

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Wednesday, 9 September 2020

PRESENT: Councillor Nunn (Chair); Councillor Larratt (Deputy Chair); Councillors Eldred, Hadland, Hallam, J Hill, Hibbert and King

1. APOLOGIES

None.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th August 2020 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

None.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

6. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

None.

7. FINANCE MONITORING TO 31 JULY 2020

Councillor Eldred, as the relevant Cabinet Member, submitted his report and reported a drop in the General Fund of over £.5m since August. Grants were still being applied for and a further update would be provided in due course. Current forecast overspends were high, however these were expected to fall to zero, helped by more incoming grants. Councillor Eldred noted that staff were not being cut, savings mentioned in the report were due to existing vacant posts not being filled. Councillor Eldred noted an error at paragraph 3.7.2

Councillor Stone thanked the Finance Department for their work and voiced concern around additional spending not covered by government grants and questioned whether the Council would have to revisit its budget. Councillor Stone questioned why private landlords were charging the Council so much money and further questioned the overspend in housing benefit and the cumulative impact that loss of income would have on the budget.

Councillor Eldred explained that there were no plans to revisit the budget due to monies available in the reserves. He advised that he was on a Task & Finish Group to ensure that the Mid-Term Financial Plan was in place and ready for the new unitary authority to take into consideration. He was hopeful that most fees would be covered with the Fees and Income grant. A small grant had been received in respect of temporary accommodation and further funding was anticipated in due course.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet:

1. Noted the contents of the report and noted that future reports will set out the actions being taken by Corporate Management Board (CMB) to address issues arising.

8. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE ALL MEASURES REPORT QUARTER 1 - 1ST MARCH 2020 - 30TH JUNE 2020

Councillor Larratt, as the relevant Cabinet Member, presented his report and highlighted the salient points. He noted that town centre footfall was beginning to recover, however not close to a pre-COVID-19 level. It was further noted that household recycling had fallen to 46%.

Councillor Birch addressed Cabinet in reference to HML09 and commented that households protected from eviction would once again be facing eviction and questioned whether the Council were prepared for the influx of homelessness applications. Regarding EC04, Councillor Birch questioned whether the Council had missed any waste and recycling campaigns which would normally prompt residents to recycle.

Regarding HM09, Councillor Hibbert advised that the Government had introduced further restrictions on possession proceedings, including how behind in rent tenants currently were.

Regarding EC04, Councillor Hallam commented that whilst household recycling was reduced at present, it was at a higher level than in previous years due to the new environmental services contract, increased social media presence and a successful green sack/recycling box trial in parts of Far Cotton.

Regarding PP16, Councillor King advised that the Licensing Enforcement Team were not able to undertake off-licence checks due to COVID-19 restrictions but were supporting the night-time economy providing guidance and advice to local businesses to ensure they reopened safely. She thanked the team for their work.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet:

1. Reviewed the contents of the performance report.

9. ASSET MANAGEMENT DISPOSALS

Councillor Hadland, as the relevant Cabinet Member, presented the report which sought Cabinet approval for the disposal of land at Farmclose Road, Becketts Park, Blackthorn Bride Court and adjacent to 11a Eastfield Road.

Councillor Birch commented that she was pleased the Pavilion at Becketts Park would remain in community use and asked what the Council's policy was on the disposal of retail units.

Councillor Hadland advised that regarding neighbourhood shops that provided a mainly local service, there was generally a desire from the tenant to invest and improve the shop so the Council would aim to dispose of them to tenants. Other shops, such as those in the town centre, were held as income producers and would be retained in the portfolio.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet:

- 2.1 Delegated authority to the Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager, in consultation with the Borough Secretary, Chief Finance Officer and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise to agree the terms and conditions and complete the

transfers of the following property and land:-

2.1.1 Farmclose Road, Land adjacent to Cemetery

- That the transfer is to Wootton Parish Council for community use
- A restrictive covenant is placed on the land to ensure that it continues to be used as intended for community use.
- The site continues to be maintained by the Council (currently under a landscape maintenance contract June 2028) and this contract for grass cutting and associated services will continue once the site has transferred subject to the ongoing collection of special expenses for these services.
- The Parish Councils will take on all other responsibilities for the land and centres at completion of the community asset transfer.
- The Council to retain a right of pre-emption should the Parish Council no longer require the land or centres for permitted use.
- The market valuation will consider the financial benefit of the grass cutting contract, the management and maintenance costs, the restrictive covenant, and where relevant, the council tax charges collected on behalf of the Parishes for services provided in the Parish Council areas. A net market value will be determined, and the transfer price will be agreed considering any value for money savings that will be achieved by the transfer.
- Each party will bear their own professional fees including legal and estates costs.
- The community assets are held on the council asset register with a nominal capital value, reflecting the existing use. To ensure the transfers achieve value for money a market valuation will be completed and Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager, in consultation with the Borough Secretary, Chief Finance Officer.

