

MINUTES

CABINET

19 APRIL 2022

Present:

Members:

Councillors: Williams (Leader)
Griffiths (Deputy
Leader)
Elliot
Anderson
Banks
Barrett

Officers:	Claire Hamilton	Chief Executive
	Mark Brookes	Assistant Director - Corporate and Contracted Services
	David Barrett	Group Manager - Housing Development
	James Doe	Assistant Director - Planning, Development and Regeneration
	Layla Fowell	Corporate & Democratic Support Officer
	Nigel Howcutt	Chief Finance Officer (S151)
	Alex Robinson	Interim Group Manager - Planning and Development
	Phillipa Zieba	

Also Attendance:

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

CA/26/21 MINUTES

Cabinet Agreed the meetings from the previous meeting

CA/27/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no Apologies received.

CA/28/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CA/29/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

CA/30/21 REFERRALS TO CABINET

CA/31/21 CABINET FORWARD PLAN

CA/32/21 HRA BUSINESS PLAN

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

1. That Council approves the updated Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan

Cabinet Agreed

2. To approve the following budget virements in the HRA for 22/23:

- £140k increase to the HRA Supervision and Management employee budget to cover the costs of an additional Team Leader Post and two new Strategic Housing Officer posts.

- £200k increase to the HRA Supervision and Management supplies and services budget to cover the additional work to be undertaken in respect of stock reviews etc.

- £340k reduction to the HRA Rev

Corporate Objectives

Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery

Climate and ecological emergency

Statutory Officer Comments:

Monitoring Officer:

The annual review provides a robust mechanism to monitor the business plan to ensure that it takes account of changes in government policy, law and the economy and therefore meets the Council's statutory requirements.

Deputy S151 Officer:

There are some inflationary assumptions inherent within the Business Plan, which are liable to change over the lifetime of the plan and so represent a risk to delivery. These assumptions are kept under regular review.

The Business Plan incorporates a programme of capital works, which must be financed. Funding sources available to meet the cost of these works includes capital receipts and reserves, grant funding and external borrowing.

The way in which the Council structures its borrowing will influence the amount of funding available to deliver the Business Plan in future years. Borrowing options and the associated implications for the Business Plan will be presented to Members in advance.

Advice

Cllr Griffiths introduced the report and said that this was revised business plan for the housing revenues account and that there were 2 recommendations, she said it is fairly self-explanatory and she was happy to take questions.

Recommendation agreed

CA/33/21 EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Cabinet Agreed

1. To approve the Draft Employment and Skills Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation.
2. To delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure and the Assistant Director for Planning, to agree the timing of the public consultation on the Draft Employment and Skills Supplementary Planning Document.

Corporate Objectives

Building strong and vibrant communities
Ensuring economic growth and prosperity

Statutory Officer Comments:

Monitoring Officer:

No comments to add to the report.

Deputy S151 Officer:

This reports requests approval of the Draft SPD for public consultation. The costs associated with undertaking this consultation will be met from existing resources. Any financial considerations associated with the Council formally adopting the SPD will be brought before Cabinet in future reports.

Advice

Cllr Anderson introduced the report and said that he thought the report was excellent and they had hoped to get the most benefit out of new development and have skills for the future.

Cllr Elliot thought that this was a fantastic idea and hoped this would help the skills shortages, especially within the construction sector. He asked how this would be monitored to make sure that developers were actually doing this,

ARobinson responded that there were two main ways that they would do this, the 1st is through skills strategy that would be submitted to us prior to planning permission that they would set out amongst other things the proposals that the developer is offering, also the ongoing monitoring framework. The second way is that the skill strategy would be embedded into the section 106 process and the section 106 officer would monitor those provisions.

Cllr Elliot asked how would they keep on top of this and how do other councils monitor it.

ARobinson said that resourcing is an issue but he thought in the short term that the capacity to operate this effectively and what they needed to do as more developments come in stream and as the SPD embeds, in two or three years' time they may need to look at their processes for monitoring all 106 agreements. That may well mean improved software and improved processes to ensure that they were automating as much of the monitoring as they can. For the initial phase, they have the resources that they need to monitor and operate this effectively.

.Recommendations agreed

CA/34/21 ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRAMME APPROVAL

Cabinet Approved

The Annual Internal Audit Programme for 2022-23.

Corporate Objectives

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery.

Statutory Officer Comments:

Monitoring Officer

As set out in section 4, the Council is required by law to have a sound system of internal controls in place to review its main functions and areas of risk. This Internal Audit Programme will help to provide the required assurance and ensure the Council meets its statutory requirements.

Deputy s151 Officer:

This is a Deputy s151 Officer report. Comments are contained within the body of the report.

Advice

Cllr Elliot introduced the report and explained that this was a plan for the audit procedures over the next period.

NHowcutt said that this had already been to the audit committee and approved by them. They had allowed them a little leeway, 10% of the days for 2023 in case additional requests from members comes in in that period. It is flexible as well as providing them with the certainty that they need for their internal audit division and internal audit governance statement for 22/23.

Recommendation Agreed

CA/35/21 SOLAR BULK BUY PROPOSAL

Cabinet Agreed

1. To delegate approval to the Strategic Director (Place) for Dacorum Borough Council to sign the contract and appoint the chosen scheme provider (iChoosr) to proceed with the delivery of the Hertfordshire wide solar bulk buy scheme.
2. That the signing of the final contract by Dacorum Borough Council on behalf of the other authorities that wish to join the scheme, will be subject to them signing an MoU to 'promote the scheme and afford the relevant property data to Dacorum Borough Council', if required.
3. That Dacorum Borough Council agrees to share the auction benefits with Buckinghamshire County Council (plus any other local authority who may require support to join the scheme), subject to Dacorum Borough Council being satisfied there will be no legal commitments between the parties.

Corporate Objectives:

A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities
Climate and ecological emergency

Statutory Officer Comments

Deputy Monitoring Officer:

The internal Legal Team has reviewed the legal documents that are required to lead and participate in the Scheme and confirm there are no legal issues or concern.

Deputy S151 Officer:

The costs associated with this arrangement relate to the promotion of the scheme with householders and will be met in full by HGC funding. Engaging iChoosr as set out in this report is in line with relevant procurement requirements.

Advice

Cllr Anderson said he was pleased to present this report to members so that the Cabinet can approve it. It was an excellent scheme, not just to get solar panels

across Hemel Garden Communities but across the piece as a whole. This was a form of sustainability for the future generation that he fully supports and he hoped that they could get some traction and get some panels installed on roofs that do not have them. He felt this was an excellent opportunity and to do it in the most cost effective way.

PZieba said this was a real opportunity to retrofit solar panel, actual cells and charging points to the housing stock.

Recommendation agreed

CA/36/21 APPROPRIATION BY THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT OF GENERAL FUND LAND ST MARGARETS WAY

Cabinet Agreed

1. That the site at St Margaret's Way is no longer required for its current purpose.
2. To delegate authority to the Strategic Director (Place) to apply for consent pursuant to section 19 Housing Act 1985 to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (or equivalent successor title) to appropriate the flats (above a garage block) and amenity land held within the Housing Revenue Account at St Margaret's Way as shown edged red and green on the Plan ('HRA Land').
3. To delegate authority to the Strategic Director (Place) to carry out a consultation in relation to the intended appropriation and the disposal of the public open space within the HRA Land at St Margaret's Way; if objections are received as part of the consultation process, the consideration of those objections will be referred back to Cabinet.
4. To delegate authority to the Strategic Director (Place) to take all necessary steps to appropriate the HRA Land from the Housing Revenue Account to planning purposes and the garages held within the General Fund within the Site for planning purposes pursuant to Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 227 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for planning purposes subject to the completion of the processes authorised by Recommendations 2 and 3..
5. To delegate authority to the Strategic Director (Place) to appropriate the Site at St Margaret's Way from planning purposes to the Housing Revenue Account prior to construction of the new build council houses as set out in Part II of the report.

Corporate Objectives

A clean, safe and enjoyable environment

Building strong and vibrant communities
Ensuring economic growth and prosperity

Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need.

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery.

Climate and ecological emergency

Statutory Officer Comments:

Deputy Monitoring Officer:

The appropriation powers have been set out in the body of the report. The use of appropriation power needs to be justified by a clear 'public interest' case that overrides the individual rights of potential affected third party owners and occupiers of nearby properties.

Prior to appropriating the flats above the garage site that are currently held in the HRA, Secretary of State Consent will be required under section 19 of the Housing Act 1985.

Where land consisting or forming part of an open space is proposed to be appropriated, the Council cannot do so unless it has advertised its intention to do so for two consecutive weeks in a local newspaper and specifically considered any objections received under section 122(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

The definition of open space is "any land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground". The amenity land at St Margaret's Way shown edged in green on the Plan comes within this definition and therefore the open space rules apply.

Deputy S151 Officer:

The appropriation of General Fund property and land to the HRA requires a technical to reduce the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) of the General Fund and adjustment increase the CFR of the HRA by the market value of the transfer. The CFR is an indication of the Council's underlying need to borrow as a result of capital investment.

Advice

The meeting moved into part 2, please see the part 2 minutes.

CA/37/21 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The Meeting ended at 7.51 pm