



MINUTES

CABINET

5.35pm – 6.50pm

16 February 2011

Present: Councillors Morphew (Chair), Arthur (Vice Chair), Bremner, Brociek-Coulton, MacDonald, Waters and Westmacott

Also present:: Councillors Lubbock, Offord and Stephenson

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the cabinet meeting held on 19 January 2011.

2. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question 1

Pauline Walton asked the cabinet member for housing:-

In the proposal 'future provision for housing works' at paragraph 13 it is explained that the in-house option for the provision of housing repairs and maintenance has been rejected due to officer lack of knowledge and expertise. Please explain how the detailed cost analysis to recommend a single large long term contract is less demanding?

Councillor Brenda Arthur, cabinet member for housing replied:-

Paragraph 13 does not state that the in-house option for the provision of housing repairs and maintenance has been rejected due to officer lack of knowledge and expertise. Paragraph 13 relates to the cost of providing an in-house service. There are a variety of other factors considered in the report and appendices that led to the recommendation of the private sector provision.

Further, there is no recommendation for a single large long term contract. The report clearly separates repairs and maintenance from voids and programmed works. The report, which will be considered later in the meeting, seeks an initial decision on the form of provision and if the private sector provision is then approved the analysis can then be undertaken to determine the packaging of works, the type of contract, specifications, contract term etc.

Pauline Walton then asked for information on the number of staff hours involved in the analysis required for the option for private sector provision of the works. Councillor Arthur said that she would provide this information to Pauline Walton following the meeting.

Question 2

Kevin Hayes asked the cabinet member for housing:-

The proposal seen by the Norwich Leaseholder's Association contains specific recommendations from the contracts working party but the proposal before the cabinet does not have the endorsement of the CWP, who apart from the head of procurement and service improvement has made the recommendations?

Councillor Arthur, cabinet member for housing replied:-

The contracts working party resolved to note the contents of the report. If contracts working party members had any individual comments they would feed these back to officers and cabinet. If any have been received, the head of procurement and service improvement will report these when the item is considered later in the meeting. The citywide board tenants' repairs sub group has also considered the recommendations and the head of procurement and service improvement will feed back their comments when the report is considered.

Written comments have been received from leaseholders who cancelled their scheduled meeting to discuss the proposals and the head of procurement and service improvement will also feed these back when the report is considered.

The head of procurement and service improvement makes the recommendations for cabinet to consider as the report shows.

Kevin Hayes then asked how the cabinet could justify taking a decision when a number of other options for the provision of housing works had not been fully considered.

Councillor Arthur said that officers had completed appropriate risk analysis for all the options for the provision of housing works and the cabinet would make its decision based on the advice given in the report. It was important to ensure continuity in the provision of housing works following the completion of the temporary contracts currently in place.

Question 3

Lorna Kirk asked the cabinet member for housing:-

Who are the cabinet members of the contracts working party and what particular expertise does each member have?

Councillor Arthur, cabinet member for housing replied:-

The contracts working party is chaired by Councillor Waters and the vice chair is Councillor Jeraj. The other councillors are Bremner, George, Lubbock, Morpew and Stephenson. It is not for me to comment on the particular expertise of each member.

Lorna Kirk then asked what were the terms of reference for the contracts working party. Councillor Arthur said that the terms of reference were available on the council's website.

3. FUTURE PROVISION FOR HOUSING WORKS

Councillor Arthur, cabinet member for housing, introduced the report. Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources, performance and shared services endorsed the officers recommendations contained in the report and said that all the available options for the provision of these works had been carefully considered and the appropriate risk analysis undertaken. He referred to the overall reduction in financial resources available to the council which would affect the provision of all services. He said that the preferred option for the provision of these works provided the least risk to the council in the future.

The head of procurement and service improvement presented the report and referred to comments from the tenants' citywide board who considered that the quality of repairs and maintenance, works to void properties and programmed works was the priority consideration in deciding the preferred option. Members of the contracts working party had been asked to submit comments individually on the proposals but none had been received. The head of procurement and service improvement then reported comments received from the Norwich Leaseholder's Association.

