

# NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET

Wednesday, 14 March 2018

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

### 1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

### 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2018 were agreed and signed by the Leader.

### 3. INTENTION TO HOLD PART OF THE MEETING IN PRIVATE IF NECESSARY

There were no items to be considered in private.

### 4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

### 5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor King declared a personal and pecuniary interest in respect of item 8 as a trustee of Northampton Leisure Trust and her daughters being paid employees of Unity Leisure and stated that she would leave the room whilst the item was being discussed.

### 6. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

None.

### 7. MUSEUM EXPANSION PROJECT

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

### 8. GRANT OF PROPERTY LEASES, AND FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS WITH UNITY LEISURE.

At this juncture Councillor King left the room, having declared an interest.

Councillor Birch addressed Cabinet and questioned whether a full guarantee would be in place should the Council lend money to Unity Leisure, and asked how much money the Council was set to make.

Councillor Hadland, as the relevant Cabinet Member, elaborated upon the report and commented that this was an excellent way for the leisure centres to grow and prosper, noting that they were in need of improvements and were in a good position to carry them out. He added that the Council did not expect to profit from the leases.

### RESOLVED:

- 2.1 Three new Full Repairing and Insuring leases be granted under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 to Unity Leisure for the three leisure centres owned by

Northampton Borough Council (Lings Forum, Danes Camp, Mounts Baths), for a period of 30 years. The combined rent will be £51,000 per year plus any addition for building insurances and VAT where applicable, and will be in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in this report, which reflects a discount from market rent of £22,500 per annum.

- 2.2 The Head of Regeneration, Economic Development & Assets be authorised to complete the above leases in consultation with the Borough Secretary & Monitoring Officer and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning.
- 2.3 Either the lending of up to £3m to Unity Leisure or acts as guarantor for commercial lending in a similar amount, for the purpose of carrying out capital improvement works on the aforementioned three Leisure Centres.
- 2.4 The Operating Agreement between the Council and Unity Leisure be amended to remove the Council's option to close any one or more of the leisure centres on providing not less than six months' notice.
- 2.5 The Operating Agreement between the Council and Unity Leisure be amended to remove any requirement for a management fee to be paid by the Council to Unity Leisure, this amendment to apply retrospectively back to 2014/15.
- 2.6 The Council's Capital Programme be increased by the amount of the agreed loans in any given year, to be funded entirely by repayments from Unity Leisure.
- 2.7 Authority be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer acting in consultation with the Borough Secretary & Monitoring Officer and the Cabinet Member for Finance to approve the terms of the necessary loan or guarantee agreements following completion of necessary due diligence checks, ensuring that the Council is not exposed to unacceptable financial loss or liability.
- 2.8 The Chief Finance Officer be instructed to amend the appropriate revenue budgets to reflect the agreed level of rental income and savings on repairs and maintenance and insurance.
- 2.9 Authority be delegated to the Borough Secretary & Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and the Head of Regeneration, Economic Development & Assets the power to complete all the relevant documentation, including the loan agreements, leases and Guarantee, as relevant.

## **9. GREAT BILLING AND GREAT HOUGHTON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL & MANAGEMENT PLANS.**

Councillor King re-joined the meeting.

Councillor Hadland, as the relevant Cabinet Member, presented his report and thanked officers for their hard work. He stated that the consultation regarding Article 4 Direction in the area showed there was evidence to support the measure and that further consultation would be arranged with residents and parish councils. He noted that the support from parish councils regarding the Conservation Area had been unanimous.

### **RESOLVED:**

- 2.1 That Cabinet approved the adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisal and

Management Plans for Great Billing and Great Houghton Areas.

- 2.2 That Cabinet agreed an alteration to the boundary of Great Billing Conservation Area to remove conservation area designation from Cumbrae Drive, Great Billing.
- 2.3 That Cabinet approved further consultation on the making of an Article 4 Direction in respect of Great Billing and Great Houghton Conservation Areas.

## **10. NORTHAMPTON LOCAL PLAN PART 2 - RESPONSES TO SITES CONSULTATION**

Coduncillor McCutcheon commented that he was looking forward to what would be produced in the Local Plan in respect of HIMOs. He stated that local plans required policies to evolve and bring about better communities and hoped that the Council would be able to take positive steps moving forwards.

Councillor Hadland, as the relevant Cabinet Member, elaborated upon the report and explained that over 500 comments from 66 different parties had been received. He stated that the Council would potentially have more flexibility in terms of providing sites to meet figures from the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. He added that policy was slowing down the building of new homes, both locally and nationally. Councillor Hadland thanked officers for their objective work.

Councillor Hibbert commented on the urgency to build more houses and stated his encouragement on the report suggesting an increase in what could be built in the next 5 years.

