

CABINET

6 June 2016

Present: Mayor (Chair)

Councillors P Taylor, K Collett, S Johnson, I Sharpe and
M Watkin

Also present: Councillor Bell (Labour)

Officers: Managing Director
Shared Director of Finance
Legal and Democratic Section Head
Corporate and External Communications Section Head
Senior Communications and Engagement Officer
Democratic Services Manager

1 Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

The Mayor welcomed Councillor Collett to her first Cabinet meeting as a Portfolio Holder and the new Senior Communications and Engagement Officer as an observer to the meeting.

2 Disclosure of Interest (if any)

There were no disclosures of interest

3 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2016 were submitted and signed

4 Conduct of meeting

Councillor Bell spoke on behalf of the Labour Group

Watford Borough Council's reviewed vision, priorities and values and the Corporate Plan 2016-2020

Cabinet received a report of the Managing Director regarding the council's corporate vision, priorities and values following a review as part of an annual review of the council's corporate planning framework. Following an earlier report to Cabinet in March 2016 this report presented the final recommendations on the new corporate planning framework and the council's draft corporate plan for 2016-2020.

The Mayor introduced the report and reminded Cabinet that it had to go to Council for approval in July. As the town was changing rapidly, it was important to change the council's priorities and make necessary structure changes to achieve the new priorities. The local government landscape was also changing and Watford Borough Council needed to be ahead, particularly as the government grant would end after 2018/19.

The Managing Director explained that the existing corporate plan had been in place since 2012 and all organisations needed to review progress and priorities regularly. The way that the town was changing and the demands on the council's services along with the council's ambitions justified a review of priorities.

The new vision for the Council: to create a bold and progressive future for Watford was about ambition and taking measured risks and working with partners to deliver in a bold and progressive way.

The Managing Director took Cabinet through the new council priorities:

- Identify ways to manage the borough's housing needs
Housing was set as a top priority due to the huge pressure and demand, the scale of temporary accommodation the council had to provide support for and the high costs of housing in the borough.
- Champion smart growth and economic prosperity
Maintaining the journey to prosperity, forecasts for Gross Value Added increases from the Metropolitan Line Extension were showing an £8bn investment into the town. Growth should be smart; adjacent to transport links and with development on predominantly brownfield land.
- Provide for our vulnerable and disadvantaged communities
Ensuring that growth in the town was to the benefit of all residents.
- Deliver a digital Watford to empower our community

To transform how the council engages with residents in terms of technology and digitalisation.

- Secure our own financial future
To ensure the council would be financially sustainable as the government withdraws grant. The council would be dependent upon business rates, recycling property assets and investment from major projects.

The Mayor commented that there would be hard decisions to come and there would be changes such as the joint venture housing company with Watford Community Housing Trust.

Councillor Bell welcomed housing being one of the main priorities.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. approves the final recommendations for the council's new vision, values and priorities and to note that these form the basis for the council's corporate planning framework including the corporate plan, service plans and individual work objectives.
2. notes the draft corporate plan 2016-20 and recommends it to Council.
3. notes that the new corporate planning framework will be supported by communications and engagement with staff to ensure ownership and understanding.

6 **Delivering a bold & progressive future for Watford: Organisational and Management changes to drive delivery of the corporate plan priorities**

Cabinet received a report of the Managing Director presenting the key management and organisational changes required to deliver the council's priorities.

The Managing Director explained that it followed that the council's structure should support the new priorities. The structure had been reviewed with the objective of delivering a bold and progressive future for Watford. There were six drivers for these changes:

1. Renewing momentum for corporate performance to ensure high standards were maintained across the organisation

2. The need to revitalise leadership throughout the organisation both in support of the Managing Director and across the Leadership Team
3. Joining up the place shaping agenda
4. Bringing expertise for digital Watford and service transformation. To deliver the pace of change with new knowledge and expertise
5. To address capacity issues
6. To better mirror the political structure developed by the Mayor and Cabinet e.g., joining housing and property under one portfolio holder.

With regard to the recommendations in the report the Managing Director outlined that the Deputy Managing Director would take direct responsibility for integrating the place shaping agenda. The Head of Service transformation would be joining up customer service, ICT and digital transformation to make sure the council did not fall behind again.