Councillor Stephenson said that all the options referred to in the report should have been assessed equally. Councillor Waters said that full assessments of the options for private sector provision, joint venture and in-house provision had been completed and referred to the analysis of the options contained in the appendices to the report which indicated that private sector provision would enable the services to be provided at least risk to the council in view of the council's budget settlement and the overall financial position of the council.

Councillor Lubbock questioned why leaseholders were not fully consulted on the proposals and suggested that the consideration of the preferred option should be postponed in order that a full dialogue with Norwich Leaseholder's Association could take place. Councillor Arthur said that a meeting with the Norwich Leaseholder's Association had been arranged to discuss the options within the report but that this had been cancelled at the leaseholders' request. She said that the comments of the Leaseholder's Association had been reported to the cabinet which would take into account their comments.

RESOLVED to approve the strategy to seek provision for repairs and maintenance, voids, and programmed works through private sector provision as set out in the report.

4. POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK

Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources, performance and shared services, presented the report. The comments of the scrutiny committee on the budget proposals were circulated at the meeting.

RESOLVED to recommend to council to –

- (1) endorse the approach to setting the council's policy framework and budget as set out in the report;
- (2) the amendments to the corporate plan 2010-12, as set out in the report, are approved.

5. GENERAL REVENUE FUND BUDGET

Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources, performance and shared services introduced the report.

RESOLVED to recommend council, for the 2011-12 financial year to –

- (1) set the council tax at £225.87 for Band D, which is an increase of 0%;
- (2) set the council's budgetary requirement at £21.570 million;
- (3) set the prudent level of reserves for the council at £3.1 million in accordance with the recommendation of the head of finance;
- (4) that the precept of the collection fund for 2011-12 be calculated in accordance with sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as per the statutory determination at annex 3 to the report.

6. NON HOUSING CAPITAL PLAN AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2011-12

Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources, performance and shared services introduced the report.

The head of finance said that the cabinet had delegated authority to approve the discretionary section 106 expenditure provision.

RESOLVED to –

- (1) recommend council to approve the non housing capital programme 2011-12, as set out in the report;
- (2) approve the following discretionary section 106 expenditure provisions, and to delegate to the capital programme board the approval of detailed proposals in the form of project mandates when requirements have been fully worked up in conjunction with members and other stakeholders;

Play and Open Space Provision

- (a) Waterloo Park – approval of an additional £30,000 provision for filtration equipment to the paddling pool, making the total project budget £209,000;
- (b) Pointers Field – approval of an additional £20,000 towards a natural play park, making the total project budget £67,500;
- (c) NCCAAP bank – addition of a further £12,873 to the northern city centre area action plan section 106 bank, making a total project budget to date of £89,057;
- (d) Pilling Park – approval of £114,465 for improvements to play equipment and surface at Pilling Park;
- (e) Chapelfield Gardens – approval of an additional £9,977 section 106 provision to allow improvement to lighting in the gardens associated with the play project, making a total budget of £201,544.

Transportation Provision

- (a) Marriotts Way improvement – approval of an additional £4,404 to the budget for improvements to the cycle route, making a total project budget of £23,904;
- (b) Chapelfield North and Westlegate traffic circulation and public space improvements – approval of an additional £75,965 to the budget for this project, making a total section 106 budget contribution of £82,320;
- (c) Edward Street bus interchange – approval of £13,838 contribution towards the cost of the interchange;
- (d) Chapelfield North and Westlegate traffic circulation and public space improvements/Edward Street bus interchange – approval of a total contribution of £146,184 towards one or both of these schemes from funds set aside for provision and maintenance of park and ride facilities;
- (e) Northern city cycle links – approval of an additional £76,595 towards measures to encourage cycling and walking in the north of the city, making a total section 106 contribution of £172,925;
- (f) Hurricane Way bus link – budget to remain as approved at £50,000 but source of funding to be amended as detailed in the report;
- (g) Magdalen Street furniture and signage review – approval of £2,822 towards improvement of the pedestrian experience of Magdalen Street by the removal of unnecessary street furniture and signage;
- (h) Norwich river parkway/connect to – approval of £6,519 contribution to this project;
- (i) Livestock Market cycle and walking routes – approval of £143,000 for additions and improvements to cycle and walking routes in the south of the city including improvements to Lakenham Way.

7. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2011-12

Councillor Arthur, cabinet member for housing introduced the report.

