

Cabinet  
9 October 2012

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the CABINET held on Tuesday 9 October 2012 at 7.30pm at Campus West, Welwyn Garden City.

PRESENT: Councillors J.W.Dean (Leader of the Council) (Chairman)  
A.Franey (Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member,  
Resources) (Vice-Chairman)

C.Couch (Executive Member, Environment)  
T.Kingsbury (Executive Member, Policy and Culture)  
A.L.Perkins (Executive Member, Planning and Business)  
B.Sarson (Executive Member, Governance and Public Health)  
R.Trigg (Executive Member, Housing and Community)

OFFICIALS Chief Executive (M.Saminaden)  
PRESENT: Director (Governance) (B.Baldock)  
Head of Planning (T.Harvey)  
Head of Resources (K.Ng)  
Governance Services Manager (G.R.Seal)  
Communications Officer (N.Burrows)

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71. MINUTES:

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

72. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS:

There were no declarations of interests by Members in respect of the matters decided at the meeting and therefore no dispensations granted by the Standards Committee in respect of any declared interest.

73. ITEM REQUIRING KEY DECISION:

The following item for decision in the current Forward Plan was considered:-

73.1 The Selection of a Housing Target and Distribution Strategy for the Core Strategy (Forward Plan Reference FP554):

Recommendations from the special meeting of the Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel on 27 September 2012 on the evidence for the amount of housing growth required in the Borough, a target as a housing requirement for the Core Strategy and the options for distributing growth around the Borough (Minute 23).

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Cabinet agree a housing target of 7,200 dwellings for the period 2011- 2029.
- (2) That option 4 (growth focused mainly towards Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield) be selected as the preferred strategy for the distribution of growth).
- (3) That the vision and objectives for the Emerging Core Strategy as set out in Section 3 of Housing Background Paper Part 1 to the report of the Director (Strategy and Development) to the special meeting of the Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel on 22 September 2012 be approved.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

This was the first time the Council would be responsible for setting its own housing target. It was clear that there was a need for more housing and that a target of less than 6000 dwellings would not meet the need for homes arising from natural growth in the population.

The Panel and the Cabinet would both be considering the Emerging Core Strategy at their next meetings, but the establishment of the preferred housing strategy for the location of the growth would be a key component of that strategy.

Since the Panel had met, Officers had received a request for consideration of this item to be deferred from this meeting since the full sustainability appraisal was not available to Members.

As the report to the Panel contained the sustainability matrices for the distribution options and the full sustainability appraisal would be published at the same time as the Emerging Core Strategy the Cabinet did not consider it appropriate to defer the item.

(3) Alternative Options

Regarding the options for delivering the development, the Panel focused on two alternative approaches.

The first approach (option 4 in the report of the Director (Strategy and Development) to the Panel meeting) focused development around the two towns and the second approach (option 6 in the report) focused the majority of growth around the two towns, but

allowed for some limited development around large villages excluded from the greenbelt (Cuffley, Brookmans Park and Welham Green).

The arguments in favour of one option over the other were finally balanced. Although option 6 which identified growth around the large villages, was arguably the more sustainable option, there had been substantial objection from the local community to such growth.

The Panel took residents views into account and whilst both options required a similar amount of development around the towns, it was considered that to recommend option 6 in the face of the large amount of objection would have been perverse.

The Cabinet believed that it was right that the two major towns took the majority of development because that was where most of the community lived, where economic growth was likely to occur and where there was existing infrastructure, even though much more would be needed to deliver the development.

It also enabled a critical mass of development to occur which was important if the new communities were going to be cohesive.

For these reasons option 6 was rejected in favour of option 4.

74. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES:

There were no recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committees to be considered.

75. ESTATE MANAGEMENT APPEALS PANEL:

The Panel at its meeting on 18 July 2012 had made recommendations to update and clarify the existing policies for the Welwyn Garden City Estate Management Scheme in respect of energy efficiency measures and roof alterations (Minute 6).

RESOLVED:

(1) That the approach to consultation be as follows:-

- In the Welwyn Garden City Estate Management Scheme areas which were also covered by a Conservation Area designation, to only allow energy efficiency measures and other roof alterations where they were sited on the roof slopes which were not overly dominant when viewed from any surrounding public vantage point, save for where the architectural

design of an individual property dictated otherwise.

- Within all other Welwyn Garden City Estate Management Scheme areas to adopt this approach on traditional arts and crafts style properties and on more modern housing designs to allow the sensitive siting of such installations on principal elevations on a case by case basis, provided that they did not appear out of keeping with the design of the property and did not cover the majority of the roof slope.
- In all cases to continue to weigh the environmental benefits of the proposals against the visual impact.

(2) That this approach be used in respect of other roof alterations such as dormer windows and roof lights.

#### 76. HATFIELD SWIM CENTRE ROOF - WATER INGRESS:

Report of the Director (Finance and Operations) advising the Cabinet of the evolving situation with the Hatfield Swim Centre roof, the extra work that had been discovered and the alternative ways forward from this position.

The current contract was to cover the roof with a water proof coating, providing a 25 year guarantee, but during the preparation phase of the works, the insulation beneath the existing water proof surface was found to be saturated in places and a source of water ingress could not be positively identified without removal of the insulation.

If the water had come from a leak from the top water proof layer, it might be possible to dry out the insulation using pumps and/or vents after the roof was recovered.

If the water was from vapour condensation originating from the pool hall through failure of the vapour barrier, this would not be resolved and the insulation would continue to be wet.

#### 76.1 Alternative Options

There were two options for dealing with the roof.

In option 1 the contractors (M&J Flat Roofing) had recommended that the insulation be replaced at an additional cost of £250,000 without which, they would not be able to guarantee the roof for the period agreed, but this might include carrying out work that was unnecessary.

