

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Wednesday, 27 May 2020

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

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

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

The Leader announced that Item 9 Cultural Quarter Funding had been made exempt under schedule 12A, Part 1, (3) of the Local Government Act 1972, as the report contained commercially sensitive information.

3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor King declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item 7 – Capital Investment – Plant & Machinery.

Councillor Eldred declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item 9 – Cultural Quarter Funding.

5. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were none.

6. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON FINANCIAL BUDGET

At the Leader's invitation, Councillor Eldred introduced the report and explained it was too early to fully comprehend the financial implications of the Covid-19 Pandemic, however, the report aimed to highlight the cost areas and address the financial impact thus far. He stated that appendix 1 highlighted the service areas with additional cost pressures as a result of the pandemic. The Council had received some government grant funding, as outlined in appendix 2, to support services and administer Government grants.

Councillor Stone addressed Cabinet and thanked officers for their hard work during the pandemic. She appreciated that an update had been brought to Cabinet as the pandemic was a difficult situation to be faced with, and a shock to everyone. She hoped that there would be no cut backs to frontline services as the most vulnerable would be affected at this time of crisis. She suggested that a finance scrutiny working group be set up to monitor the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's finances.

The Cabinet Members all expressed their gratitude and thanks to officers for their hard work across the service areas. Councillor Hallam commended the refuse service which had performed better than similar councils; Councillor Eldred thanked officers for their great efforts and reducing business rates putting money back into the local economy; and Councillor Hibbert thanked officers and expressed the need to continue lobbying the Government in regards to homelessness.

The Leader echoed the messages of the Cabinet Members and thanked Councillor Stone

for her comments. He shared that although scrutiny were welcome to set up a working group, audit would be looking into the impact of Covid-19 and regular updates would be brought forward to Cabinet as costs emerged. He thanked IT support for their assistance with ensuring that equipment was available to Councillors and officers, and supporting with any issues.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- a) Noted the provisional financial impacts for the General Fund for the financial year 2020-21 as set out at appendix 1 and appendix 2.
- b) Noted the risks to the budgets for 2020-21 which may impact on the levels of reserves maintained and/or drive a need to seek additional in year savings measures.
- c) Approved option 3.3.1c, to reduce the financial risk to the Council and the future West Northants Council.

7. CAPITAL INVESTMENT - PLANT & MACHINERY

Councillor King left the meeting at this juncture.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Enterprise, Councillor Hadland introduced the report which recommended the procurement of an energy professional to identify the works required on the fixed plant and machinery at Upper Mounts Baths, Danes Camp Leisure Centre and Lings Forum, to ensure they remained operational and environmentally and financially efficient. He explained that the report underlined the value for money as some of the machinery had not been updated since the 1930s or 1980s, and if updated would be more efficient, reducing the carbon footprint for Northampton, and serve the leisure centres and local communities for many years to come.

Councillor Stone addressed Cabinet and stated she was in favour of the report as the Trilogy Trust does an excellent job in providing leisure facilities for Northampton. She questioned whether there were any grants available for us to apply for to help with the cost of the investment. She was glad to see that the investment was being made to keep the leisure facilities running, as it provided services for local communities and had helped with projects to encourage those who were disadvantaged to get access to leisure and fitness facilities.

Councillor Eldred thanked Ian Redfern the managing director of Northampton Leisure Trust for his 15 years of service, and dedication to the Borough and providing fantastic facilities over the years.

The Leader also passed on his thanks and recognition to Ian Redfern, and wished him all the best in his retirement.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet agreed to:

- a) The procurement of an energy professional to support the Council to undertake a peer review of the work undertaken by the tenants to ensure we focus on work that will produce the most efficiency savings. The cost of this will be funded through the responsive repairs budget.
- b) A capital budget of £1.8 million for the urgent work to be completed. The cost of this work is to be funded partly by capital receipts from internal borrowing or planned

capital receipts.

- c) Subject to 2.1.2 above, a further report from the project team to Cabinet in July 2020 confirming the scope, priorities and cost of the urgent works including the programme of work.

8. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Chair moved that the public and Press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that there was likely to be disclosure to them of such categories of exempt information as defined by Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 as listed against such items of business by reference to the appropriate paragraph of Schedule 12A to such Act.

The Motion was Carried.

9. CULTURAL QUARTER FUNDING

Councillor Eldred left the meeting at this juncture.

Councillor King re-joined the meeting.

This item was held in private session.

Cabinet agreed to the recommendations as set out in the report.

The meeting concluded at 18:49