The Managing Director continued that there would be four disestablished posts. These were the Head of Regeneration and Development whose functions would join with housing under the Deputy Managing Director. The Head of Corporate Strategy and Client Services whose client services functions would transfer to the Head of Community role. The Economic Development Manager whose role had been about developing an economic development strategy and building networks - there was now a need to convert the resource to delivering the strategy. The fourth post was the Section Head of Communications.

The Managing Director explained that there would be two business management changes: the Integrated Finance Review Board and Digital Watford Board. The Shared Director of Finance had carried out a review of the finance service. The Integrated Finance Review board would join up the management of revenue, capital and project financial reporting. It would give focus in order to deliver the financial outcomes needed. The Digital Watford Board would catalyse change and drive transformation.

The existing council structure had been successful, and had delivered £5m savings and created a platform for success. The new structure would take the organisation to the next level.

The Mayor commented that everybody involved in posts affected were people who were well regarded. The two new management boards were important to effect a culture change with members and staff working together. The process of change would be done through Human Resources and if members had any questions on the progress of the change they should contact the Managing Director.

In response to a question from Councillor Bell, the Managing Director confirmed that the timing of the new Deputy Managing Director starting and the disestablishment of the Head of Regeneration and Development post would be around October or November this year.

Following a question from Councillor Bell, the Shared Director of Finance confirmed that the costs of the change would be met within budget being carried forward from 2015/16. There would be no strain on current budgets.

Councillor Bell asked about the purpose of the two new boards and what role members would have within them and how they would be scrutinised.

The Managing Director explained that the arrangement would mirror the Property Investment Board (PIB) with Cabinet members working with responsible leadership team officers and some external advice to drive change and implementation. PIB had been successful in generating £4.6m in capital receipts and this had been re-invested.

The Mayor commented that there could be a role for members to be engaged in the digital Watford work to test out changes. The Finance Review Board would feed into Budget Panel and key decisions which came to Cabinet would be subject to call-in.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. approves the new corporate structure as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.
2. approves the establishment of a new post of Deputy Managing Director to enhance the level of leadership of Watford's place shaping agenda, integrate the key functions and drive up corporate performance.
3. approves the establishment of a new post of Head of Service Transformation to lead the customer service and digital Watford change management, ensuring our future technology strategy is developed and delivered and catalyse the reengineering of back office services.
4. approves the disestablishment of the posts of Head of Regeneration and Development, Head of Corporate and Client Services (this post from 1/4/17), Section Head of Communications (this post from 1/4/17) and Economic Development Manager.

5. approves the establishment of the Integrated Finance Review Board to be chaired by the Mayor, terms of reference to be agreed with the Mayor and Portfolio Holder for Resources and Customer Services.
6. approves the establishment of the Digital Watford Board, chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Customer Services, terms of reference to be agreed with the Mayor and Portfolio Holders.

7

Approval for consultation of proposed changes to a section of the Residential Design Guide

A report was received from the Head of Regeneration and Development which set out a change by the government to the internal space standards which could be required for all new housing developments. This would be a policy to be included in the publication version of the Local Plan Part 2 which would state that all new residential development should comply with the standards set out in the Residential Design Guide (RDG), including the national space standards.

Councillor Sharpe introduced the report and explained that it was necessary to go through different iterations of the district plan, to show what had been deleted and what had been added. The proposed change was due to the introduction of a new national standard of minimum internal space standards. Whereas previously councils had had their own defined standards, councils now had to use the new national standards. The current design guide contained the council's own local standards so the policy documents needed to be amended. This involved an uplift in living space standards, changes to the minimum floor area in bedrooms (a decrease to our own local standards). The council did not have discretion; it was the national standards or nothing. A quantity of housing was required to meet the needs in the town, but it should not be at the expense of quality.

The Mayor commented that in some areas the national standards were better than ours, some were worse. However, the important message was that the council would be applying standards when looking at planning applications.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. approves for consultation the proposed changes to the table at 7.3.6 of the RDG as adopted in 2014.
2. allows any post consultation changes of a minor nature to be agreed and signed off as the council's adopted guidance by the Head of Regeneration

and Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development.

