

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Cabinet



Wednesday 22 March 2017 at 8.00pm

Present:

Councillors	
P K Lamb	(Chair of Cabinet and Leader of the Council)
M G Jones	(Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Community Engagement)
S J Joyce	(Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing)
C J Mullins	(Cabinet Member for Wellbeing)
A C Skudder	(Cabinet Member for Resources)
P C Smith	(Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development)
G Thomas	(Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability)

Also in Attendance:

Councillors B J Burgess, R D Burrett, D Crow, C Portal-Castro and M A Stone.

Officers Present:

Ann-Maria Brown	Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Peter Browning	Acting Chief Executive
Karen Dodds	Head of Crawley Homes
Diana Maughan	Head of Strategic Housing and Planning
Chris Pedlow	Democratic Services Manager

56. Apologies for Absence:

No apologies were received.

57. Members' Disclosure of Interests

No declarations of interests were made.

58. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on [8 February 2017](#) were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

59. Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public.

60. Matters Referred to the Cabinet

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

61. Report from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

The comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Commission had been circulated to all Cabinet Members. Details of those comments are provided under the minute to which the comments refer.

62. Town Centre Regeneration Programme (Phase 2) Queensway and The Pavement

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development presented report [PES/230](#) of the Head of Economic and Environmental Services, which set out the 2nd phase of the Town Centre regeneration, with the proposal to extend the environmental improvement scheme in Queens Square along Queensway and The Pavement.

It was noted that following approval, a detailed design would be created for a planning application submission in later 2017. The proposed works would not start until early 2018, which would allow retailers a 6 month gap including the Christmas period, between the ending of phase 1, Queen's Square, and commencement of the second phase.

The Cabinet noted the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's comments including their support from its meeting on 20 March 2017 and then agreed the recommendations.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet

1. approves the design concept for the Queensway and The Pavement regeneration scheme;
2. delegates authority to the Head of Economic and Environmental Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development to approve the detailed design;
3. delegates authority to the Head of Economic and Environmental Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development to spend up to the allocated budget of £2.2m for the scheme, subject to formal approval from West Sussex County Council for a contribution of £1.1m;
4. delegates authority to officers to undertake a procurement exercise in accordance with the Council's Procurement Code to select a suitable Contractor to construct the scheme;
5. delegates authority to the Head of Economic and Environmental Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to enter into a contract with the successful bidder for the construction of the scheme.

Reason for Decision

- a) Approval of the design concept for the scheme is required in order for the project team to undertake detailed design and prepare a planning application for submission in mid-2017. This will be closely followed by the procurement process leading to the selection and appointment of a contractor, with a view to commencing construction in early 2018.
- b) The scheme will complement and build on the momentum set by the Queens Square project and breathe new life into Queensway and strengthen the positive perception of Crawley town centre in order to consolidate and boost retail / business investment.

63. Sheltered Housing Service Review

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented report [CH/171](#) of the Head of Crawley Homes, which sought approval to change the Council's approach to sheltered housing service provision. The proposals for the change came through an in-depth systems thinking review of the service and the need for alternative provision following the withdrawal of the Supporting People funding.

It was noted that the outcome of the Review found that the accommodation based approach does create a significant amount of duplication with social care services, and provides services for those who really have no need of such services. As a result the proposals for the service going forward included:

- provision of an older persons tenancy support service to any older tenant including those in general needs accommodation
- deleting the out of hours service as existing and providing a service based on the provision of the lifeline service with out of hours emergencies covered through a duty rota.
- deleting the provision of the morning call service and removing the charge from those assessed as being required to pay for it.
- de-designate the dispersed sheltered schemes to older persons housing, which will be carried out in a gradual manner as the hard-wired alarm system required upgrading.

It was emphasised that the consultation taken with sheltered housing tenants and the results had been reasonably positive, with the majority not expressing any concerns or worries about the changing service. They were reassured however that the Careline service, that provided the 24/7 response to the alarm calls would not be affected by the proposals.

