



CABINET

5.30pm to 6.40pm

21 September 2011

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

Also present: Councillors Gayton, Stephenson and Lubbock

1. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Councillor Stephenson presented the following petition to the meeting.

"We the undersigned, call upon Norwich city council's cabinet to make public the future schedule of street cleaning and drain clearing and unblocking. The publication of this information will give residents appropriate expectations of work to be carried out and will allow them to move cars and other obstacles in advance".

Councillor Westmacott, cabinet member for environment and neighbourhoods, gave the following response:

"I have asked officers to investigate how information can be published telling residents when we are working in their area including letter drops and use of the website. Where possible we will publish the street cleansing schedules on the website.

Most residential areas have their streets cleaned every thirteen weeks. In some areas we have arranged "deep cleans" over and above this encouraging residents to move their cars enabling us to clean the full street, including emptying the gullies, in one visit.

Gullies are emptied once a year. It is acknowledged there are access problems caused by on street parking. Officers are investigating notifying residents of impending works or linking in with 'deep cleans' so that cars are moved in advance".

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2011.

3. CAPITAL PROGRAMME – MID YEAR REVIEW

(A revised report had been circulated prior to the meeting which contained the following amendments:

- Recommendation 2a the revised public sector housing capital programme amount had been changed to £18,633,000 for 2011/12.
- Recommendation 2c had been changed to read to increase the general fund capital programme by £566,000 to fund works to City hall (£100,000), repairs to the City wall (£100,000), provision of tennis courts, Waterloo Park (£61,000), communal bins (£275,000), and replacement “Welcome to Norwich” signs (£30,000).
- The balance of unspent funds in paragraph three had been amended from £13.08m to £13.3m.
- Paragraph 12 had a figure of £1,000,000 inserted above item (a)
- The repairs to the city hall item had been moved out of the section 106 investment section.)

Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources, introduced the revised report and explained that budget council had agreed to carry out the half year review. There were a number of initiatives which would be taken to full council next week. He explained that the increase to the general fund was to enable works to City Hall, and other initiatives. He particularly welcomed the replacement of the “Welcome to Norwich” signs which had come about because of the cost effective tender for the replacement windows. This had also enabled the provision of bin stores together with additional funds that had been realised from the sale of assets.

Councillor Stephenson said that it was good that £400,000 had been saved from the windows replacement programme but she considered that more window replacement should be done rather than the provision of bin stores. Councillor Macdonald said that this had been considered but the size of the contract would have compromised the quality and therefore the provision of bin stores was the best use of this funding at the present time.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) approve the following amendments to the housing and non-housing capital programmes:
 - (a) a virement of £400,000 in the 2011/12 housing capital from the windows budget to finance the cost of providing additional bin stores in the current financial year (Table 2 refers);
 - (b) the reallocation of £203,579 from the pool of section 106 funds available for play and open space provision detailed in table 4;
 - (c) the allocation of £22,000 from the S106 funds available for the maintenance of open space at Bowthorpe to finance the revenue cost of undertaking a review of open space requirements and maintenance obligations of existing open space at Bowthorpe (paragraph 28 refers).

- (2) recommend to council the following amendments to the housing and non-housing capital programmes:
 - (a) approve the revised public sector Housing Capital Programme (£18,633,000) for 2011/12 as detailed in Table 2.
 - (b) a commitment to allocate £600,000 in the 2012/13 housing capital programme for the completion of the bin store construction programme (paragraph 12 refers);
 - (c) increase the general fund capital programme by £566,000 to fund works to City Hall (£100,000), repairs to the city wall (£100,000), provision of tennis courts, Waterloo Park (£61,000), communal bins (£275,000), and replacement "Welcome to Norwich" signs (£30,000).

4. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – SELF FINANCING

The head of finance introduced the report and pointed out the importance of securing independent expert advice to reduce the financial risk to the council. The chair endorsed this approach and said that anything else would be less than prudent.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the contents of this report;
- (2) agree to the use of up to £100k of funds from the HRA contingency budget to procure independent expert advice on and validation of the asset management, business planning, and treasury management work being undertaken by council staff.

5. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2011/12

Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources, introduced the report.

The chair congratulated the officers for achieving the under spends.

RESOLVED to note the financial position on the revenue account for the period April 2011 to June 2011.

6. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY - PRELIMINARY DRAFT CHARGING SCHEDULE

Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for planning and transport, introduced the report.

