

Crawley Borough Council



Minutes of Cabinet

Wednesday 12 November at 7.30pm

Present:

Councillor	P K Lamb	(Chair of Cabinet and Leader of the Council)
	S J Joyce	(Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing)
	C C Lloyd	(Cabinet Member for Environmental Services)
	C J Mullins	(Cabinet Member for Leisure and Cultural Services)
	D J Shreeves	(Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate Services)
	P Smith	(Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Services)

Also in Attendance:

Councillors D Crow and W Ward

Officers Present:

Ann Maria Brown	Head of Legal & Democratic Services
Peter Browning	Director of Transformation & Housing
David Covill	Director of Development & Resources
Sally English	Democratic Services Officer
Chris Harris	Head of Community Services
Lee Harris	Chief Executive
Phil Rogers	Director of Community & Partnership Services

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor C Oxlade

37. Members' Disclosure of Interests

There were no disclosures of interest.

38. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 8 October 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

39. Public Question Time

Public question time took place and Mr Chris Zablocki asked a question regarding the Council's Housing Allocation Policy. As the new policy was due to go live on 3 December, he asked whether a Crawley resident who reached the requisite 5 years' residency three days later on 6 December would have to begin their residency period afresh before being eligible to join the housing register. The Cabinet Member for Housing advised that 3 December was the date the changes to the Housing Allocation Policy came into force, not that residency was taken from that date. The resident in question would come off the register for 3 days until 6 December when the 5 year residency level had been reached. He added that 5 years' residency was what was required to join the register, regardless of where that 5 year date fell.

40. Further Notice of Intention to Conduct Business in Private and Notifications of any Representations

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services reported that no representations had been received in respect of agenda item 15 Strategic Approach to Affordable Housing Delivery 2015-2025.

41. Matters Referred to the Cabinet

It was confirmed that no matters had been referred to the Cabinet for further consideration.

42. Quarterly Monitoring 2014-2015 Quarter 2 (Leader's Portfolio)

The Cabinet considered report [FIN/347](#) of the Deputy Head of Finance which set out a summary of the Council's actual revenue and capital spending for the quarter to September 2014, together with the main variations from the approved spending levels and impact on future budgets.

Councillor D Crow requested clarification on item 5.1 of report FIN/347 in which interest accrued from the North East Sector investment was listed as £172k. He queried why this was listed when £6.5m capital receipt from this investment would be paid to CBC at the end of the project, yet £4.4m had already been recognised as a capital receipt and was generating interest. He was advised by the Director of Transformation & Housing that the capital receipt would be made payable when the scheme became 'cash positive', which was estimated to be during phase 3 of the 4 phase scheme, and the Director of Development & Resources advised that CBC was required to account for this capital receipt at the date of the agreement, but recognising that £6.5m due in 10 years is only worth £4.4m today. Each year, interest will be recognised on this, so that after 10 years the full £6.5m has been recognised in the Council's accounts. The Director of Development & Resources confirmed that

CBC's external auditors were happy with this, and that the process had been shared with other local authorities as a good accounting practice.

The Cabinet Member for Planning & Economic Services advised the Cabinet that although item 8.11 in the report stated £440k had been removed from the capital programme, this had been agreed as the currently confidential proposals for the remaining Ifield West project spending would come from alternative budgets. However, if this fell through, the capital funds would need to be reinstated.

RESOLVED

- 1). That the projected outturn as at Quarter 2 for 2014/2015 as summarised in this report be noted.

Reason for Decision

To report to Members on the projected outturn for the year compared to the approved budget.

43. Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2014-2015 (Leader's Portfolio)

The Cabinet considered report [FIN/346](#) of the Deputy Head of Finance, which provided an update on the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2014-2015. .

The matter had been considered at the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission on 10 November 2014 and the Commission noted the report to the Cabinet. The Commission's main comments had been:

- The pros and cons of how the capital programme is progressing.
- The importance of balancing spending and returns on investment.
- The significance of finding different ways to raise revenue, including additional income from further property acquisitions and investments.
- An appreciation of the quality of the report together with its depth and range.

The Chair of the Commission added that given the complexity of some of the financial information in the report, the Commission would appreciate the inclusion of an executive summary of the information in future reports. He added that members of the Commission would in January be undertaking finance training.

The Commission noted the report to the Cabinet.

RESOLVED

That the report and the treasury activity for the first two quarters of 2014/2015 be noted.

Reason for Decision

The Council's financial regulations, in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management, require a Treasury Management Mid Year Review to be approved. The report complied with that requirement.

44. The Future of Crawley's Adventure Playgrounds (Leisure & Cultural Services Portfolio)

The Cabinet considered report [DC&PS/004](#) of the Head of Community Services and Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Cultural Services which provided the findings from an extensive public consultation exercise, as well as engineers' surveys of the on-site play equipment. It also made recommendations for the future provision and investment in the town's four adventure playgrounds.

The matter had been considered at the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission on 10 November 2014 and discussion areas included:

- Support for proposed changes to adventure playgrounds as a result of the consultation exercise.
- Encouragement expressed for the bid to replace outdoor play equipment at adventure playgrounds, where equipment has been removed or is coming to the end of its life and acknowledging the emphasis on safety while retaining the sense of adventure.
- Recognition that further changes will be investigated to make sites more attractive to potential users with particular support for revised opening hours, usage, increased marketing and publicity.
- Proposal for the inclusion of the Crawley Young Person's Council, together with children and young people to be involved in the consultation and design/built works going forward.
- The need to find a balance between site availability and income, whilst acknowledging the social value the service provides.
- The possibility for sponsorship from companies or opportunity to work with businesses who wish to enhance their corporate social responsibility and improve the local community.
- Proposal for a future report in six months' time (as opposed to the twelve months proposed) detailing further recommendations for the future development of the Council's adventure playgrounds.