2.1.2 Becketts Park Pavilion

- To market the site as a Community Asset Transfer inviting expressions of interest from Third Party Sector organisations as identified in paragraph 3.3.7 of the report.
- A qualifying process will then follow, and a panel of Officers and Members will review the applications and report back to Cabinet with a recommendation identifying the preferred organisation and include the outline terms of the transfer and adherence to the requirement to achieve value for money.

2.1.3 Land at Blackthorn Bridge Court

- To sell the land by private treaty to the Blackthorn pharmacy operator at market value as determined by a RICS registered valuer.

2.1.4 Land abutting 11a Eastfield Road

- To sell the land by private treaty to the owner of 11a Eastfield Road at market value as determined by a RICS registered valuer.

2.1.5 The transfer of all the above will be subject to advertisement to adhere to statutory requirements to allow members of the public opportunity to comment. These comments will be reviewed by the Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager, in consultation with the Borough Secretary, and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise and should there be no objections to the proposed disposal received

the matter will complete. If there are any objections received to the proposed disposal then in accordance with statutory procedure the matter will be brought back to Cabinet for consideration.

10. CONSULTATION ON A PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER FOR THE ALLEYWAY CONNECTING DUNSTER STREET AND ST. MICHAEL'S ROAD

Councillor King, as the relevant Cabinet Member, presented the report and highlighted the salient points. She advised that the outline reasons for the PSPO were largely identical to those in a previously approved PSPO for Marble Arch, which had been very successful.

Councillor Stone commented that problems associated with the area were causing much distress to residents. She advised that a new community group had set up in the area and were engaging with neighbours, ward councillors and the Customers and Communities Department; she stated that it was pleasing to see council officers, councillors and community groups working together towards the same goal.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet:

- 2.1 Delegated authority to the Chief Executive to undertake a 12-week statutory public consultation in the terms set out in Appendix 3 on the proposal to make a PSPO that allows gating the alleyway that links Dunster Street and St Michael's Road, as shown on the map at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Agreed to receive a further report, following completion of the statutory public consultation, which considers any representations received and, if appropriate, seek approval of a PSPO as per para. 2.1 of the report.

11. 24 GUILDHALL RD (GUILDHALL RD BLOCK) CULTURAL QUARTER ENHANCEMENT WORKS

Councillor Hadland, as the relevant Cabinet Member, presented the report which sought Cabinet approval for works to be undertaken at 24 Guildhall Road and to refurbish the building to allow for the relocation of NN Contemporary Works.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approved the completed construction works including extensive asbestos removal/disposal, repairs to the central heating and Part M (access and use) repairs required since the purchase of the building in accordance with Council procurement guidelines at a value of £1.17m
- 2.2 Approved the match funding of £385,000, with £320,000 to be taken from existing in year budgets and the remaining requested as new capital, for further enhancement works to 24 Guildhall Road in conjunction with the grant funding for £1.15m that has been awarded via the Getting Building Fund (GBF) for this purpose.
- 2.3 Delegated authority to the Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager, in consultation with the Borough Secretary, Chief Finance Officer and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise to implement the tendered roof, window and façade repairs.

- 2.4 Approved a legal budget in connection with the refurbishment and use of 24 Guildhall Road for £10,000 for the provision of external professional legal advice as may be required in connection with this project.
- 2.5 Delegated authority to the Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager, in consultation with the Borough Secretary, Chief Finance Officer and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise to prepare for a formal lease and partnership agreement between the Council and NN Contemporary which will include the establishment of the governance and project arrangements on the refurbishment project and the working relationship beyond completion.
- 2.6 Agreed the project to refurbish 24 Guildhall Rd is for Regeneration purposes and the relocation of NN Contemporary Arts.

The meeting concluded at 6:40 pm