The Cabinet noted the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's comments from its meeting on 20 March 2017, including its support for the recommendations.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet

1. confirms that it has considered the report and the responses from the consultation process undertaken in respect of the proposed changes.
2. approves the change from an accommodation based service to a needs based assessment for older people including those in general needs accommodation.
3. delegates authority to the Head of Crawley Homes, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to implement the proposals contained in this report as outlined in 5.3 of report [CH/171](#).
4. delegates authority to the Head of Crawley Homes, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to implement any further minor operational changes arising from the continuing systems thinking review.

Reason for Decision

- a) The focus on accommodation based support has led to the provision of a service that the majority of new tenants and a significant number of existing tenants do not want and do not value.
- b) There is an opportunity to provide additional support to older people living in general needs accommodation who do have a need for additional support
- c) The Council's integral sheltered schemes do offer the opportunity to continue a quality sheltered service for those seeking a safe and secure environment with the offer of a vibrant community.
- d) The majority of the dispersed schemes do not provide the same opportunity for community activities and those people accessing the properties as accommodation rather than sheltered accommodation do not wish to engage in communal activities. These people are more likely to choose a dispersed scheme.

64. Irrecoverable Debts 2016/2017

The Leader presented report [FIN/410](#) of the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits. The purpose of this report was to obtain approval to write-off a debt that was considered to be irrecoverable and exceed the delegated limit of £50,000 per write-off. It was noted that a summary of debts to be written-off under delegated powers was also contained within the report. The Leader commented that he had been privy to the lengths that the finance team chase debts to the Council and was satisfied that it was in the Council's best interest to write off the proposed debts for accounting purposes.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet approves the write-off of amounts exceeding £50,000 as detailed in the table below:

Name and Address	Reason	Total £
Make it Fashion Ltd 76/77 County Mall	Company Dissolved	78,289.36
		78,289.36

Reason for Decision

The Council's Constitution necessitates amounts exceeding £50,000 requiring write-off to be approved by the Cabinet.

65. 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 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act by virtue of the paragraphs specified against the item.

66. Council Enabled Affordable Housing

(Exempt Paragraphs 3 (information relating to financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information))).

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented reports SHAPS/58 and SHAPS/58.5 of the Head of Strategic Housing and Planning Services. The purpose of the reports were to secure financial assistance to enable the provision of up to 95 affordable housing units on the College Car Park site. The Cabinet was guided through both reports which contained in-depth information on the proposed approach for securing the housing units and the associated financial implications.

The Leader invited Councillor Burrett to ask a question in relation to the proposals and the associated implications on both the HRA and Council's capital reserves, respectively.

RESOLVED

The Cabinet request that Full Council in relation to:-

- 1) the College Car Park scheme:
 - i) Approve a supplementary capital estimate, as detailed in Section 5 of report SHAPS/58, to secure up to 95 affordable housing units on the College Car Park site, funded from usable capital resources.

- ii) Delegate authority to the Head of Strategic Housing and Planning Services and the Head of Finance Revenues and Benefits, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, to conclude nomination and funding agreements with a Housing Association, as named in the report.
- 2) enabling affordable housing with Right To Buy (RTB) 1-4-1 receipts:
- i) approve a supplementary capital estimate, as detailed in Section 5 of report SHAPS/58 to be funded from the RTB 1-4-1 receipts, which will enable Officers to respond to existing and emerging opportunities to allocate funding for additional affordable housing units and/or additional rental units.
 - ii) Delegate authority to the Head of Strategic Housing and Planning Services and the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, to allocate funding to successful RSL bidders and enter into appropriate funding and nomination agreements with them to protect the Council's interests.

Reason for Decision

- a) The delivery of new affordable housing remains a key priority for the Council. Given land supply constraints, and where appropriate, it is vital that the Council is in a position to respond promptly and positively to potential windfall opportunities to maximise delivery.
- b) The recommendations within this report are firstly intended to secure a significant windfall of up to 95 affordable housing units through an RSL partner. As the RSL has included HCA grant funding in their offer for this scheme, any funding contribution from the Council cannot be in the form of RTB 1-4-1 receipts.
- c) Secondly to pursue opportunities with Housing Association partners using RTB 1-4-1 Receipts in order to secure additional units, or to better address housing need by converting Intermediate Tenures into Affordable Rent Tenure, with the aim to mitigate the risks of underspending RTB Receipts by responding to opportunities as they arise.

67. Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Cabinet concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.19 pm.

P K LAMB
Chair