Option 2 was for the rotted timbers to be replaced, but the insulation and vapour barrier to be left alone with the new covering being applied in line with the existing contract and attempts made to ventilate and de-water

the existing insulation. This would require an additional sum of £50,000 to be incorporated into the project budget to cover this extra cost. This work would not be guaranteed beyond the contractor's workmanship and the performance of the materials and even this would be difficult to claim under as any fault would be blamed on the reduced works. Despite this, this was the option suggested by the Officers.

For these reasons option 1 was rejected in favour of option 2.

RESOLVED:

That, following consideration of the two options in respect of extra work that had been discovered to deal with water ingress to the Hatfield Swim Centre roof, option two to replace the rotted timbers but leave alone the insulation and vapour barrier be agreed and that the Council be recommended to approve an additional sum of £50,000 being incorporated into the project budget to cover the extra cost.

77. RELEASE OF FUNDS TO IMPLEMENT NETCALL:

Netcall offered the Council the opportunity to automate some parts of its switchboard, routing calls more quickly and effectively through voice recognition.

The report of the Director (Strategy and Development) explained that a full appraisal of the product had been carried out in consultation with the supplier in preparation for implementation. An analysis of calls made to the authority had identified that the Council's set up was not currently ready for a full automation of the switchboard and because of this it was considered prudent not to pursue the efficiency savings as previously agreed.

The product did still offer an improved solution for the Council's switchboard for some Contact Centre tasks and therefore it was considered of benefit to pursue it. Once the solution had been implemented, the Council would look at further improvements to the switchboard and the Contact Centre operation to realise efficiency savings in future years.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the revised implementation of the Netcall software be pursued as detailed in the report without the realised revenue savings.
- (2) That capital funds of £67,500 be released to proceed with the implementation of Netcall on the basis that a growth of £1,800 built into the original 2012/13 budget would not be required and savings of £14,375 would not be achieved.

- (3) That the Council be recommended to approve an in-year growth of £12,575 required for 2012/13 with the revenue implications of the project for future years being dealt with as part of the 2013/14 budget setting process.

78. CONSENT TO MAKE THREE PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR SHOPS IN HATFIELD TOWN CENTRE:

Report of the Director (Finance and Operations) seeking approval to make three planning applications for shop numbers 42, 56 and 66 Hatfield Town Centre with the works principally focusing on installing new shop fronts.

RESOLVED:

That consent be given to making three planning applications for shops in Hatfield Town Centre and that a budget of £50,000 be established as part of the capital programme for Hatfield Town Centre unit refurbishment and released to be funded by transferring the capital budget for the Hatfield Town Centre regeneration legal and consultancy fees which would not result in any additional resources on the capital programme.

79. COUNCIL'S ACHIEVEMENTS LIST:

Report of the Director (Strategy and Development) summarising the Council's key achievements and service improvements from mid-June to mid-September 2012.

RESOLVED:

That the Council's achievements from mid-June to mid-September 2012 be noted.

80. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC:

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A)(2) and (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting for Agenda Item 18 on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in Section 100(A)(3) and paragraph 3 (private financial or business information) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said act (as amended).

In resolving to exclude the public in respect of exempt information, it was considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in

disclosing the information.

81. ITEMS OF AN EXEMPT NATURE REQUIRING KEY DECISION:

The following items of an exempt nature for decision in the current Forward Plan were considered:-

81.1 Selection of Registered Provider for the Re-Development of the Hyde Site, Hollybush Lane, Welwyn Garden City for an Affordable Housing Scheme and Re-provision of the Existing Community Facility :

Exempt report of the Director (Strategy and Development) on proposals for the development of the Hyde site, Welwyn Garden City.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

- (1) That appropriate legal powers be exercised to dispose of this asset to Affinity Sutton Housing Group in reliance on legislation and statutory instruments, obtaining where required any consent from the Secretary of State, for a capital receipt of £500,000 to build out the affordable rented homes and community facility as set out in the tender document.
- (2) That on satisfactory completion, the community facility and associated land for parking be transferred back to the General Fund for £1.
- (3) That delegated authority be given to the Director (Strategy and Development), in consultation with the Executive Member (Housing and Community), to agree minor changes to the scheme with the registered provider where the need arose.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

Following a report to the Cabinet meeting on 6 June 2012 (Minute 27), a recommendation to tender the site to developing registered providers was approved and a tendering exercise had been carried out.

The disposal of the site to the selected registered provider meant that the site could be re-developed for an affordable housing scheme with the re-provision of the existing community facility. The bungalows which would be included in the re-development would be targeted at older households occupying larger family homes with the aim to free up these properties for households waiting for larger accommodation.

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81.2 Award of Sale of Recovered Newspaper Contract (Forward Plan Reference FP563):

Exempt report of the Director (Finance and Operations) providing details of the procurement to select a replacement contractor with effect from 1 December 2012.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:

That a two year contract with an option to extend for a further year be awarded to UPM, commencing on 1 December 2012.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The Council was the lead authority for the sale of recovered newspaper (newspaper collected for recycling either at the kerbside or through paper banks) for the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership and had conducted the procurement on behalf of the other authorities. The procurement was undertaken following the EU Procurement Directives open process.

**(Note:** Notice was given in accordance with Regulations 5 and 11 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 that the Chairman of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee had agreed that it was impracticable to comply with the requirements to give at least 28 days notice of the consideration of this item in the private section of the meeting because it was urgent and could not reasonably be deferred.)

The reason for this was that the Council was lead authority for sale recycling contracts in Hertfordshire. It had conducted this procurement on behalf of the waste partnership and arrangements had to be in place for the replacement contractor to start on 1 December 2012.

Meeting ended 7.50pm  
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