3. delegates authority for the Head of Regeneration and Development in consultation with Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development to approve further regulatory or minor changes until such time as there is a full review of the RDG.

8 Hemming Way- Watford

The Regeneration and Development Section Head had submitted a report on a small piece of land which was owned by the council and formed part of Leavesden Green. It was proposed to appropriate the land to Watford Community Housing Trust (WCHT) who wished to redevelop their existing land in the location to demolish 10 affordable units and replace them with 32 new homes all of which would be affordable.

WCHT and the council had agreed that the land, if appropriated, would be exchanged for land that fronted onto Hemming Way and would significantly improve the entranceway to the park.

Councillor Johnson introduced the report and welcomed the 32 new affordable units. The application had come through Development Management Committee, which had turned down the first application, and the Trust came back with better plans. The council would receive land which would shape the entrance into the park.

The Mayor had recently visited Kingsway Junior School which was doing a project about the park; there were a number of children who thought that the current entrance was a barrier. The new land, following the swap, would mean that the entrance was more open.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. approves the appropriation of land shown in blue on the attached map (Appendix 1) from open space to planning under the provisions of s 122(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972. To declare the land surplus to requirements and to agree for the transfer of the land to WCHT and to acquire the land shown green on the attached plan (Appendix 2) from WCHT.

2. notes that Watford Borough Council will have 100% nomination rights for the new housing less any settlement of displaced tenants who wish to relocate within the scheme.
3. notes the land received in exchange from WCHT will be used to improve the entranceway to the park.

9 **Atrium - Property Asset Management System, contract extension**

A report of the Regeneration and Property Section Head informed Cabinet that an exemption had been approved in relation to the contract for the annual support and hosting of Atrium, the Council's Property Asset Management system.

Following the introduction of the report, Councillor Bell commented that when the Property Task Group had met it was recommended that the property officers should be properly trained on the system.

The Managing Director responded that during the Lambert Smith Hampton property review it had been identified that the council was not making the most of the asset management system. In response a project team had been set up to upload all of the data onto Atrium to make it more successful, and then roll out a training programme.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet notes that an exemption has been granted in line with the council's Contract Procedure Rules.

10 **Procurement of the franking machine - exemption to contract procedure rules.**

Cabinet received a report of the Head of Community and Customer Services which set out that an exemption had been approved for the Mailing Room which the council used for a franking machine. The contract was being extended for a further three years.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet note the approved exemption to the council's procurement procedures in relation to the franking machine contract agreement.

The future of ICT

A report of the Managing Director had been received which provided an update on the progress of ICT since the last report in November 2015 and outlined the new proposals for ICT and Managed Print from July 2016. The contractual exit process was still in progress and Capita had confirmed that they remained committed to providing the service until the termination date of 30 June. Watford Borough Council had also initiated the change programme to take forward a new ICT service.

Councillor Watkin introduced the report and commented that it was an important step in the journey towards a better IT system in the authority. The exit strategy had been achieved at low cost to the council and a new service desk provider Amicus had been procured. There had been a roll out of desk tops across the authority.

Councillor Watkin commented that moving forward it was still about achieving a reliable service baseline. The costs of the new services were in line with what was spent on Capita. Once the baseline had been achieved then work would start to build on this and move towards digital Watford.

Councillor Bell commented that he was in favour of the modernisations.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. notes the progress on the Capita exit, the change programme and the ICT service re-provision.
2. notes the exemptions to the procurement rules outlined in paragraph 3.23 and 3.28 of the report.
3. agrees the novation of the print contract as outlined in paragraph 3.29 of the report.

Mayor

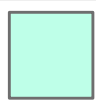
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and finished at 7.40 pm



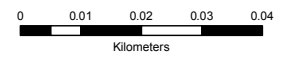
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Local Government Act 1972
Land to be appropriated
for affordable housing