Councillor Lubbock referred to the briefing for members on the consultation on community infrastructure levy and asked how members of the public could be fully informed and engaged in the consultation. Councillor Arthur said that at this stage developers would be more involved than community groups as the consultation was on the charging schedule and community groups were less likely to respond. They

would be more interested when the consultation of how to spend the money in the communities took place.

Councillor Lubbock referred to the government's proposals and the difficulty of district council's without parishes consulting communities on expenditure and suggested there would need to be some kind of forum to do this.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) approve the consultation documents as the basis for consultation on the Community Infrastructure Levy to satisfy Regulation 15 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010
- (2) agree to the timetable to prepare the CIL, and the approach to consultation which is focussed on the relevant 'consultation bodies' and 'persons resident of carrying out business in the area'
- (3) delegate any minor amendments and resolution of the outstanding issues such as an appropriate charge for domestic garages to the Director of Regeneration and Development (as the Council's representative on the GNDP Directors' Group) in consultation with the portfolio holder

7. PROPOSED REVISIONS TO CAR PARK FEES AND CHARGES

Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources, introduced the report and informed the meeting that this report had been presented to the Norwich Highways Agency committee on 15 September 2011 and the committee had resolved to support the increases in car park fees and charges as set out in this report.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) approve the revised fees and charges as set out in Appendix C and Appendix D of the report, to take effect from 31 October 2011
- (2) authorise head of law and governance to undertake the necessary statutory procedures to introduce the new fees and charges, by means of a Variation under Section 35C of the Road Traffic regulation Act 1984.

8. REVIEW OF THE POLICIES FOR THE DECOMMISSIONING OF HOUSING PROPERTY AND DISPOSAL OF INDIVIDUAL COUNCIL HOUSING ASSETS

Councillor Macdonald, cabinet member for housing, introduced the report, she said that the city-wide board had been consulted on these proposals and thanked the members for their comments and giving it the "tenant tick".

Councillor Lubbock asked if the city council gave financial incentives to people under-occupying their homes to move on. The senior development officer (private sector housing) confirmed that no financial incentives were given; the approach would be to advise on cost savings and efficiencies to be gained from moving to a smaller home.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) adopt the revised decommissioning policy as part of the council's policy framework
- (2) adopt the disposal of individual council housing assets policy as part of the council's policy framework.

9. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR THE INSTALLATION OF PHOTOVOLTAIC PANELS TO COUNCIL HOMES

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

Councillor Stephenson said that she had concerns that it had taken so long to get to this point as there are only seven months left to benefit from this scheme. She also expressed her disappointment that the council would not be getting income from the fitting of the photovoltaic panels and that the company was not giving as much from the feed in tariff as could have been achieved had this been agreed earlier. She considered that the process for dealing with this should be reviewed and lessons learned for the future.

Councillor Arthur said that she had originally moved this initiative and was also disappointed in the length of time it had taken.

Councillor Macdonald explained that it would have cost £40m to fit the panels and this carried a high risk which the council was not prepared to take. The provision of photovoltaic panels had been delayed because of the investigative work that had been done to achieve the best way forward. She expressed her regret that the panels would not be in place for the coming winter.

The head of housing property services said that there were serious ramifications and significant risks for the council to fit the photovoltaic panels and it had taken some time to work through the risks with nplaw. Many providers have not considered the risks and after investigation it was clear that this was not the correct way forward for Norwich city council.

RESOLVED to delegate to the director of regeneration and development, in consultation with the head of finance and portfolio holders, authority to award the contract subject to a satisfactory evaluation process.

10. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR EXTERNAL REDECORATION TO COUNCIL HOUSING PROPERTIES

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

The head of housing property services said that £400,000 would be funded from the capital underspend from 2010-11 subject to council approval of the carry forward of this underspend to the 2011-12 capital programme.

RESOLVED to delegate to the director of regeneration and development, in consultation with relevant portfolio holders, authority to award a contract for external

re-decoration works to council dwellings, subject to a satisfactory evaluation process and the successful tender prices being within the investment plan forecasts.

11. CONTRACT FOR COMMUNITY ENERGY SAVING PROGRAMME FUNDED WORKS TO COUNCIL HOMES

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

The head of housing property services explained that it was proposed that the work would be funded from the 2010-11 capital underspend subject to council approval of the carry forward of this underspend to the 2011-12 capital programme.

Councillor Arthur welcomed the report as it demonstrated the council's commitment to help to reduce costs for its tenants.

RESOLVED to approve the award of a contract to Carillion to deliver loft, cavity wall and external wall insulation and new gas boilers and controls which is part funded by the Community Energy Savings Programme.

12. ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUB-REGIONAL CO-OPERATION ON PLANNING MATTERS

Councillor Arthur, leader of the council, introduced the report and said that the Greater Norwich Development Partnership had been very successful and the "D" for development would now change to "D" for delivery.

Councillor Stephenson said she considered that the new partnership would not be significantly different to the old one other than the meetings would be held in public and considered that it could have been made very different.

Councillor Arthur explained that everyone could attend meetings and added that the city council had pressed hard for the meetings to become public to enable greater transparency.

RESOLVED to participate in the Greater Norwich Development Partnership Board with objectives and governance arrangements as set out in Appendix 1.

13. CONSTITUTION CHANGE - REVIEW OF THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources, introduced the report.

RESOLVED to recommend to council that it:

- (1) adopts the revised financial regulations as part of the constitution as attached to this report (appendix A); and;
- (2) asks the head of law and governance to amend the council's constitution accordingly.

14. REVIEW OF THE HOME OPTIONS PARTNERSHIP BOARD

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

RESOLVED to:

- (1) issue a six month notice to withdraw from the Greater Norwich Home Options partnership scheme, in accordance with the partnership agreement;
- (2) approve the development of a business case and a continuity plan to form the basis of the new Norwich home options service;
- (3) approve the creation of an interim Norwich home options service based on the current service to run from April 2012 for one year;
- (3) agree to a review the council's allocations policy, in consultation with residents, and to carry out a detailed impact assessment on any proposed changes to the service from 2013 onwards.

15. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of items 18-21 below on the grounds contained in the relevant paragraphs of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

***17 REVIEW OF THE HOME OPTIONS PARTNERSHIP BOARD (PARA 3)**

Councillor Macdonald, cabinet member for housing, introduced the report and said she regretted the effect on staff.

RESOLVED to commence the formal staff consultation exercise with staff directly affected by the proposal to dissolve the partnership.

***18. REVIEW OF THE SHELTERED HOUSING SERVICE (PARA 3)**

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

RESOLVED to:

- (1) agree to remodel the current service to bring cost in line with the reduction in supporting people funding and revised service charges and the removal of the financial subsidy from the HRA;
- (2) accept the request to change the variation of contract for the housing related support contract from Norfolk Supporting People (NSP) from April 2012;

- (3) agree to undertake a strategic review of the future provision of accommodation for the elderly in Norwich to determine the role of the city council. The outcome of the review to be reported back to cabinet;
- (4) commence formal staff consultation on the changes arising from resolutions (1) and (2);
- (5) continue to work with representatives of the sheltered housing tenants' forum on the implementation of the changes to the service and to assess and, where appropriate, mitigate the impact of the proposed changes.

***20. PERFORMANCE OF NPLAW FOR THE PERIOD 1 OCTOBER 2010 - 31 MARCH 2011 (PARA 3)**

Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources, introduced the report and explained that the shared services with nplaw had been successful in terms of performance and satisfaction. He reported that he would be looking to ensure that any surplus would be kept as a reserve.

RESOLVED:

- (1) to note the performance of nplaw during the six-month period October 2010 – March 2011
- (2) subject to any requirement by the nplaw board, to retain any working capital and to acknowledge the receipt of the surplus income for the period, as set out in paragraph 2 of the report.

***21. DISPOSAL OF LAND FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES (PARA 3)**

Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources, introduced the report and said that this was important to the city for both the economy and the creation of jobs.

The director of regeneration and development answered questions on the report.

RESOLVED:

- (1) to continue negotiations on the freehold disposal of approximately 40 acres of developable land for employment purposes based on the draft heads of terms outlined in the report; and,
- (2) subject to the resolution of various development matters (including confirmation that the proposal meets the 'best consideration' for the disposal of publicly owned land; the resolution of planning requirements and confirmation of the funding arrangements for the development) that a further report be made to cabinet to conclude the disposal of this land.

***22. COMPULSORY PURCHASE OF PRIVATE DWELLING (PARA 3)**

Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for planning and transport, introduced the report and explained that the reason for the compulsory purchase was to ensure the safety of adjoining houses as well as an improvement to the entire street

Councillor Lubbock expressed concern about the amount spent on this issue and the time it had taken to resolve.

RESOLVED:

- (1) to authorise the director of regeneration and development to engage the services of nplaw to obtain a Compulsory Purchase Order under section 226(1) (a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990;
- (2) In the event of the successful compulsory purchase, to authorise officers to dispose of the private dwelling (as detailed in paragraph 1 of the report) by means of sale or auction to achieve the market value.

CHAIR