

# CABINET

Meeting held on Tuesday, 5th March, 2019 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

## Voting Members

Cllr D.E. Clifford, Leader of the Council  
Cllr K.H. Muschamp, Deputy Leader of the Council

Cllr Barbara Hurst, Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder  
Cllr G.B. Lyon, Corporate and Democratic Services Portfolio Holder  
Cllr M.L. Sheehan, Operational Services Portfolio Holder  
Cllr P.G. Taylor, Customer Experience and Improvement Portfolio Holder  
Cllr M.J. Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder

The Cabinet considered the following matters at the above-mentioned meeting. All executive decisions of the Cabinet shall become effective, subject to the call-in procedure, from **18th March, 2019**.

### 93. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 5th February, 2019 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

### 94. **COUNCIL PLAN 2018/19 - QUARTERLY UPDATE ON KEY ACTIONS OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2018 –**

(Cllr Gareth Lyon, Corporate and Democratic Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet received Report No. ELT1901, which set out the Council's performance management monitoring information for the third quarter of the 2018/19 municipal year. The Report indicated that most actions or initiatives were on track. In response to a comment, it was confirmed that improving educational attainment in the Borough would remain a priority for the Cabinet.

**The Cabinet NOTED** the progress made towards delivering the Council Plan 2018/19, as set out in Report No. ELT1901.

### 95. **REGENERATING RUSHMOOR - QUARTER 3 PROGRESS REPORT –**

(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet received Report No. RP1904, which set out progress towards the Council's Regenerating Rushmoor programme for the third quarter of 2018/19. The Report indicated that good progress was being made in most areas.

**The Cabinet NOTED** the progress made towards delivering the Regenerating Rushmoor programme, as set out in Report No. RP1904.

96. **PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COUNCIL OWNED HOUSING COMPANY –**

(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. ED1903, which set out the business case for the creation of a wholly owned company, limited by shares, to deliver housing in the Borough. The Chairman welcomed, Cllr A.R. Newell, Chairman of the Policy and Project Advisory Board, to the meeting.

Members were reminded that the establishment of a local housing company, as a vehicle to allow the Council to participate directly in the provision of housing, had been included as a priority in the Council Plan. Following consultation with the Policy and Project Advisory Board, it had been concluded that the option to set up a wholly owned company, limited by share, would best meet the objectives of the Council in meeting housing need and achieving financial sustainability. The Report set out the principal points of the business case for this option, the advice received from the Council's solicitors and details of the consultation with the Policy and Project Advisory Board.

The Cabinet considered the details of the business case and was supportive of the approach suggested. In particular, Members discussed issues around how the company would be effectively scrutinised, the provision of Member training in this role and other specialised areas of the Council's activities, the composition and role of the Shadow Board and how this initiative was expected to assist the Council's approach to homelessness.

**The Cabinet**

(i) **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** that

- (a) the establishment of a Council owned housing company, to deliver housing and meet the Council's objectives for the housing company, as set out in Report No. ED1903, be approved;
- (b) on incorporation of the company, the appointments set out in Resolution (ii) below becoming the Council's appointments as Directors of the Board of the housing company, be approved, with future appointments being made by the Licensing, Audit and General Purposes Committee;
- (c) the Shadow Board and the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Council's statutory officers, be authorised to establish the housing company and complete the relevant paperwork and documents, as required;
- (d) subject to availability, the incorporation of the company as 'Rushmoor Homes Limited' be approved; and

(ii) **RESOLVED** that the Deputy Leader (Cllr K.H. Muschamp) and Cllrs K. Dibble and J.E. Woolley be appointed to serve on the Shadow Board, with a senior manager to be appointed by the Chief Executive, to oversee the

development of the business plan and budget.

97. **SOUTHWOOD SANG –**  
(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. EPSH1914, which set out a proposal to enter into a collaborative agreement with the Environment Agency to carry out a feasibility study and, as necessary, implement associated works to create a natural wetland habitat at Southwood Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).

Members were reminded that the decision to close the Southwood Golf Course, to provide SANG to mitigate the potential recreational impact of net new residential development on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, had been made in December 2017. The Report set out the details of this proposal and it was explained that the Environment Agency would be providing a funding contribution towards this. The Report also included consideration of the requirement to provide a 2.4 km route that was dry all year and other requirements of the SANG.

The Cabinet was supportive of the proposal and felt that, subject to the feasibility study, a natural wetland habitat would enhance the parkland being provided on the site.

**The Cabinet RESOLVED** that

- (i) the carrying out of work by the Council, with the Environment Agency, to carry out a feasibility study with a view to creating a natural wetland habitat on part of the Southwood SANG site, as set out in Report No. EPSH1914, be approved;
- (ii) the Corporate Manager – Legal Services be authorised to negotiate and enter into an agreement with the Environment Agency;
- (iii) the Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing, in consultation with the Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder, be authorised to agree the brief for the project; and
- (iv) a £40,000 capital budget in 2019/20 for the feasibility study be approved, to be funded by a contribution of £90,000 from the Environment Agency towards the costs of the project and future developers' contributions.