Leavesden Green Recreation Ground
Hemming Way
Watford



Scale 1:1,250
Map Produced by: tims
Publication Date: 13/05/2016

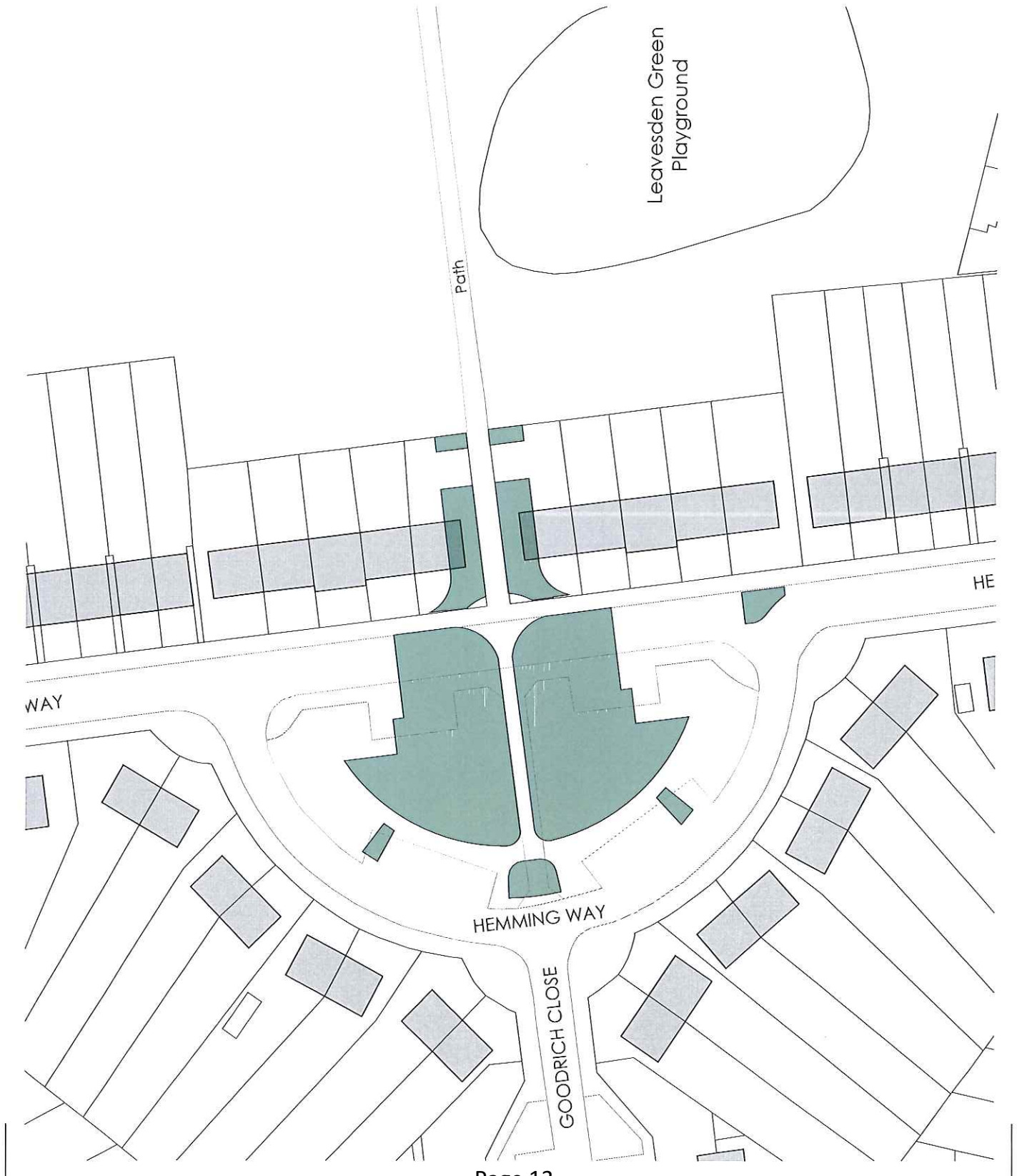
ORDNANCE SURVEY LICENCE AGREEMENT
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NORTH

0 5m 10m 25m

Land swapped from WCHT to Watford Borough Council



Revision Date Amended Details

LEGAL

Any errors or discrepancies should be reported to the architect as soon as they are discovered. All information ©2025 Black Architecture Limited, subject to Statutory Approval



Black

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Hemming Way
Watford Community Housing Trust

Land swap areas

Drawn ND	Checked SB	Date 22.02.2016	Scale 1:500@A3
Project 0408	Reference L	Number 020	Revision

