

CABINET

2 July 2018

Present: Mayor (Chair)
Councillors K Collett, S Bolton, S Johnson, I Sharpe, M Watkin
and T Williams

Officers: Managing Director
Deputy Managing Director and Director of Place Shaping and
Corporate Performance
Shared Director of Finance
Legal and Democratic Section Head
Principal Planning Officer (JG)
Communications and Engagement Manager
Democratic Services Manager

9 **Apologies for absence**

No apologies were received.

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

There were no disclosures of interest.

11 **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2018 were submitted and signed.

12 **Conduct of meeting**

No changes were made to the agenda.

13 **Commuted Sums for the Provision of Affordable Housing Supplementary
Planning Document (Revised)**

A report was received from the Planning Policy Section Head. Councillor Sharpe introduced the report and explained that the revised Supplementary Planning

Document (SPD) was to give greater clarity and understanding of the existing document rather than to make a substantive change e.g., there were more worked examples to provide illustrations to developers. It remained council policy to have onsite provision where possible but it had been found that there were occasions where a development was primarily small flats that could result in schemes that were policy compliant but were not meeting the housing need.

Councillor Sharpe continued that the SPD was coming back for Cabinet approval as the original document was agreed by Cabinet. However, there was provision in the recommendations that future revisions could be agreed by the Deputy Managing Director and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development. Councillor Sharpe proposed a change to the recommendation to include the words “non substantive” with regards to the future revisions which could be made.

The Deputy Managing Director explained that the SPD had been in place for just under a year. The document was updated based on local market factors and would be reviewed annually.

Following questions from Cabinet the Deputy Managing Director explained that a suitably qualified person to carry out viability appraisals would be someone who met the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors criteria. They would be expected to work through land appraisals, construction costs and may engage further specialists as required. The viability figures were then checked by the council’s own consultants to verify the facts. If the council’s consultants felt that the viability appraisal was not suitable then the developer would be contacted and asked to resubmit, if these were still unsuitable the development would be rejected.

Following a question from Councillor Johnson, the Deputy Managing Director agreed to provide a pre-amble to viability reports so there was an audit trail of who had signed off the report from the council.

Cabinet agreed the change to the wording of the recommendation.

RESOLVED:

- That Cabinet agrees:
1. That the commuted sums for the Provision of Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (Revised) be adopted

2. Future non substantive revisions to the document can be agreed by the Deputy Managing Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development

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Summary of the Financial Outturn 2017/18

A report of the Director of Finance was received which had also been to Budget Panel on 26 June and the extract of the minutes was circulated at the meeting. The report informed Cabinet of the revenue and capital outturns for financial year 2017/18.

Councillor Watkin introduced the report and explained that the Budget Panel had no concerns regarding the outturn report. There was a favourable variance of £2,350. The outturn report was a good record of where the council was financially and its future direction.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Considered the revenue outturn as summarised at paragraph 4.1 of the report and supplementary notes at appendices 1 to 5 and notes the year end position, which includes carry forwards.
2. Approves the 2017/18 budget carry forwards into 2018/19 as recommended by Leadership Team totalling £1,056,290 as detailed at Appendix 2 of the report.
3. Considered the capital outturn as summarised at paragraph 5.1 of the report and shown in detail in appendix 4. To confirm the re-phasing of £7.547 million into 2018/19 and later years.

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Appointment to Watford Commercial Services Limited

Cabinet received a report of the Head of Democracy and Governance. Councillor Watkin introduced the report and explained that the new Head of Finance had attended the recent Budget Panel meeting and provided training for the members. He was happy to recommend her appointment as a Director on Watford Commercial Services Limited.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet agrees that Alison Scott Head of Finance Shared Services be appointed as a Director on Watford Commercial Services Limited.

Watford's Monitoring Report 2017

Cabinet received a report of the Planning Policy Section Head. Councillor Sharpe introduced the report and explained that the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) was a document which the council was required to produce. As it was a substantial piece of work it was also presented to Cabinet.

Councillor Sharpe continued that the purpose of the AMR was to assess whether the council's planning policies were robust and whether there were any changes of direction needed. There was pressure from government policies and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) required councils to identify the objectively assessed need for housing. The new methodology would significantly increase Watford's housing requirement. The council had been clear about this impact in response to the government consultation on the NPPF. However, the council was in a position where the government was concentrating development on existing urban areas.

Councillor Sharpe explained that the AMR was backward looking to 2017. The policy indicators gave an indication of the key issues e.g., the council had delivered above the previously required target for new homes and still retained a five year land supply. The council was providing 80% of development on previously developed land. Councillor Sharpe encouraged all members to look through the report as it provided context for future applications and assessing planning policy.

In response to questions from the Mayor, the Deputy Managing Director explained that the report showed cycling was maintaining a steady line on usage but the council would be looking to build on this. It would require some changes to regulations for traffic segregation and better routes which were safe and accessible.

The Managing Director commented on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which were introduced three years ago to be transparent about the work being carried out by the council. There was a need for further contextual commentary on some KPIs to reflect how the national picture was changing.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet notes the information provided by the AMR 2017

Mayor

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 7.20 pm

