

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 11 July 2018

Time: 2.00pm

Place: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: Sharon Taylor OBE CC (Chair), Joan Lloyd (Vice-Chair), Rob Broom, John Gardner (until 2.55pm), Richard Henry, Jackie Hollywell (from 3.35pm), Ralph Raynor and Jeannette Thomas.

Start / End Time: Start Time: 2.00pm
End Time: 3.50pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No apologies for absence were received

There were no declarations of interest.

The Leader congratulated the England Football Team, which included Stevenage-born Ashley Young, on their success in the World Cup and wished them all the best for their semi-final match against Croatia.

2 MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 4 APRIL 2018

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 4 April 2018 are approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

3 MINUTES OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES

The Leader expressed her thanks to all officers involved in the delivery of this year's Cycling Festival, which had attracted much community interest and participation.

The Leader reminded Members that the work on scrutiny would be highlighted further through the regular reports by the Scrutiny Chairs to the Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that Minutes of the following meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committee are noted –

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 19 March 2018

Environment & Economy Select Committee – 21 March 2018

Community Select Committee – 27 March 2018

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 5 April 2018

Community Select Committee – 5 June 2018

4 THE FUTURE OF FAIRLANDS VALLEY FARMHOUSE

The Committee considered a report on the community bid process for the Fairlands Valley Farmhouse (FVF).

The Portfolio Holder for Resources outlined the two community bids received, and commented that, having weighed up the pros and cons, it had been concluded that neither bid provided a robust financial strategy, and both were uncertain regarding the outcome of securing the necessary funding.

The Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) explained that, due to the financial and insurance risks associated with the deteriorating condition of FVF, it had been concluded that it would be beneficial for the Council to dispose of the asset by freehold sale.

The Executive supported an additional recommendation from the Leader that the community groups who had submitted bids to take on the refurbishment and future maintenance of FVF be thanked for their interest in the process, and that they be offered support by the Council to assist them with their aspirations to find alternative accommodation for their community activities.

It was **RESOLVED** -

1. That neither of the community bids are accepted for securing the future of Fairlands Valley Farmhouse on the basis of the reasons stated in section 4 of the report.
2. That the Strategic Director (Tom Pike) be authorised to progress the negotiations for the freehold sale of Fairlands Valley Farmhouse to a third party commercial interest which had commenced prior to the Asset of Community Value process.
3. That the Strategic Director (Tom Pike) be authorised to finalise the terms of the sale of the freehold of FVF to that third party commercial interest following consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Resources; Communities, Community Safety & Equalities and for Neighbourhoods & Co-operative Working
4. That should the negotiations referred to in 2. above fail to result in a sale, the Strategic Director (Tom Pike) be authorised to re-market Fairlands Valley Farmhouse.
5. That that the community groups who had submitted bids to take on the refurbishment and future maintenance of FVF be thanked for their interest in the process, and that they be offered support by the Council to assist them in their aspirations to find alternative accommodation for their community activities.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report and 5. To support the individual community groups.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

5 4TH QUARTER MONITORING REVENUE REPORT - GENERAL FUND AND HRA 2017/18

The Executive considered a report that provided an update on the 2017-2018

outturn positions for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account together with recommendations to revisions to 2018-19 revenue budgets.

It was pointed out that the arrow in the chart at paragraph 4.2 of the report next to “overspend or less” should read “underspend or more”.

The Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) reminded the Executive that, notwithstanding the removal of 2018/19 General Fund base budget net savings totalling £116,970, the Council still needed to identify £3.2million in revenue savings over the next three years.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the 2017/18 actual net expenditure on the General Fund of £10,138,229 is noted, subject to the 2017/18 audit of the Statement of Accounts.
2. That new carry forward requests totalling £338,100 are approved for the General Fund
3. That the removal of 2018/19 General Fund base budget net savings totalling £116,970 , which will contribute towards the Council’s Financial Security objectives for 2018/19 is approved.
4. That the 2017/18 actual in year surplus on the HRA of £4,365,093 is noted, subject to the 2017/18 audit of the Statement of Accounts.
5. That new carry forward requests totalling £82,270 are approved for the HRA.
6. That the removal of 2018/19 HRA budget net savings of £7,000 which will contribute towards the Council’s Financial Security objectives for 2018/19 is approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

6 4TH QUARTER MONITORING CAPITAL REPORT - GENERAL FUND AND HRA 2017/18

The Executive considered a report that provided an update on the 2017-2018 capital programme together with recommendations relating thereto.

The Leader commented on the frustrating Government process/system relating to the ability of local authorities to use capital receipts to finance new housing developments.

