

COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

18TH JANUARY 2018

Present:

Councillor Mark F Annett - Chairman
Councillor NJW Parsons - Vice-Chairman

Councillors -

Sue Coakley MGE MacKenzie-Charrington
C Hancock

Observers:

SI Andrews JA Harris (invited to speak on
AR Brassington (invited to speak on Minute CAB.62)
Minute CAB.64) Mark Harris (invited to speak on
Minute CAB.64)

Apologies:

SG Hirst

CAB.59 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest under the Code of Conduct for Members or Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

There were no declarations of interest under the Code of Conduct for Officers.

CAB.60 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 16th November 2017 be approved as a correct record.

Record of Voting - for 4, against 0, abstentions 1, absent 1.

CAB.61 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been submitted.

CAB.62 MEMBER QUESTIONS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, a question had been submitted, and a response provided, as follows:-

Question from Councillor JA Harris to Councillor Stephen Hirst, Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Leisure

'Is the Cabinet Member aware that the lift at Cirencester's leisure centre has been broken for over three months now.

This has meant that disabled people can't access the gym and other facilities on the first floor. Will the Cabinet Member commit to having this repaired as soon as possible, and when can we expect to see it fixed?'

Response from Councillor Hirst

'I am aware of various problems experienced with the lift over time.

Following a series of breakdowns (and repairs), the Council, in consultation with SLM, took the decision to replace the whole lift, as this was felt to be a better and sounder long-term solution.

However, due to value of the contract, we have had to complete a full tender process, in accordance with our Contract Procedure Rules, which has impacted on the overall timescale.

On a positive note, a successful contractor has been appointed; the order for the fabrication of lift has been placed; pre-contract and set-up meetings have been carried out; and the schedule of work is being finalised. The provisional completion date is the end of April, but this will be dependent upon there being no issues with fabrication and installation.'

Councillor Harris expressed the view that the response contained merely a list of excuses as to why the issue had not been resolved. Councillor Harris added that, as at the end of April 2018, the lift would have been out of operation for six months, leaving disabled members unable to access the upper floor for a considerable amount of time. By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Harris asked if the Leader would review the tendering process; and whether the Council would refund the membership fees to those disabled members who had been unable to use the facilities.

The Leader responded that, as this issue was being dealt with by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Leisure, he would discuss these suggestions with him and ensure that a full written response was provided to Councillor Harris at a later date.

CAB.63 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements from the Leader.

CAB.64 NOTICE OF MOTION - NATIONAL POLICE FEDERATION 'BELIEVE IN BLUE' CAMPAIGN

The Cabinet was requested to consider the following Motion, referred by the Council from its Meeting on 20th December 2017:-

'This Council resolves to support the National Police Federation's 'Believe in Blue' Campaign to show our support for the dedicated men and women in blue who work tirelessly to keep us safe'.

In accordance with the Council's procedures and custom and practice, Councillors Mark Harris and Ray Brassington had been invited to attend the Meeting to present and speak to their Motion.

Councillor Harris was invited to address the Cabinet, and formally Proposed the Motion. In so doing, Councillor Harris apprised the Cabinet of the decrease in the number of officers within the police force since 2010 and the high volume of cuts that had been required to be implemented by forces across the country. Councillor Harris praised the work of the Gloucestershire Police Force within the District, and expressed the hope that the Cabinet would lend its support to the campaign and thereby provide a demonstrable indication of the value placed on the officers 'on the ground' who worked tirelessly to keep residents safe.

Councillor Brassington added that, as a Member of the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel, he was fully aware of the invaluable work undertaken by the Force and was happy to support the Motion.

All Members were happy to support the Motion. However, whilst in no way wishing to diminish support for the specific campaign associated with the Police Force, a Member felt that it would be more appropriate to place on record the Council's thanks to the unstinting work of those involved across all of the 'blue light' emergency services. The remaining Cabinet Members supported this suggestion.

In responding to the debate, Councillor Harris recalled that the Council had previously supported a similar campaign in relation to paramedics, and confirmed that he would be happy for the Council's support to extend to all emergency services personnel.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the Motion be supported;**
- (b) the Council places on record its gratitude to, and support for, all of those dedicated personnel who work across all of the 'blue light' emergency services.**

Record of Voting - for 5, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 1.

CAB.65

HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION ACT IMPLEMENTATION

The Head of Democratic Services read out a supporting statement provided by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Leisure, who was unable to attend the Meeting.