98. **REPORT OF URGENCY DECISION - ALDERSHOT DIGITAL-GAMES HUB –**  
(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered a Record of Executive Decision, which set out an urgent decision made on 13th February, 2019 by the Executive Head of Regeneration and Property, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to enter into an agreement for the lease of the Old Town Hall, Grosvenor Road, Aldershot. The reason for urgency had been to maintain the momentum of the Aldershot Digital-Games Hub project and to achieve completion of the project by the end of December, 2019.

**The Cabinet RESOLVED** that the action taken, as set out in the Record of Executive Decision dated 13th February, 2019, be noted and endorsed.

99. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC –**

**RESOLVED:** That, taking into account the public interest test, the public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the under mentioned items to avoid the disclosure of exempt information within the paragraph of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 indicated against the items:

<b>Minute Nos.</b>	<b>Schedule 12A Para. No.</b>	<b>Category</b>
100, 101 and 102	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs

**THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE CONSIDERED  
IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC**

100. **PROPERTY INVESTMENT PURCHASE –**  
(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Exempt Report No. RP1904, which set out an update to a proposal to acquire the freehold investment in a property, as part of the asset investment programme in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Cabinet was reminded that this matter had been considered, previously, at the Cabinet meeting on 8th January, 2019 and a decision had been made to acquire the property. Since that time, the vendor's Investment Committee had met and this had resulted in the asking price being increased. The Report set out the details of the potential investment, including the current lettings, the projected rates of return and the rationale for the purchase. Members were assured that, even at the increased price, the 7% net initial yield represented a good return for the Council.

**The Cabinet RESOLVED** that

- (i) the purchase of the property, as set out in Exempt Report No. RP1904, be approved;
- (ii) the Executive Head of Regeneration and Property, in consultation with the Council's statutory officers and the Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder, be authorised to conclude negotiations, subject to due diligence, for the freehold at a price up to the figure set out in the Report;
- (iii) the flexibility within the approved Capital Programme to reflect a purchase at the agreed price be noted;
- (iv) revenue income and expenditure budgets for 2019/20, as set out in Appendix 2 of the Report, be approved; and

- (v) in the event of the acquisition not going ahead, the bringing forward of abortive costs of £29,450, as part of the following budget monitoring report, be approved.

101. **FARNBOROUGH CIVIC QUARTER - SITE ASSEMBLY –**  
(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Exempt Report No. RP1905, which set out a proposal for the acquisition of a site that formed an integral part of the redevelopment area known as the Farnborough Civic Quarter.

The Report set out details of the proposed acquisition. It was felt that the site would have a considerable impact on the overall development of the Civic Quarter. An outline planning application had been submitted by the current owners but it was explained that the acquisition of the site by the Council would allow for it to be included in a wider masterplan, which would increase flexibility in achieving the desired outcomes for the Council and the local community. The Cabinet was requested to agree an upper limit to enable the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder and the Executive Head of Finance, to negotiate to acquire, by agreement, the freehold of the property. Members were informed that, due to timescales requested by the vendor, this was considered to be an urgent decision.

In discussing this matter, the Cabinet considered this to be a key site in the overall redevelopment of the Civic Quarter and felt that this would be better utilised as part of a wider masterplan.

**The Cabinet RESOLVED** that

- (i) the acquisition of the freehold associated with the site identified in paragraph 1.2 of Exempt Report No. RP1905, be approved;
- (ii) the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder and the Executive Head of Finance, be authorised to negotiate and acquire, by agreement, the freehold of the property, at a value up to that set out in paragraph 2.3 of the Report, subject to the necessary due diligence; and
- (iii) a variation to the Capital Programme, to bring forward part of the budget allocated against the Civic Quarter for 2019/20 into the current financial year, be approved, to allow for
  - the purchase of the freehold, together with stamp duty, land tax and associated legal costs, in accordance with the timescales requested by the vendor and set out in the Report; and
  - additional capital expenditure of the amount set out in paragraph 2.2 of the Report, which would be fully recoverable from the Rushmoor Development Partnership through a loan note.

102. **APPLICATION FOR SECTION 49 REMISSION OF NON-DOMESTIC RATES –**  
(Cllr Gareth Lyon, Corporate and Democratic Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Exempt Report No. FIN1913, which set out an application for the remission of non-domestic rates on the grounds of hardship.

Members assessed the application from PRB Hampshire Limited, trading as The Empire Banqueting and Hall, High Street, Aldershot, taking into account the evidence of financial hardship supplied and whether it was in the interests of local taxpayers to subsidise the business. The Cabinet took into account the nature and circumstances of the business and the availability of alternative facilities in the area. The Corporate and Democratic Services Portfolio Holder had met with the proprietor at the premises to discuss the application in detail.

**The Cabinet RESOLVED** that 62% hardship relief be granted to PRB Hampshire Limited, trading as The Empire Banqueting and Hall for the period from 1st September, 2017 to 31st March, 2019.

The Meeting closed at 7.52 pm.

CLLR D.E. CLIFFORD, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

-----