

## **CABINET**

**1 March 2021**

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

Also present: Councillors N Bell, A Dychton and F Ezeifedi

Officers: Managing Director  
Group Head of Democracy and Governance (Shared Services) Director of Finance  
Group Head of Transformation  
Group Head of Place Shaping  
Executive Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications  
Executive Head of Commercial Finance and Innovation  
Interim Head of Regeneration and Property  
Head of ICT  
Senior Democratic Services Officer  
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.

76 **Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

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

There were no disclosures of interest.

78 **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2021 were agreed. It was noted that the minutes would be signed once officers and members were able to return to the Town Hall.

79 **Conduct of meeting**

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

80 **Responding to the impacts of Covid 19 on Watford's BAME communities and street name policy review task group - final report**

Cabinet received a report of the Senior Democratic Services Officer and the task group's final report.

The Mayor invited Councillor Ezeifedi to introduce the task group's report. She explained that the task group had been set up following two motions that had been agreed at Council last year. The task group members had met various witnesses, including from the voluntary sector, community groups and officers from the county and borough councils. It had been a robust process and the task group's recommendations had been presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Ezeifedi explained each of the recommendations and the reasons that had been included in the final report. In addition she noted that there had been some discussion about the impact of overcrowding and multi-generational houses and their difficulties in self-isolating within the home. She appreciated that this was a challenging situation but felt it needed further investigation to try to find a solution.

The Mayor invited Councillor Collett, Portfolio Holder for Community to respond to the task group's report.

Councillor Collett acknowledged that the Covid-19 pandemic had had a serious impact on the Black and Asian communities. The county council was reviewing the Public Health England report into this matter. She noted the recommendations and spoke about each one. The recommendations supported the council's Road to Renewal plan. She thanked all members of the task group for their work, the Democratic Services Officers and the local community who had participated in the review.

Councillor Bell thanked Councillor Ezeifedi for her skilful chairing. All members had worked well together. He encouraged Cabinet to adopt the task group's recommendations.

Councillor Watkin thanked the task group for their report. The review of internal policies would build on the council's strengths and it was appropriate for them to be reviewed.

The Mayor noted that the street naming section had generated interest. He acknowledged the recommendation that future names should reflect the diversity of the town. He advised that currently the council did not have any plans to change any street names. Any new policy that was drawn up would ensure the involvement of residents and businesses.

RESOLVED –

That Cabinet approves the task group's recommendations

### **Responding to the impacts of Covid 19 on Watford's BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) communities**

1. Watford Borough Council should agree a corporate definition of BAME. The council should also assess how well the needs of other communities, not captured in the task group's agreed definition of BAME, are understood and served.
2. The council should establish an equalities forum to include representatives of protected characteristics, as set out in the Equality Act 2010.
3. The council should develop a corporate equalities policy.
4. The template for undertaking Equalities Impact Assessments for new council policies should be reviewed to reflect best practice.
5. The council, in partnership with ward councillors, should encourage all communities to complete their Census 2021 returns and to underline the importance of this data in formulating future council policies.
6. Councillors should maximise their community role to share public health messages and particularly to encourage take-up of vaccines for Covid 19 and promote wider health screening programmes.
7. The council should provide compulsory training on equalities and unconscious bias for staff and members.

### **Street name policy review**

1. The council should adopt a new street naming policy for the borough which sets out the process for reviewing existing street names as well as naming new streets and buildings to reflect the rich diversity of the town.

2. The council should commission Watford Museum to develop an education programme based around a new exhibition which explores the background and history of the town's road names, including those identified as having negative historic links.

## 81 **Approval of Croxley Business Plan**

Cabinet received a report of the Interim Head of Regeneration and Property including an initial Business Plan for the 2021/2022 financial year.

The Mayor invited Councillor Johnson to introduce the report. Councillor Johnson, Portfolio Holder for Property and Housing, noted that the Croxley Business Park had been a regular feature at Cabinet over the last few months. The business plan was looking towards next year and beyond. The plan would be renewed annually. He highlighted some of its key points.

The Interim Head of Regeneration and Property further explained the plan and information about the Park since the council had acquired it. The report also asked Cabinet to approve the recommended delegations to enable matters to be agreed within the parameters set out in the report.

Councillor Sharpe, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development, said the work was very impressive. It had been a big decision for the council to make the large investment. The plan helped to ensure the Park would be able to adapt and evolve enabling it to remain a desirable location.

Councillor Bell agreed that the whole council had made an important decision investing in the business park. He hoped that scrutiny would have the opportunity to monitor the scheme and financial aspects over the coming years.

RESOLVED –

1. That Cabinet approves the Business Plan for 2021/2022 as produced by LSHIM and attached to the report at Appendix 1.
2. That Cabinet approves the delegations to the Head of Regeneration and Property as outlined in Appendix 1 and detailed in the report.

## 82 **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 items 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 items 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.

**83 IT Services Contract Award**

Cabinet received a report of the Head of ICT setting out details of the procurement process for the IT Services Contract Award and details of the bidders.

Councillor Watkin, the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Customer Services, introduced the report.

Members considered the officer's recommendation.

RESOLVED –

That Cabinet agrees to award the contract for IT services to the officer's recommended provider from 1 July 2021 for a period of four years, with the option to extend for a further year.

**84 Letting to West Herts Hospital NHS Trust**

Cabinet received a report of the Interim Head of Regeneration and Property setting out details of a lease to the West Herts Hospital NHS Trust.

Councillor Johnson introduced the report. The Group Head of Place Shaping provided additional information.

RESOLVED –

1. That Cabinet agrees to the entering into an agreement for lease and subsequent lease with West Herts Hospital NHS Trust having had regard to the advice set out in the report.
2. That Cabinet agrees to the entering into a sublease from WHHT on the terms detailed in the report.
3. That Cabinet agrees to the entering into a Deed of Guarantee, Service Charge Deed, Council Access Licence, Memorandum of Understanding and a Deed of Variation to the Watford Health Campus Development Agreement together with all associated documentation necessary to facilitate the development and completion of the property.

4. That Cabinet delegates to the Interim Head of Regeneration and Property in consultation with the Group Head of Democracy and Governance the approval of the final terms of the agreement for lease, lease, sub-lease, the Deed of Variation, Memorandum of Understanding and the Guarantee.
5. That Cabinet delegates authority to the Group Head of Place, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Cabinet Member for Property and Housing to agree to any revised terms for the lease and sublease.
6. That Cabinet agrees that until an acceptable lease variation has been documented as set out in 5 above, the council will not enter into any further land transactions with WHHT.

Mayor

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm  
and finished at 8.00 pm