

## **CABINET**

**3 October 2022**

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

Officers: Chief Executive  
Group Head of Democracy and Governance  
(Shared Services) Director of Finance  
Head of Finance  
Associate Director of Property and Asset Management  
Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Director of Performance  
Associate Director of Housing and Wellbeing

### **22 Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence from Cabinet members.

Councillor Bell, Leader of the Labour Group, had given his apologies.

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

There were no disclosures of interest.

### **24 Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2022 were submitted and signed.

### **25 Conduct of meeting**

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

### **26 Ombudsman Decision**

Cabinet received a report of the Group Head of Democracy and Governance which included a final decision from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

The Mayor invited Councillor Dychton to introduce the report.

Councillor Dychton advised that the report was in relation to a complaint from a resident around a noise nuisance. The issue was investigated by officers and the planning team were involved. There had unfortunately been a lack of communication between the two departments which resulted in the issue being unresolved for too long. The Ombudsman's findings were that the lack of communication in this case had impacted the resident. Lessons had been learnt and measures put in place to avoid repetition. She noted that the issue had taken place some time ago when workloads were particularly challenging due to Covid. Officers remained dedicated to resolving complaints quickly.

The Mayor asked if there was confidence that the issue would not be repeated. The Associate Director of Housing and Wellbeing noted that such delays would be identified in case reviews with managers. In this instance, there had been a difficult balance between the planning process and the business being able to continue trading. Officers were required to mitigate the impact of this on residents. A Senior Environmental Health Officer now attended monthly planning meetings to ensure effective joint-working and alleviate communication issues.

RESOLVED –

1. that the decision be noted.

27

**Focusing on delivery: Council Delivery Plan 2022-24 Quarter 1 update, Organisational Development Strategy 2022-24 Quarter 1 update, Council Performance 2022-23 Quarter 1 update**

Cabinet received a report of the Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Service, the Executive Head of Human Resources and the Business Intelligence Manager. The report provided Cabinet with an update on the progress of implementing the Council Delivery Plan, the Organisational Development Strategy and the quarter 1 performance update.

The Mayor introduced the report summarising that lots of progress had been made in many areas and he was pleased to see the effective monitoring in place. Identifying a red action in the council plan, he asked about the delay in the works on the business park.

The Associate Director of Property and Asset Management advised that while final clearance was awaited, qualified approval from the Environment Agency (EA) for the initial work had been received. The action should now be amber as this was underway and the sign off of the construction strategy was now awaited.

Councillor Stotesbury noted that the work on the River Colne had been affected by difficulties working with the EA. The Chief Executive advised that the EA was experiencing a significant backlog of 9-12 months and delays were to be expected.

The Mayor asked about the target levels for some key performance indicators, notably 48% of waste to be recycled or composted, and whether a process was in place to ensure they were sufficiently challenging. The Chief Executive responded that work was ongoing to ensure target levels were appropriate. Some KPIs would come to Cabinet to be reset as part of the service planning process to ensure continuous improvement. Responding to a further question, she confirmed that targets contained in the forthcoming sustainability strategy would be incorporated into existing reporting mechanisms.

Councillor Williams noted that the Resources and Waste Strategy had stalled in parliament and this would have an impact on levels of residual waste and recycling, placing a greater onus on manufacturers.

The Mayor observed that changes in how performance was measured could disrupt how the council measured trends as it was useful to compare with historic benchmarking.

Introducing the update on the Organisational Development Strategy, the Chief Executive highlighted that sessions on health and wellbeing were being run to support staff. There was also further training on mental wellbeing and the menopause available. Across the organisation 38 agile charters had been drawn up and were complemented by the annexe opening.

The Mayor asked about the lack of equalities data relating to officers. The Chief Executive noted that the previous Executive Head of HR and OD had recently retired and there was renewed vigour under the interim appointment to address this including a planned workshop. The Executive Head of Strategy and Initiatives added that this was a long-standing issue. It was not clear why staff did not disclose this information. It was noted that this was not uncommon, particularly for district councils.

RESOLVED –

That Cabinet notes:

1. the progress updates within this report relating to:
  - the Council Plan 2022-26 and Delivery Plan 2022 -24
  - the Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24
  - the key performance indicator results for 2020/23.
  
2. that the key performance indicators and measures will continue to be reviewed as part of the council-wide service planning process and the ongoing work on the Business Intelligence Strategy.

Cabinet received a report of the Associate Director of Property and Asset Management with an update on the progress to date regarding the regeneration of Watford Riverwell by the Watford Health Campus Partnership LLP (the LLP) and seeking Cabinet endorsement of the latest LLP Business Plan for 2022/23.

The Mayor invited Councillor Watkin to introduce the report.

Councillor Watkin advised that a remarkable amount had been delivered in the face of a number of issues including the termination of the MLX project and the delays to the hospital regeneration. It would be a wonderful new community. The council was well on the way to meeting its financial goals. After highlighting the affordable homes being delivered, he noted that the multi-storey car park was a particular achievement which had been undertaken in consensus with the hospital. There would be a school and hotel on the site and the industrial zone south had been successfully developed and let. The report was asking for delegated authority to dispose a part of the Industrial Zone North land.

Turning to the Industrial Zone North site, the Mayor asked whether 'best consideration' was purely financial. The Director of Finance confirmed that this was the legal requirement. The Group Head of Democracy and Governance added that the intention was to sell as a turnkey building and for the new occupier to move in when built.

The Mayor noted that the site was next to a school and asked about what types of business could occupy it. The Associate Director of Property and Asset Management advised that it would be for a dedicated business so the use of the site would be known. The proposed operation was a clean use.

Further, it was separated by the MLX corridor and the western element of the site would be reserved for access to that corridor.

Councillor Stotesbury asked about how the safety of the school site would be ensured. The Associate Director of Property and Asset Management responded that the corridor separated the two sites and the embankment meant there was no connectivity. The school site would be developed by Hertfordshire County Council, rather than the LABV.

The Mayor praised the progress that had been made, noting that this was always a long-term project and a lot had been delivered already.

RESOLVED –

That Cabinet:

1. endorses the Watford Health Campus Partnership LLP Business Plan 2022/23 for Riverwell and agrees that WBC representatives on the Partnership and Operations Board of the JV can make decisions in accordance with the business plan.

2. notes the progress made at Watford Riverwell to date in the delivery of key sites.

3. delegates to the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Chair of the Property Investment Board, authority to dispose to the successful bidder, the land in relation to Industrial Zone North provided that best consideration is demonstrated.

Mayor

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm  
and finished at 7.25 pm