgeting approach in the future; and
- (3) record the cabinet's thanks to officers for their work on preparing the participatory budgeting programme as detailed in the report.

## **9. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of items 10-15 below on the grounds contained in the relevant paragraphs of schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended.

**\*10. THREE SCORE, BOWTHORPE – EXEMPLAR FIRST PHASE (PARAGRAPH 3)**

**RESOLVED**, having considered the report of the assistant director – city development, to –

- (1) prepare a brief to procure a development partner to deliver an exemplar first phase of development at Three Score, Bowthorpe;
- (2) undertake the procurement process using the Home and Communities Agency (HCA) Development Partner Panel (DPP) on a non-binding basis; and
- (3) ask the assistant director – city development to report back to the cabinet, in due course, following the completion of the procurement process, to allow full consideration of the implications to the council before any decision on the selection of any development partner is made.

**\*11. FIBRE OPTIC BROADBAND PROPOSAL FOR NORWICH (PARAGRAPH 3)**

**RESOLVED**, having considered the report of the head of economic development, to proceed with due diligence/feasibility studies on the fibre optic broadband proposal, in partnership with the company detailed in the report, at no cost to the city council.

**\*12. MANAGING ASSETS (PARAGRAPH 3)**

Councillor Arthur, cabinet member for housing, presented the report.

The senior development officer (enabling) circulated a proposed amendment to the recommendations.

**RESOLVED** to –

- (1) approve the disposal of the 25 void properties as detailed in the report;
- (2) approve the decommissioning of four properties and the resettlement of two tenants in accordance with the council's adopted decommissioning policy;
- (3) approve the disposal of the council's interest in the land to enable the provision of new, high quality affordable housing and to agree to secure vacant properties by removing any metal from the interiors, capping of utilities, and the securing of windows and doors;
- (4) approve the capital receipt from housing revenue account property disposals to be ring fenced for investment in the housing capital programme and/or for enabling new affordable housing;
- (5) approve an application to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for their disposal of the assets detailed in paragraph 12; and

- (6) delegate authority to the director of regeneration and development to take all necessary and ancillary steps to achieve the above.

**\*13. BARRACK STREET LETTING (PARAGRAPH 3)**

**RESOLVED**, having considered the report of the head of asset and city management, to –

- (1) grant a 50 year lease to occupy the building on the terms set out in paragraph 5 of the report, including the provision for a building refurbishment; and
- (2) record the cabinet's appreciation to the property services manager and his team for their work in preparation for the letting.

**\*14. NORWICH PLAYHOUSE THEATRE (PARAGRAPH 3)**

**RESOLVED**, having considered the report of the head of communications and cultural services, to –

- (1) agree to the repayment of the loan arrangement as detailed in the report; and
- (2) agree to discharge any charge over the land of Norwich Playhouse Theatre Ltd and Norwich Playhouse Enterprises Ltd.

**\*15. SAVINGS AND EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME – REDUNDANCIES (PARAGRAPH 1)**

**RESOLVED**, having considered the report of the deputy chief executive, to –

- (1) approve the payments relating to the voluntary and compulsory redundancies as detailed in the report;
- (2) record the cabinet's thanks to the officers for the detailed work on the savings and efficiency programme and the sensitive manner in which the selection procedure for posts and decisions on redundancies had been handled.

CHAIR