

CABINET

8 February 2021

Present: Mayor P Taylor (Chair)

Councillors K Collett, S Johnson, I Sharpe, M Watkin and
T Williams

Also present: Councillors N Bell, A Dychton and P Jeffree

Officers: Managing Director
Group Head of Democracy and Governance
(Shared Services) Director of Finance
Group Head of Place Shaping
Executive Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications
Head of Executive Programme Management Office
Interim Head of Property and Regeneration
Mayor's Political Assistant
Democratic Services Manager

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the virtual Cabinet meeting. He introduced the councillors and officers present. He advised that at the end of each item he would ask each member of Cabinet how they wished to vote.

69 **Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

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

There were no disclosures of interest.

71 **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2021 were agreed. It was noted that the minutes would be signed once officers and members were able to return to the Town Hall.

72 **Conduct of meeting**

The Mayor reported that he intended to go through the agenda as printed.

Strategic Framework Quarterly Update

Cabinet received a report of the Executive Head of Strategy and Communications and Head of Enterprise Programme Management Office which provided an update on the progress achieved on the Council Plan, Organisation Development Strategy and Covid-19 Road to Renewal Plan.

The Mayor introduced the report. He commended officers and councillors for the significant progress in all three plans. This had been achieved at the same time as the council was responding to the Covid pandemic. He noted that there were 510 areas of work and projects in the Delivery Plan. He highlighted some of the important pieces of work that had been completed, including:

- Waste and recycling services changes
- Partnership with WENTA
- Oxhey Activity Park
- Works completed on St Albans Road
- Staff ambassadors group which had become well established
- Mental Health First Aiders to support staff
- Work supporting rough sleepers
- First UK WhatsApp High Street set up.

The Mayor invited the Managing Director to expand on the progress.

The Managing Director reported that this was the second update on the council's key plans, following their adoption in July 2020. Good progress had been made despite the challenges of two lockdowns, in November and January. The focus and delivery of the staff had not been deflected by the pandemic. Other key achievements included

- Launched Key Accounts Programme – engaging with the town's largest employers to ensure they had a strong voice and for the council to hear their challenges. Positive feedback had been received from key employers.
- Watford Career Fair planned for March 2021
- Review of Heritage and Museum service started
- Work started on Woodside Sports Village
- Mental health support for staff
- Time to talk initiative for staff
- Four new Executive Group Head Assistants appointed, two started in November and were making a great contribution to the council
- Millions of pounds paid out to businesses through various grants

- Additional Restriction Grants awarded to those who were unable to access other business support grants
- Grants and support to taxi drivers.

The Managing Director added that the recovery plan had been in place since July and over the next quarter it would be consolidated. More attention would be given to the health and wellbeing of the residents. The impact on the BAME community would be considered, reflecting on the findings from the work of the scrutiny task group.

Councillor Johnson noted that it was not just about the work of the council but also its partners. He praised the work of One YMCA, New Hope and Watford Community Housing, who had worked with the council towards eliminating rough sleeping within the borough.

RESOLVED –

that Cabinet notes:

1. The progress updates within the report relating to:
 - The Council Plan 2020-24 and Delivery Plan 2020-22
 - The Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24
 - The Road to Renewal Plan
2. The significant corporate effort over the last three months that has resulted in a substantial level of progress made against all three plans.
3. The impact of external factors on some of the areas of delivery. Where this is the case, the area have been reviewed to reflect the current environment during Quarter 3. The focus on delivery within the life of the plans remains a corporate commitment.
4. The Road to Renewal plan will adapt to best serve residents and businesses as the Covid-19 incident continues and develops. A review and refresh of the existing plan will be undertaken over the next quarter to ensure that it is responding to the impact of the pandemic and the arising needs of residents and businesses.

74 **Exclusion of press & public**

RESOLVED –

that, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during consideration of the item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100(1) of the Act for the reasons stated in terms of Schedule 12A.

75 **Letting at Croxley Business Park**

Cabinet received a report of the Interim Head of Regeneration and Property setting out a proposal for a letting at Croxley Business Park.

Councillor Johnson, the Portfolio Holder for Property and Housing introduced the report. The Interim Head of Regeneration and Property provided further details.

Members commented on the proposal and asked officers questions for clarification. The Interim Director of Finance, the Interim Head of Regeneration and Property and Group Head of Democracy and Governance responded to the questions.

RESOLVED –

1. that the Interim Head of Regeneration and Property, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Portfolio Holder for Property and Housing, be delegated to enter into an agreement for lease and lease with prospective leaseholder, upon satisfactory completion of all necessary due diligence.
2. that the Director of Finance be delegated to agree terms of any freeholder consent.

Mayor

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 7.40 pm