RESOLVED to recommend the council to approve –

- (1) the housing revenue account budgets for 2011-12, as shown in table 1 as amended;
- (2) the minimum level of HRA balances as £2.6 million as advised by the head of finance and shown in appendix 2 to the report.

8. COUNCIL RENTS AND SERVICE CHARGES FOR 2011-12

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

RESOLVED to recommend to council to approve –

- (1) implementation of an average rent increase of 7.58%, being £4.70 per week for housing revenue account dwellings, and a corresponding average rent increase of 7.66% (£5.35) for general fund dwellings;
- (2) maintain service charges for district heating, premises management, sheltered housing and good neighbour services, at current levels as set out in paragraph 30 of the report.

9. HOUSING CAPITAL PLAN AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2011-12

Councillor Arthur, cabinet member for housing, introduced the report and referred, in particular to the window replacement programme which would be progressed should these recommendations be approved.

RESOLVED to recommend the council to approve –

- (1) the housing capital plan 2011-13;
- (2) the housing capital programme 2011-12;
- (3) the capital allowance set out for 2011-12 and the extinguishing of previous year's capital allowances as set out in appendix 1 to the report.

10. CONTRACT EXTENSION – NEWS MATERIALS RECYCLING FACILITY

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

RESOLVED to –

- (1) extend the contract for a period of 3 years to 31 March 2014 subject to the improvements proposed by NEWS (including the variation to deliver food waste and glass to NEWS for onward delivery to the reprocessing markets);
- (2) secure a contract extension beyond 2014 within the terms of the contract to maintain where possible the existing revenue stream to the council, with the final decision being delegated to the director of regeneration and development in consultation with the cabinet member for environment.

11. BLUE BADGE CAR PARK CHARGES

The head of city development presented the report.

RESOLVED to –

- (1) approve the provision of free additional time for blue badge holders as set out in option 3 of the report, to take effect from 28 March 2011;
- (2) authorise nplaw to undertake the necessary statutory procedures to introduce the amendments, by means of a variation under section 35C of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

12. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of items 13-16 below on the grounds contained in the relevant paragraphs of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

***13. TRANSPORTATION – PROPOSED ORGANISATION CHANGE (PARAGRAPH 4)**

The director of regeneration and development presented the report which had been circulated at the meeting.

The UNISON branch secretary said that, although the union's preferred option was alternative proposal 1, he supported alternative proposal 2 as it achieved the staff reductions through voluntary means.

RESOLVED to –

- (1) approve the proposed organisational structure for transportation as set out in the report;
- (2) note the responses to the employee consultation on the proposals;
- (3) approve the redundancies of the postholders as set out in annex B to the report.

***14. AWARD OF THE CONTRACT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF HOUSING COMMUNAL BIN STORES (PARAGRAPH 3)**

Councillor Arthur, cabinet member for housing introduced the report.

RESOLVED to approve the award of a contract with Lovell Partnerships Ltd to complete the construction of bin stores to priority 1 and 2 sites as set out in the report.

***15. AWARD OF A CONTRACT FOR GAS AND SOLID FUEL SERVICING AND ASSOCIATED REPAIRS (PARAGRAPH 3)**

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

RESOLVED to approve the award of a contract with Gasway Services Ltd for gas and solid fuel safety inspections, annual servicing and associated repairs for a three year term with an option to extend for a further three years dependent on performance.

***16. HCA PARTNERSHIP – SMALL HOUSING SITES UPDATE (PARAGRAPH 3)**

Councillor Arthur, cabinet member for housing, presented the report. The senior development officer (enabling) said that the planning applications committee had approved the planning applications for 45 dwellings and further applications would be considered by the committee in March.

During discussion, Councillor Bremner requested that ward councillors were involved in the pre planning discussions on proposed sites in future.

RESOLVED to approve –

- (1) the substitution of two sites to be developed for affordable housing within the Norwich City Council HCA Partnership;
- (2) the disposal of an additional site for new affordable housing;
- (3) two sites previously agreed to be disposed to be brought into partnership should planning approval not be granted on the current agreed sites to achieve 100 new affordable homes;
- (4) the disposal of a general fund as set under section 128 (paragraph 1) of the 1972 Local Government Act for less than market value.

CHAIR