

CABINET held at COMMITTEE ROOM - COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX CB11 4ER, on THURSDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2019 at 5.00 pm

Present: Councillor J Lodge (Chair)
Councillors A Armstrong, D Eke, P Fairhurst, N Hargreaves and B Light

Officers in attendance: D French (Chief Executive), R Auty (Assistant Director - Corporate Services), A Bochel (Democratic Services Officer), A Knight (Assistant Director - Resources) and A Webb (Director - Finance and Corporate Services)

Public speaker: R Woodcock

CAB32 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Ray Woodcock spoke on the possibility of an additional NHS licensed prescription dispensing pharmacy in Stansted Mountfitchet. A summary of this statement is appended to these minutes.

CAB33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were received from Councillors Asker, Barker, Dean, Gerard, Lees and Pepper.

CAB34 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting on 15 July were approved and signed as a correct record.

CAB35 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (STANDING ITEM)

The Chair of Scrutiny Committee said the Committee had met the previous week. There had been positive work by the Planning Obligations and Conditions Task and Finish Group.

Scrutiny Committee requested that the Portfolio Holder for Business, Economy, Jobs, Investment and Strategy; Youth Services to discuss how the Scrutiny Committee could be better involved in the investment process.

A matter referred by Cabinet to the Scrutiny Committee would be brought back to Cabinet in October. The matter raised an issue about a degree of mistrust in

the Council as a body corporate. Some of this was a settling-in issue for the new administration.

CAB36 REPORT ON ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE DETERMINED BY THE ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE AND LOCAL HERITAGE LIST COMMITTEE (STANDING ITEM)

The Chair said it had been determined by the Assets of Community Value and Local Heritage List Committee to designate the Felsted Community Hall and the Adult Community Learning Venue and Essex Cares Ltd Day Centre as assets of community value.

CAB37 BUDGET OUTTURN 2019/20 - QTR. 1 FORECAST

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Budget gave a summary of the report, which detailed financial performance relating to the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Capital Programme and Treasury Management. It was based upon actual expenditure and income from April to June and predicted a forecast for the end of the 2019/20 financial year.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Budget noted everything was as expected.

RESOLVED to approve the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme outturn forecast position and the updated use of reserves.

CAB38 SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2020-2025

The Portfolio Holder – Education and Libraries; Culture and Heritage gave a summary of the report, which explained the Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries and the review procedures, and listed policy documents with a timetable for submission via the Museum Management Working Group to Cabinet for approval between September 2019 and April 2020. This began with the Collections Development Policy 2020-25 which accompanied the report.

The Portfolio Holder – Education and Libraries; Culture and Heritage proposed that a letter of thanks be sent to the Museum Society for its work.

Members commended the work of the Museum.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) approve the Collections Development Policy as appended to the report;
- 2) write a letter of thanks to the Museum Society.

CAB39 CORPORATE PLAN DELIVERY PLAN 2019/20 QUARTER 1 PROGRESS UPDATE

The Portfolio Holder for Business, Economy, Jobs, Investment and Strategy; Youth Services gave a summary of the report, which set out progress against the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan between April and June (Q1), and provided more recent update where progress since the end of June has been significant.

The Portfolio Holder for Business, Economy, Jobs, Investment and Strategy; Youth Services said the Council was working on a new corporate plan to reflect the goals of the new administration. Corporate strategy would be fleshed out through a Strategy Board.

CAB40 ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

The Chair said that the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues; Equalities could not attend to present the report. A motion had been passed at Council requesting that Cabinet establish an Energy and Climate Change Working Group as part of a commitment to achieving net-zero carbon status by 2020 and enhancing biodiversity.

RESOLVED to establish an Energy and Climate Change Working Group.

CAB41 COMMERCIAL STRATEGY

The Portfolio Holder for Business, Economy, Investment, Jobs and Strategy; Youth Services gave a summary of the report, which presented the revised Commercial Strategy, and recommended the change of name of the associated Working Group.