The Assistant Director (Finance & Estates) added that there was a risk that the Council may still be required to return £112,000 of housing related capital receipts to the Government relating to Quarter 4.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the 2017/18 General Fund capital expenditure outturn of £9,013,305 is noted, (subject to the completion of the 2017/18 external audit of accounts).
2. That the 2017/18 HRA capital expenditure outturn of £17,022,272 is noted (subject to the completion of the 2017/18 external audit of accounts).
3. That the funding applied to the 2017/18 General Fund capital programme is approved as summarised in paragraph 4.2.4. of the report
4. That the funding applied to the 2017/18 HRA capital programme is approved as summarised in paragraph 4.5.1. of the report.
5. That the 2018/19 General Fund capital programme net changes of £701,875 reduction and slippage from 2017/18 of £11,726,975 (£10.6M on two schemes as detailed in para 4.1.1) are approved as summarised in paragraph 4.3.4 and as detailed in Appendix A to the report.
6. That the 2018/19 HRA capital programme net changes of £568,020 slippage from 2017/18 and £8,694,850 re-profiled into 2019/20 are approved as summarised in paragraph 4.6.1 and detailed in Appendix B to the report.
7. That the appropriation of 29 Shephall Way (valued at £247,500) in 2017/18 and Symonds Green Annexe (valued at £444,550) in 2018/19 from General Fund to Housing Revenue Account as detailed in Para 4.7.3 of the report be approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

7 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Executive considered a report that provided an update on progress for producing the revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and that sought approval to undertake public consultation on the draft.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment & Regeneration advised that the revised SCI was similar to the previous version, but had been expanded to include sections on both Neighbourhood Planning and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

In view of the fact that the public consultation period for the draft SCI would largely take place during the school holidays, the Executive supported a request from the Leader that this period be extended to the second week of September 2018.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the draft Statement of Community Involvement (Appendix 1 of the report) is approved for public consultation for a period of eight weeks, commencing Wednesday 18 July 2018.

2. That delegated powers are granted to the Assistant Director: Planning & Regulation, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Regeneration, to make such amendments as considered necessary in the final preparation of the Statement of Community Involvement and to make necessary preparations for the public consultation.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

8 ADOPTION OF GENERAL FUND ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The Executive considered a report that sought adoption of the revised new General Fund Asset Management Strategy and Action Plan.

In response to queries raised at the meeting, the Property Development Manager undertook to:

- Provide Members with a list of the Miscellaneous commercial properties referred to in Appendix B to the report.
- Check whether or not the Fairlands Valley Sailing Centre included the Boat House building (cycle hub).
- Include RAG Ratings in the Register of Assets, to assist Members to identify whether assets were most suited for disposal for community use.
- Amend the list to provide consistency between the entries for the Business Technology Centre and Chells Enterprise Village, with an additional column showing how many units were located on each site.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the changes to the Asset Management Strategy and Action Plan, which now take into account co-operative council principles are noted .
2. That the revised Asset Management Strategy at Appendix A is adopted.
3. That the revised Asset Management Action Plan, at Appendix B is adopted.
4. That approval of a package of community development support is delegated to the Strategic Director (Matthew Partridge) following consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holders for Resources and for Neighbourhoods & Co-operative Working.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

9 2017/18 ANNUAL REPORT AND PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

The Executive considered a report concerning the Council's draft Annual Report 2017-2018 and arrangements for its final publication, together with details of the Council's performance across a number of key themes and priorities during 2017-2018.

The Leader requested the many successes identified should form the basis of a Social Media campaign informing the community of the Council's achievements and the areas of focus for the coming year.

The Chief Executive gave a short presentation in respect of the Council's Performance Measures in 2017/18 and areas for improvement in 2018/19.

The Executive noted that the Performance for the re-letting of major works voids and sheltered voids had improved during the early part of 2018/19 and officers would strive to ensure that this trend continued. Members asked that further consideration be given to the performance monitoring of sheltered voids to take account of when properties were actually ready to be re-let.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the progress on the delivery of the Future Town Future Council programme is noted together with the overall performance and achievements of the Council during 2017/18.
2. That the closure of the Partner of Choice Programme as outlined in paragraph 3.57 of the report is approved.
3. That the content of the Council's draft Annual Report 2017/18 as shown at Appendix A of the report, is agreed.
4. That delegated authority is given to the Assistant Director (Corporate Services and Transformation) following consultation with the Leader to approve any final changes to the Annual Report prior to its publication.
5. That the suite of 2018/19 performance measures at Appendix C is noted.
6. That the improvement plans and associated timeframe for delivery identified to enable effective application of the Homelessness Reduction Act and improve service performance relating to homelessness preventions are endorsed (paragraphs 3.87 to 3.89 of the report refer).
7. That initial improvement activity in the Customer Service Centre is noted and future plans to improve performance during 2018/19 are endorsed (outlined in paragraphs 3.120 to 3.127 of the report refer).
8. That the initial steps being carried out during quarter one 2018/19 to improve management of sickness absence across the Council are endorsed (outlined in paragraphs 3.145 to 3.150 of the report).

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

10 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

11 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That, under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 to 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by SI 2006 No. 88.

2. That having considered the reasons for the following items being in Part II, it be determined that maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

12 PROPERTY INVESTMENT STRATEGY - UPDATE

The Executive considered a Part II report on the progress of the new Property Investment Strategy that was adopted in May 2017.

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations in the report are approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

13 AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR THE REFURBISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF LIFTS (2018-2023)

The Executive considered a Part II report that sought approval to award the refurbishment and maintenance of lifts contract.

The revised recommendations tabled at the meeting were supported.

It was **RESOLVED** that the revised recommendations tabled at the meeting be approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

14 AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR INSURANCE SERVICES 2018/19

The Executive considered a Part II report that provides details of the procurement process for the Council's insurance contracts.

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations in the report are approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

15 URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR