

CABINET

3 July 2017

Present: Mayor (Chair)

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

Also present: Councillor N Bell (Labour) (for minute numbers 9-13)

Officers: Managing Director
Deputy Managing Director and Director of Place Shaping and
Corporate Performance
Head of Democracy and Governance
Head of Finance (Shared Services)
Communications and Engagement Section Head
Spatial Planning Manager
Democratic Services Manager

9 **Apologies for Absence**

No apologies were received.

10 **Disclosure of Interest (if any)**

There were no disclosures of interests.

11 **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2017 were submitted and signed.

12 **Conduct of meeting**

No changes were made to the agenda

Councillor Bell attended on behalf of the Labour group

To adopt the Cycle Parking Supplementary Planning Document, to supplement policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy

Cabinet received a report from the Deputy Managing Director and Director of Place Shaping and Corporate Performance.

Councillor Sharpe introduced the report and explained that there was considerable development pressure in Watford. The cycle parking supplementary planning document (SPD) was designed to promote good practice and make cycling a viable transport option. In new applications cycle parking and storage was intrinsic to development rather than a later inclusion or secured by condition. There had been consultation which received a number of comments and in some cases had resulted in changes to the document.

The Deputy Managing Director commented that the council was developing a suite of SPDs which, once used together, would be a powerful combination of approaches to solve issues in Watford and would bolster existing policies.

Cabinet discussed whether there was a need for CCTV coverage on cycle storage and recognised the benefits of extending the definition of cycle to a range of pedal drive vehicles.

Cabinet thanked officers for their work on the SPD.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. approves the Cycle Parking Supplementary Planning Document
2. agrees that minor changes ahead of publication can be agreed by the Deputy Managing Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning.

Brownfield Land Register

Cabinet received a report of the Planning Policy Section Head.

Councillor Sharpe introduced the report and explained that this was part of regulations coming from government. The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 required the council to have a register of brownfield land which was capable of being developed. This register would include brownfield sites suitable for housing even if they were designated for another purpose. Secondly, the Town and Country Planning (Permission in

Principle) Order 2017 identified sites suitable for granting planning permission in principle. There was a sense that government was increasing pressure on authorities to deliver housing which meant more development in an already densely populated town. Whilst it was good to recycle and reuse land to be developed, not all brownfield land was ideal and development may change the landscape in a negative way for some residents.

Following a question from the Mayor, the Spatial Planning Manager explained that there would be a two-step process. The report before Cabinet focussed on part 1 which was identifying sites. Many sites had already been identified through the local plan. However, the new regulations allowed the council to update the list annually so it would be more current. There would be a separate report for entering sites which would be given permission in principle (part 2). The council was not obliged to put any sites on this list.

The Deputy Managing Director commented that if a site went through the process on part 1 and part 2 then it would be part of the council's 5 year land supply. Although the council was inviting developers and land owners to come forward, there was still an assessment to be done and no guarantee that sites would be suitable. If a site went on the register it would still need planning permission.

The Managing Director explained that there would be engagement with the public on the council's growth and regeneration agenda. There would be a report to Cabinet members in the autumn to present thoughts on engagement and a further survey of residents and stakeholders on the regeneration agenda. The Mayor commented that a dialogue with the press on this was important to maintain a continuing narrative as Watford developed.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. notes the new legislation
2. agrees that delegated authority be given to the Section Head for Planning Policy to maintain, update and publish the Brownfield Land Register
3. agrees that delegated authority be given to the Deputy Managing Director Place Shaping and Corporate Performance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning to undertake an annual review of those sites listed on the Brownfield Land Register.

4. notes that Regulation 19 specifically excludes any decision to grant Permission in Principle being an Executive Decision; a report will be taken to Council setting out the process for deciding Part 2 registrations.

15

Summary of Financial Outturn 2016/17

Cabinet received a report of the Director of Finance. The report had previously been to the Budget Panel on 27 June and an extract of the minutes from that meeting had been circulated.

Councillor Watkin introduced the report and explained that the key message from the outturn document was that the council was operating on a tight financial control. There was only a £3,000 variance in the outturn. There had been some capital spend offset to the next year.

Following comments by Cabinet on the Budget Panel minutes the Head of Finance explained that the Panel had asked why there was so much rephrasing in capital programming. One reason for this was that officers were not always realistic about profiling and taking into account all the steps involved. However, this was not for all the council's projects, many were completed on time and on budget.

Councillor Taylor and the Managing Director referred to the successful contract management forum at the council which had recently won a European award for standards and focussed on best practice. The Managing Director highlighted that some projects were complex and spend profiles were not always in the council's control depending on planning permission, ground conditions etc. The Programme Management Board was an internal body which looked at the council's top 20 projects. The council was looking at the projects which sat below the top 20 and how to build more control and certainty. The Panel minutes reflected that project management had improved and there were good controls.

Councillor Johnson informed Cabinet that the Disabled Facilities Grant would be transferred to Hertfordshire County Council in October. He continued by thanking the housing team for their work to keep the temporary accommodation costs at a reasonable level as well as providing good accommodation.

In response to Budget Panel's suggestion of the council running its own pension scheme the Head of Finance explained that whilst in theory it was possible it would not be something the council would wish to do as the risk would be very high.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. Considers the revenue outturn as summarised at paragraph 4.1 and supplementary notes at Appendices 1 to 5 and notes the year end position which includes carry forwards.
2. Approves the 2016/17 budget carry forwards into 2017/18 as recommended by Leadership Team totalling £886,960 as detailed at Appendix 3.
3. Considers the capital outturn as summarised at paragraph 5.1 and shown in detail in Appendix 5. To confirm the re-phasing of £15.917m into 2017/18 and later years.

16

Ombudsman Complaint

Cabinet received a report of the Head of Democracy and Governance who explained that the complaint had been regarding an issue that was going on for a number of years. It had been unfortunate that the ombudsman's officer had not wanted to come to the council to see the evidence and instead preferred to correspond by email. The council had agreed the Ombudsman's recommendation and had sent the person in question a letter to ask them to supply their income details.

Cabinet discussed the report and observed that since the time at which the issue had occurred the service had improved and there was every confidence that any issues now would be resolved in a timely manner.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet notes the report and agrees with the recommendation set out in the decision letter.

17

Watford Muslim Youth Centre - Progress Update

Cabinet received a report of the Managing Director.

The Mayor commented that the centre would be a real achievement for the community. There would be a focus on helping young men to not be radicalised and to feel part of society.

The Managing Director commented that the Shared Director of Finance had been in discussions regarding terms and conditions and keeping the council informed during construction, contract, warranties and fund raising. The council could then provide support and Watford and Three Rivers Trust could give advice so that there was reassurance the development was on track. If the centre was not built for any reason then the council could retain the land. Once there was a building in place then the council could put a charge on it to further secure the loan. The council had to mitigate against risk. However, looking at the objectives of the charitable organisation their mission was around community, welfare, training and development of young people so it was an important community project.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. Approves for the council to loan to the Watford Muslim Youth Centre Charitable Trust £150,000 based on terms set out in section 3.2 and subject to the obligations set out in 3.3.
2. Notes the objectives of the Trust, the Projects it is likely to undertake and the progress in developing the new Centre.

Mayor

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 7.40 pm