The Commission endorsed the recommendations to the Cabinet.

The Shadow Member for Leisure & Cultural Services expressed support for the recommendations and for the current administration's work in this regard.

The Cabinet thanked the Commission for its comments, and agreed to its proposal for a report in six months' time, as opposed to the original twelve months, as this would capture data on springtime crowds using the playgrounds. The Cabinet Member for Leisure & Cultural Services added that although opening the playgrounds on Saturdays had not been very successful in the past, he would be happy to reconsider this if there was sufficient external demand, noting that attendance figures would need to justify staff working on Saturdays. The proposed increased promotion of the playgrounds and further changes that were to be investigated would help make the site more attractive to potential users.

RESOLVED

1. That the findings from public consultation be noted, and authority be delegated to the Head of Community Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Cultural Services, to implement improvements to the Council's adventure playgrounds, as set out in Section 5.1.1 of the report.
2. That the actions that have been taken to ensure the future safety of adventure playgrounds in the Borough be noted, and also that the application of a Capital Bid for replacement play equipment be noted
3. That a further report to the Cabinet that makes further recommendations for the future development of Crawley's adventure playgrounds be produced by the Head of Community Services in six months' time (as opposed to the twelve months proposed), with a particular focus on the financial implications of proposed changes.

Reason for Decision

The recommendations respond to the findings from public consultation, as well as the need to replace outdoor play equipment within the four adventure playgrounds.

45. Review of the Local Government Pension Scheme Discretions Policy (Customer & Corporate Services Portfolio)

Following advice from the Head of Legal & Democratic Services, the Chair advised that report [PAT/022](#) of the Head of People & Technology be deferred until the Cabinet meeting on 3 December 2014.

RESOLVED

That report PAT/022 be deferred until the Cabinet meeting on 3 December 2014.

Reason for Decision

The deferment would provide the opportunity to further consider the report and the discretions policy to meet the revised requirements.

47. Exempt Information – Exclusion of the Public (subject to agenda item 5)

RESOLVED

That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act by virtue of the paragraphs specified against the item.

48. Strategic Approach to Affordable Housing Delivery 2015-2025 (Key Decision) (Housing Portfolio)

(Exempt Paragraph 3 – financial and business affairs)

The Cabinet considered report SHAP/041 of the Head of Strategic Housing & Planning Services which set out a proposed approach to affordable housing delivery together with plans for the way in which the Council could use resources to achieve this, both in the short term and as a medium to longer term strategy to 2025.

The matter had been considered at the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission on 10 November 2014, and Members comments included:

- The need to pursue all avenues of affordable housing provision to address the housing needs of applicants on the Council's housing register.
- The requirement to maximise the development opportunities available, including working with partners and Registered Social Landlords.
- Recognition that there is increasing pressure to commit the Right-to-Buy (RTB) funds within the anticipated timescales.
- An acknowledgement that there should be an awareness of any local sensitivities, together with the appreciation of the need to build sustainable and integrated communities.

The Commission agreed to endorse the recommendations to the Cabinet. The Cabinet noted the comments and thanked the Commission for its endorsement.

The Cabinet Member for Housing advised that there was an error in table 7 of the report which stated that there would be 56+ affordable units in Ifield Road. The correct figure was 12 units and the report would be corrected.

RESOLVED

That Full Council is RECOMMENDED:

1. To approve the proposed approach for using the RTB one-for-one replacement funding in delivering new affordable rented housing schemes to mitigate the risk to the Council of having to return elements of this funding with interest to central government
2. To authorise officers to proceed to explore the feasibility of the schemes listed in Section 5 of the report, and where appropriate to bring these forward for Council new-build development, making use of the RTB one-for-one funding and the HRA Reserves, and to delegate authority to the Head of Crawley Homes to approve such schemes, in consultation with the Head of Strategic Housing and Planning, the Head of Finance and the Cabinet Member for Housing and, where such schemes include a private element for which the Council will generate a land value, the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development
3. To authorise officers to enter into the procurement of a developer/contractor in accordance with the Council's Procurement Code to assist with the feasibility and delivery of schemes forming the Council's own-build programme and to delegate authority to the Head of Crawley Homes to approve the appointment in consultation with the Head of Strategic Housing & Planning Services, Head of Finance, the Cabinet Member for Housing and, where such schemes include a private element for which the Council will generate a land value, the Cabinet Member for Planning & Economic Development

4. To approve making RTB one-for-one funding available to enable development through the Council's RSL partners for the delivery of affordable and social rented housing in the Borough as set out in Section 5, and to delegate authority to the Head of Strategic Housing & Planning Services to approve such schemes, in consultation with the Head of Finance, the Cabinet Member for Housing and, where such schemes include a private element for which the Council will generate a land value, the Cabinet Member for Planning & Economic Development
5. To approve making RTB one-for-one funding and HRA reserves available for the individual and block purchase of properties where these contribute to meeting housing need and for officers to proceed with this approach using existing delegated authority
6. To approve a proactive approach to land acquisition by officers using existing delegated powers to facilitate new affordable and social rented housing delivery and the use of RTB one-for-one funding.

Reason for Decision

1. To pursue and maximise all avenues of affordable housing provision and, in accordance with the Council's strategic housing objectives, to address the housing needs of applicants on the Council's Housing Register
2. To make best use of the Council's available resources in sustaining the Council's housing portfolio as a principal priority, and additionally to secure affordable housing nominations aimed at meeting Crawley's housing needs by enabling development through RSL partners where appropriate
3. To safeguard the council's financial resources in the form of the RTB one-for-one funds that must be committed within a fixed time-frame to avoid the financial penalties imposed by government legislation

49. Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Cabinet concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.03pm.

P K LAMB
Chair