

## **CABINET**

**13 June 2022**

Present: Mayor Taylor (Chair)  
Councillors A Dychton, J Pattinson, I Stotesbury and  
T Williams

Also present: Councillor N Bell

Officers: Managing Director  
(Shared Services) Director of Finance  
Executive Head of Commercial Finance and Innovation  
Executive Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications  
Executive Head of Human Resources  
Head of Leisure and Environmental Services  
Economic Development Manager  
Mayor's Political Assistant  
Democratic Services Manager

### **1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Watkin.

### **2 Disclosure of interests (if any)**

There were no disclosures of interest.

### **3 Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2022 were submitted and signed.

The Mayor paid tribute to Councillor Stephen Johnson who had stepped down from the role of Portfolio Holder. He said he was grateful for the councillor's contributions as a Portfolio Holder over the last eight years.

### **4 Conduct of meeting**

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

5

### **Contract Exemption - Young Entrepreneurs Project 2**

Cabinet received a report of the Economic Development Consultant which provided details of a contract exemption that, due to it exceeding the requisite value set out in the Constitution, had to be reported to Cabinet for information.

The Mayor commented that it was an important piece of work. The first project had been very successful. It would provide an important support to the local economy.

The Economic Development Manager confirmed the contract had exceeded the threshold set out in the Constitution. The original project had been designed and led by the University of Hertfordshire, which had been very successful. The second project already had 90 people signed up. It had been essential to secure funding by the end of March 2022.

The project was welcomed by members. Councillor Bell enquired whether the age limit could be reduced to under 18 in order to attract school students who may be 17 years old.

The Economic Development Manager advised that the team would be looking at future initiatives and proposed working with West Herts College as a feeder to the scheme. Options would be explored for the future.

RESOLVED –

1. that the exemption be noted.

6

### **Council Plan 2022-26 and Delivery Plan 2022-24**

Cabinet received a report of the Managing Director setting out the new Council Plan 2022-26 and Delivery Plan 2022-24.

The Mayor introduced the report and commended officers for the speed the plans had been produced following the elections in May. The big changes affecting the community are reflected in the Council Plan, including Covid and the cost of living. It was underpinned by the council's core values and showed the council was not scared of the big issues.

There were four themes –

- A council working for our community and serving our residents – this was extremely important ensuring residents received value for money.

- A greener, brighter future – the environment was at the forefront of the plan. It was the greenest plan the council had ever produced.
- An inspiring, thriving and creative town – supporting the local economy, for example the incubation hub to be based at the Town Hall in the future.
- A diverse, happy and healthy town – this was reflected in the investment in parks and supporting the wellbeing of all residents.

The Delivery Plan was a critical part of the Council Plan, which was very detailed and the regular monitoring would ensure progress was being made. The Mayor invited the Managing Director to add further detail.

The Managing Director endorsed the Mayor's comments about the team. She informed Cabinet that the team had worked on the documents to ensure there was clarity following the new mayoral term. The plan recognised that success for Watford was not always in the council's remit to progress, but the council would carry out its role as place leader and use its voice locally and nationally for the Watford community. There would be a quarterly report to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny on the progress of delivering the plan. There would also be an annual report to residents.

The Portfolio Holders welcomed the plan, particularly that green issues had been made more prominent. Each member mentioned some of the highlights within their individual responsibilities and looked forward to progress being made.

Councillor Bell referred to a comment made by Councillor Williams about recycling and flatted developments. He considered that something needed to be done to improve this as more flats were due to be built. He asked whether individual Portfolio Holders would attend Overview and Scrutiny Committee to respond to questions about the progress within their responsibilities.

The Mayor advised that Overview and Scrutiny Committee would decide who to invite to its meetings as reports were considered. He added that the plan was not just about the council meeting its statutory obligations. As an example on page 23 it referred to lobbying the government.

Councillor Williams responded to the question about recycling. The relevant service was investigating a food waste project which would then be actioned next year. Veolia provided responses on planning applications to the planning team. At a previous waste conference, he had expected to hear ideas that the council could trial, however it appeared that all councils were doing the same thing. In developments consisting of flats, the recycling area needed to be made more accessible and better lighting.

