

Cabinet**16:30 to 17:55****14 October 2020**

Present: Councillors Waters (chair), Davis, Harris (vice chair), Jones, Kendrick, Maguire, Packer and Stonard (item 6 on).

Also present: Councillors Bogelein and Wright

1. Public Questions/Petitions

There were no public questions or petitions.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2020.

4. Temporary revision to the council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) to reflect Covid-19 restrictions

Councillor Waters, the leader of the council presented the report. The revisions to the council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) were temporary and reflected the public health requirement to engage differently with the public as a consequence of Covid. The Coronavirus Act allowed for virtual meetings and for members of the public to partake in meetings virtually.

The planning policy team leader said there was a full revision of the SCI scheduled for next year and that this would be subject to public consultation.

Members discussed the need for flexibility of approach and it was hoped a form of hybrid meeting could be adopted. In response to a member question the planner said that it was possible for officers to meet members of the public face to face still. A risk assessment was completed where visits to applicants or neighbours were required.

RESOLVED to adopt the updated Statement of Community Involvement

5. Council response to Planning White Paper consultation

(Councillor Stonard joined the meeting at this point)

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth, presented the report. The government were consulting on two sets of white papers, these

represented radical changes to the planning system with particular impact upon the role of democratically elected planning authorities.

There would be a change in the methodology used to assess housing need, housing for first time buyers would count towards affordable housing targets which would stifle the delivery on smaller sites. Members discussed the lack of local accountability afforded through the new planning proposals. Councillor Stonard proposed a cross party recommendation from Sustainable Development Panel which had considered the planning proposals earlier in the week.

In response to Councillor Bogelein's question the director of place said that work for the Greater Norwich Local Plan strategic framework was accelerating in order to be completed within the current planning legislative framework. However, reviews on development management policies had yet to begin and would likely take place under a new planning framework but it was not possible currently to know what this would look like.

RESOLVED to approve:

- 1) the proposed response to the Planning White Paper to be submitted to government by 29 October 2020; and
- 2) that the leader of the council's letter to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, agreed at council (22 September 2020) is also signed by Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth, and the group leaders.

6. Scrutiny committee recommendations

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources introduced the report and asked Councillor Wright in his capacity as chair of the scrutiny committee to present the report. Councillor Wright stated the report brought forward eleven recommendations from a select committee on short term lets across the city. Of concern was the changing nature of the property scene in the city.

The leader of the council thanked the select committee for its work. Short term lets represented 1% of the housing stock across the city. He referred to the work of the council to address housing standards in the private rented sector. It was noted that with a shortage of resources the priority had to be those residents living permanently in private rented accommodation. A means for reporting short term let properties of particular concern to the council existed and enforcement action could be taken.

In response to Councillor Bogelein's question the leader of the council said that there were no plans to incorporate responsibility for short term lets into any cabinet member portfolio.

RESOLVED to note the recommendations from scrutiny committee

7. Home improvement team and disabled adaptations service – Key Decision

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing presented the report. The recommendations within the report sought to resolve the disparity of service received between private sector and council tenants. It was recognised that

individuals benefitted from remaining in familiar surroundings. Council tenants had been encouraged unsuccessfully to move and this had resulted in delays to adaptations being installed. Council tenants would now receive the same high level service as those in the private sector.

RESOLVED to approve:

- 1) That the current assistance for council tenants is enhanced with a suite of grants mirroring those offered for private sector residents, specifically:
 - Disabled Facilities Grants
 - DFG Top Up Grant
 - Hospital Discharge Grants
 - Preventing Hospital Admission Grants
- 2) That the operating model of the home improvement team is replicated for council tenants so that they are offered the same high level of service that residents in the private sector receive.
- 3) Immediately Create one FTE Caseworker post and one FTE Senior Caseworker post initially on a 2 year fixed term contract drawing from the existing HRA capital budget for disabled adaptations.

8. To award a contract for solar thermal water heating to social housing properties – Key decision

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing presented the report. The contract represented further investment into the council's housing stock and the works would challenge fuel poverty.

RESOLVED to award the contract for the installation of thermodynamic hot water systems for housing properties 2020-21 to Impact Renewable Energy Ltd.

9. Vehicle leasing and future contract awards for Norwich City Services Limited – Key decision

Councillor Maguire, cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment, presented the report. The contract represented the leasing of specialist vehicles required to be ready to run the new company from day one. Due to the specialist nature of the vehicles there were limited options available in terms of electric models but the council were looking to lease four electric vehicles and ducting had been installed for electrical vehicles at the new depot.

The monitoring officer advised members that if they were to agree the recommendations in the report the first recommendation would not be subject to a call in. She referred to appendix 6, paragraph 15.8 of the council's constitution and advised that she considered any delay in enacting the contract would prejudice the interests of the council.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to the chief executive officer as shareholder, in consultation with the cabinet member for resources and the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment;

- 1) to award a vehicle lease contract for the delivery of environmental services by Norwich City Services Limited; and
- 2) enter into other such contracts, that are reasonable and necessary to ensure the successful delivery of services from 1 April 2021 by the company.

10. The award of contract of IT contract renewal – Key Decision

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources presented the report. The director of strategy, communications and culture said that the system enabled different back office systems to be pulled together and was a useful tool in the move to greater digitisation.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to the director of strategy and culture in consultation with the cabinet member for resources to award a contract for the ongoing provision of a digital development platform, ensuring continuation of existing services and the opportunity to expand and build on the council's digital strategy.

11. The award of contract for cash collections – Key decision

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth, presented the report.

RESOLVED to award the contract for cash collections to Security Plus Limited for a four year period from 01 April 2021 to 31 March 2025.

12. Managing assets (general fund) – Key decision

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing presented the report. She noted that there was an amendment to the report title, the asset was within the general fund and not housing portfolio. The chair noted that an amended report had been circulated in relation the below the line report for this item.

The disposal of the land in question would enable the building of six new affordable units of housing. The build had been made possible by additional funding from the government aimed at reducing rough sleeping. It was noted that the delivery timescales were tight but if the project was successfully delivered there were opportunities to bid for further funding in the following two years.

Members discussed the delivery of this much needed provision for rough sleepers and agreed that it represented an excellent example of multi agency working.

RESOLVED to approve the disposal of land identified in the exempt appendix to this report to support the development of six affordable homes under the Local Government Act 1972: General Disposal Consent 2003.