The Portfolio Holder for Business, Economy, Investment, Jobs and Strategy; Youth Services said the governance procedure of the strategy was key. The Council was not an investment machine and the Council had to be exemplary in its processes. The strategy defined how and why the Council began an investment.

The Leader said Members were aware that it was necessary for the Council to invest in good opportunities in order to continue to maintain an excellent quality of service.

In response to a Member question, the Director – Finance and Corporate Services said a line in the strategy should read ‘the Investment Portfolio may include a mix of’ instead of ‘the Investment Portfolio will include a mix of’. He would ensure this change was made. The terms of reference for the Investment Strategy Board would come back to Cabinet for approval.

In response to a Member question, the Portfolio Holder for Business, Economy, Investment, Jobs and Strategy; Youth Services said the Commercial Strategy was a living document and would evolve based on the guidance of the Board.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) approve the Commercial Strategy and recommend it to Council for adoption;
- 2) approve the renaming of the Investment Steering Group to the Investment Board;
- 3) authorise the recruitment of two independent members of the Investment Board with the associated remuneration of £520.25.

CAB42 APPOINTMENT TO WORKING GROUPS

The agenda pack included a list of proposed members for the Energy and Climate Change Working Group and for the Investment Strategy Board.

Councillor Sell asked how the membership of the groups was decided. There was only one Liberal Democrat on the Investment Strategy Board, as opposed to two on the Energy and Climate Change Working Group.

The Portfolio Holder for Business, Economy, Jobs, Investment and Strategy; Youth Services said he wanted to build a group with a deep level of skill on the Investment Board. He invited Councillor Sell to join the Board.

RESOLVED to

- 1) appoint members to the Energy and Climate Change Working Group and the Investment Strategy Board as detailed in the report;
- 2) appoint Councillor Sell to the Investment Strategy Board.

CAB43 ASPIRE (MRH) LTD

The Director – Finance and Corporate Services gave a summary of the report which sought Cabinet approval to establish Aspire (MRH) Ltd as the vehicle to deliver the market rent housing units.

Members discussed the possibility of a Councillor acting as one of the directors of this company. It was agreed to discuss this at a later date.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) approve the establishment of Aspire (MRH) Ltd;
- 2) agree the Articles of Association for Aspire (MRH) Ltd as set out at Appendix One;
- 3) appoint the following directors to Aspire (MRH) Ltd;
 - a) Nicola Wittman (UDC Assistant Director of ICT and Facilities)

b) Adrian Webb (UDC Director of Finance and Corporate Services)

4) authorise the recruitment of the two independent members of Aspire (MRH) Ltd with the associated remuneration of £520.25 each per annum

5) discuss the possibility of appointing one or more district councillors as a company director at a later date

CAB44 **LOAN TO ASPIRE (MRH) LTD**

The Portfolio Holder – Business, Economy, Investment, Jobs, Strategy; Youth Services gave a summary of the report which presented an opportunity to acquire 10 student accommodation apartments in Cambridge through the Council's wholly owned subsidiary Aspire (MRH) Ltd.

Members discussed whether Cabinet should consult the Investment Strategy Board before approving the recommendations. The Director – Finance and Corporate Services said while the Board had not met as an official working group, each member of the Board had been kept informed of the investment, and no objection had been raised. There was a need to make a decision tonight because there would not be another opportunity before Council.

In response to a Member question, the Director – Finance and Corporate Services said Pubeck House would be available for other types of market rent rather than solely as student accommodation.

In response to a Member question, the Director – Finance and Corporate Services said maintenance was organised by a management company for Purbeck House. The cost of this was included in the service charge and ground rent, and had already been factored into the Council's costings.

RESOLVED to approve:

- 1) the acquisition of the 10 student accommodation apartments at Purbeck House in Cambridge;
- 2) the loan of up to £2.1m to Aspire (MRH) Ltd for a period of 10 years, at an interest only rate of 5.5%;
- 3) a request that Council endorses the purchase and loan and authorises the necessary borrowing.

The meeting ended at 6.35.