RESOLVED –

1. that the Council Plan 2022-2026 be recommended to Council for approval.
2. that the Delivery Plan be recommended to Council for approval.
3. that Cabinet recommends to Council that the Managing Director be authorised to make minor amendments to the Council Plan 2022-2026 and the Delivery Plan 2022-2024 in consultation with the Elected Mayor.
4. that Cabinet notes progress on delivering the Council Plan 2022-2026 will be reported on a quarterly basis to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with an annual report to the community of Watford being published.
5. that Cabinet notes the aspirations and outstanding activities of the council's Renewal Plan 2020, which was aligned to the previous Council Plan, are now incorporated into the refreshed Council Plan and Delivery Plan, noting the council's achievements in delivering a range of renewal activities across our community, economy and businesses, the organisation and our own financial resilience.

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### **Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework**

Cabinet received a report of the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services which sought a one-year extension to the current four-year funding cycle.

The Mayor invited Councillor Dychton to introduce the report.

Councillor Dychton explained that the current framework was due to expire on 31 March 2023. During the lockdowns, as a result of the pandemic, many organisations had to shut down. During this time the council continued to pay the agreed funding. It had not been possible to review the impact of the organisations. The report was asking Cabinet to allow for a one-year extension to the framework until 31 March 2024. This additional year would allow the council to carry out benchmarking against other frameworks. She thanked the officers for their hard work in challenging times. The last two years had been exceptional. The Watford community had stepped up to support the vulnerable and those most in need.

The extension was considered a sensible approach. A question was asked if the organisations were aware of the situation.

The Head of Leisure and Environmental Services advised that some informal discussions had taken place. Following Cabinet's decision and the call-in period the team would be writing to the organisations and giving them notice of the extension.

Councillor Dychton added that the extension would enable officers to work with the groups to understand their needs and if they had changed, particularly after the pandemic, and the team would work closely with them. If any organisation was removed or added to the framework they would be given plenty of notice.

In response to a question from Councillor Bell, the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services explained that the date to report back with the findings had not yet been agreed. The Mayor added that the framework would set out how the support was delivered. He stressed that the council valued the organisations and their support to the community.

RESOLVED –

1. that the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework for 1 year until 31 March 2024 at the current levels detailed in Appendix 1 of the report to allow the council to conduct a comprehensive review of the Framework going forward to meet the council priorities.

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## **Shared Services**

Cabinet received a report of the Executive Head of Commercial Finance and Innovation which included the business cases for the proposed shared services. It was noted that the business cases were exempt from publication due to the commercially sensitive nature of the content. The Mayor reminded members that if they wished to discuss any of the individual business cases and the details were not contained in the officer's report then the motion to exclude press and public would need to be moved.

The Mayor informed Cabinet that he and Councillor Watkin had been involved in the discussions about the new shared services. He referred to the success of the existing shared services with Three Rivers District Council which had provided resilience and a cost effective way of delivering services. He stated that Three Rivers District Council could join the new shared services at a later date if they wished. The format provided a clear governance structure by using the lead authority model.

The Executive Head of Commercial Finance and Innovation added that a lot of work had taken place to get to this stage. It was hoped that shared services could be expanded further in the future.

The Mayor emphasised that although cost was part of the reason for doing shared services, it was also about the resilience of a service.

Councillor Stotesbury commented that it was also about ensuring officers were available throughout the year. A big positive of shared services was the robustness of a service. The council already had examples of good experiences of the existing shared services with Three Rivers District Council.

In response to a question from Councillor Bell about the estimated savings, the Mayor advised that the information in the report was a conservative estimate. The Executive Head of Commercial Finance and Innovation said that once the teams were working together it may be possible that additional savings could be identified, through more efficiencies. There was a small saving in year 2 and this would build as the teams gained more resilience and they identified potential revenue raising opportunities.

There were no direct questions regarding the business cases for each of the new shared services.

RESOLVED –

that Cabinet unanimously recommends to Council:

1. the creation of a shared Planning Enforcement service between Watford Borough Council and St Albans City and District Council with the aim to go live from 1 September 2022, with Watford Borough Council as the lead authority.
2. the creation of a shared Building Control service between Watford Borough Council and St Albans City and District Council with the aim to go live from 1 September 2022, with Watford Borough Council as the lead authority.
3. the creation of a shared Legal service between Watford Borough Council and St Albans City and District Council with the aim to go live from 1 January 2023, subject to the appointment of a Head of Legal Service, with St Albans City and District Council as lead authority.

## 9 **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 was

likely, in view of the nature of the discussions, that if members of the public were present during consideration of the item there would have been disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100(1), Schedule 12A of the Act for the reasons stated in the agenda.

10 **Delivering the Council Plan 2022-2024**

Cabinet received a report of the Managing Director, which she explained to members.

Members discussed the report and questions were answered.

RESOLVED –

1. that the recommendations were unanimously agreed.

Mayor

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm  
and finished at 8.00 pm