Councillor Larratt commented that he was encouraged by Highways England's comments regarding the M1 and A45, noting existing air quality issues in some sites and stated that the development and management of the A45 should be looked at closely moving forwards.

### **RESOLVED:**

- 2.1 That the comments received on the Local Plan Part 2 Sites Consultation and the officer responses be noted and used to inform production of the Local Plan Part 2.

## **11. FINANCE MONITORING - PERIOD 10 - 2017/18**

Councillor Stone commented that she could not find details of an underspend in relation to the environmental contract within the report and asked for clarification, and questioned whether the contract had been split between 2 providers. She enquired as to whether the Council was doing all it could to raise awareness of the disabled facilities grant and whether it could be spent elsewhere if not used for its original purpose. Councillor Stone questioned whether, in light of the situation with Northamptonshire County Council, capital receipts were being used for transformation. She noted that under £2.4m of an expected £5m for the capital programme had been acquired so far and questioned when the remaining monies would be received.

Councillor Hallam advised that the underspend represented approximately £550,000 to date. He further advised that Veolia would be using a subcontractor for grounds maintenance and that the subcontractor had already begun meeting with community groups.

Councillor Eldred, as the relevant Cabinet Member, confirmed that the disabled facilities grant would not be spent elsewhere and stated that the Council would look at different ways of advertising it. He further confirmed that capital receipts would be spent on housing

development.

Councillor Russell congratulated the Head of Housing and Wellbeing for bringing statistics down, noting the waiting time for a non-emergency appointment with a Homeless Officer being reduced from 4 weeks to 3 days. She noted the 66 outstanding applications and commented that it was a blight on society that there were any people without a home. She enquired as to the reasons for homelessness and questioned what support was offered to individuals and families.

Councillor Eldred stated that a breakdown of the underspend would be given at the end of the financial year and that the Council continued to look at ways to cut back without affecting services.

Councillor Hibbert commented that homelessness was challenging both nationally and locally and noted the work by officers in bringing the statistics down. He noted that the Housing Support team actively worked with individuals and families on the applications list to help them into suitable accommodation.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- 2.1 That the contents of the report be noted.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approved the transfer of the net General Fund underspend to the MTFP Cashflow reserve to meet future financial pressures.

#### **12. PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 3 2017 - 1ST OCTOBER TO 31 DECEMBER 2017**

Councillor Stone stated that she had noticed contradictions between the Performance and Finance Monitoring reports in respect of licensing fees and asked for clarification. She noted that a number of Hackney drivers were not meeting set standards and asked what could be done to encourage better results. In respect of new start-ups, Councillor Stone suggested that a graph may provide more information relating to their sustainability and how many were still operating. She further suggested a members' briefing for major projects and expressed her disappointment that Castle House had not appeared as a major development yet.

The Leader explained that talks were ongoing with Northamptonshire County Council regarding Castle House.

Councillor Birch commented on the turnover of neighbourhood wardens and stated that the recent disruptions had had an effect of how residents interacted with them. She questioned whether wardens' workloads had increased or if they were under any additional pressure. She further noted the lack of visibility of police officers in the town and that crime had increased over the winter period, both had a large impact on residents.

Councillor Larratt, as the relevant Cabinet Member, commented that whilst missed bins rose during December, the number of corrected missed bins also increased. He stated that whilst the number of households in temporary accommodation was a concern, the outcome showed that the work done to address the situation was having a significantly positive effect. Regarding crime, the Deputy Leader explained that whilst the Council had some input, a multi-service approach was needed. Regarding environmental service and warden requests, the Deputy Leader stated that recruitment had continued to fill gaps in service and he looked forward to the performance indicator improving over the next quarter. In respect of off-licence compliance, he explained that the Enforcement team were finding those who didn't

comply and that the performance indicator showed that the right people were being targeted. He noted the work done in respect of HIMO's being made compliant.

Councillor King commented that theft of tools and aggravated burglary had increased over the quarter and added that Neighbourhood Watch offered direct reports via Twitter and Facebook. Regarding Hackney vehicles, she stated that offending drivers were served notice and required to have defects corrected within a certain time or risk having their vehicles taken off the road.

Councillor Hallam commented that the number of posts for environmental wardens remained the same but that there had been several issues outside of the Council's control, including a case of misconduct and the death of a warden. He applauded the work carried out by wardens and stated that they were filling the gap in service not received by Enterprise. He further stated that enforcement officers had taken enforcement duties from the wardens, leaving them to carry out more community work.

Councillor Hadland explained that Castle House was not on the major projects update as it was not owned by the Council and no partnership arrangement with the owner was in place.

Councillor Hibbert stated that HIMO income was below target and licences granted were above target but that any anomaly would be resolved when the Enforcement team expanded and started their investigations.

**RESOLVED:**

2.1 That the contents of the performance report and appendix 1 of the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 6.53pm