The Cabinet Member had referred to the soon to be enacted Homelessness Reduction Act, which introduced a number of duties and obligations in an attempt to reduce homelessness, and explained that the Council had been allocated some new burdens funding over a three year period would enable a proper resource to be set up in preparation for the new Act.

The Cabinet was advised that the funding would be transferred from the Council to Publica, who would operate the service on behalf of the Council. In this connection, an additional Prevention Officer would be appointed, to across all three Partner Councils. Given that such post would be funded from the Government monies, the proposal was cost neutral to the Council.

The Cabinet welcomed the initiative and supported the proposed use of the additional funding.

RESOLVED that:

(a) approval be given to vary the Publica contract sum, as detailed in the financial implications section of the circulated report, the additional costs being funded through the New Burdens Grant, the change therefore being cost neutral to this Council;

(b) the services provided by Publica be updated to include the additional homelessness prevention work, as detailed in the circulated report;

(c) approval be given to pool the one-off New Burdens funding in a sum of £9,000 with the seven Homeseeker Plus partners to ensure the best value for money enhancements to the digital system, it being noted that the £9,000 one-off New Burdens funding is not a variation to the Publica contract sum (it will be paid directly from this Council and is cost neutral to the Council).

Record of Voting - for 5, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 1.

CAB.66

REVENUES AND HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICE RECOVERY POLICY

The Cabinet was requested to consider an amended Recovery Policy in respect of the revenues and Housing Support Service. In updating the circulated report, the Head of Democratic Services Service confirmed that the Policy had been considered and endorsed at West Oxfordshire District Council.

A Member welcomed the fact that the Policy included specific reference to the Council's stated zero tolerance approach in relation to fraud. She considered this to be an important strategic principle, and would not prevent officers being able to respond to individual issues, whilst not disadvantaging those who paid their Council Tax.

In response to a question, it was reported that the approach to, and levels of, write-offs was addressed in the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, and could be revisited in the future. However, the Chief Finance Officer was of the view that the low amount of write-offs would suggest that the current approach was satisfactory.

RESOLVED that the updated Revenues and Housing Support Service Recovery Policy be adopted.

Record of Voting - for 5, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 1.

CAB.67 **THE MANAGEMENT OF TREES OWNED BY THE COUNCIL - UPDATED POLICY**

The Cabinet was requested to consider an updated Policy in relation to the management of trees owned by the Council. Attention was drawn to some minor additional revisions to the circulated Policy, including guidance on considerations to be taken into account when the disposal of Council land was being contemplated.

A Member suggested that a guidance/advisory document could be produced on this matter.

RESOLVED that:

(a) subject to the additions circulated at the Meeting, the updated Policy in respect of the Management of Trees Owned by the Council be approved;

(b) the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member(s), be authorised to make future amendments to the Policy, provided that such amendments are not of a significant nature.

Record of Voting - for 5, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 1.

CAB.68 **STAIRCASE AT OLD MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, CIRENCESTER**

The Cabinet received a proposal to safeguard the oak staircase at the Old Memorial Hospital, Cirencester. It was reported that, since the writing of the report, confirmation had been received from the RAF Historical Branch that it was fully supportive of the transfer.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Forward Planning explained that funding of up to £12,000 was being sought to enable the safe removal and transfer of the staircase; and that a suitable plaque would be included with any redevelopment of the site.

A Member commented that the staircase was a very important item and it was fitting an appropriate home had been found, given the strong links of the Bannatyne Family with Limerick.

RESOLVED that:

(a) Officers progress the removal and transfer of the oak staircase in the Old Memorial Hospital, Cirencester to Limerick, Ireland;

(b) the staircase be gifted to Limerick Civic Trust and the Group Manager Land, Legal and Property, in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Forward Planning, be authorised to agree the final terms of any legal documentation;

(c) approval be given for funding of up to £12,000 from the Council Priorities Fund for the removal and transfer of the staircase to Limerick Civic Trust;

(d) a suitable plaque(s) be included within any redevelopment of the site commemorating the Old Memorial Hospital building, the memorial of Meriel Leicester Bathurst and the Bannatyne Memorial, in consultation with Lord Bathurst, the Ward Memorial Trust and relevant local groups.

Record of Voting - for 5, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 1.

CAB.69 SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet noted a Schedule detailing decisions taken by the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Forward Planning.

CAB.70 ISSUE(S) ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND/ OR AUDIT (IF ANY)

There were no issues arising from Overview and Scrutiny and/or Audit.

CAB.71 OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business that was urgent.

The Meeting commenced at 4.00 p.m. and closed at 4.24 p.m.

Chairman

(END)