
POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Monday 12 September 2016 between 7.30pm and 9.15pm.

Councillors present:

Sara Bedford (Chairman)

Diana Barber (substitute for Cllr David Sansom)

Kemal Butt

Rupert Barnes

Phil Brading (Vice-Chairman) Public Services

Stephen Cox

Paula Hiscocks

Alex Hayward

Stephen Giles-Medhurst (Sustainability, Planning and Transport)

Ty Harris

Matthew Bedford (Resources and Shared Services)

Chris Lloyd (Leisure, Community and Wellbeing)

Ralph Sangster

Alison Scarth (Health)

Andrew Scarth (substitute for Cllr Martin Trevett)

Roger Seabourne (Community Safety)

Also in attendance: Councillor Ann Shaw OBE

Officers Present:

Steven Halls, Chief Executive

Geof Muggeridge, Director of Community and Environmental Services

Joanne Wagstaffe, Director of Finance

Lyn Ware, Head of Property and Assets

Alan Head, Head of Major Projects

Phil King, Emergency Planning and Risk Manager

Nigel Pollard, Senior Finance Manager

Kevin Snow, Communications Manager

Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager

PR31/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Sansom and Martin Trevett. The substitute Members being Councillors Diana Barber and Andrew Scarth.

PR32/16 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2016 were agreed by the Committee and were signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendments:

Minute PR28/16 and Minute 29/16 second paragraphs to read “Members did not support the appeal and agreed that the policy had been adhered to and that they did not qualify for an award of Discretionary Rate relief.”

PR33/16 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman ruled that the following items, which had not been available for five clear days before the meeting were of sufficient urgency to be considered by the Committee for the reasons indicated:

Item 11 – South Oxhey Initiative – to enable the Community Board to be set up and for the Board to meet on 26 September 2016.

Item 13a - Investment in Property vision – WRVS site - to enable the development of the WRVS site to progress.

PR34/16 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None received.

PR35/16 SERVICE PRESENTATIONS – PROPERTY AND ASSETS, FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES

Members received service presentations on Property and Assets, Finance and Corporate Services. Members thanked the officers for their informative and interesting presentations.

RESOLVED:

That the presentations be noted.

PR36/16 DESIGNATION OF HOUSING PROVIDERS TO ISSUE COMMUNITY PROTECTION NOTICES

The report requested Council approval to:

- Designate Thrive Homes and Watford Community Housing Trust as Housing Providers able to issue Community Protection Notices under the Anti-Social Behaviour (Authorised Persons) Order 2015.
- Authorise the Chief Executive to designate additional housing providers as the Solicitor to the Council is satisfied that their staff have been trained.

The Lead Member for Community Safety moved the recommendations at Section 11 of the report.

Members of the Committee made the following comments:

Vulnerable people in the local community may not understand the implications of CPNs (Community Protection Notices).

The MoU, if signed, would not have binding legal effect and is not intended to and does not create any legal relationship between the parties.

On legal matters, and costs associated with this, were there any cost limitations.

There would be controls in place for all organisations issuing notices in the Council's name. All officers would receive training to be able to issue the notices.

The Lead Member for Community Safety said he would clarify with Councillor Ty Harris the issue of legal costs and cost limitations.

On the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and the other parties, when the Heads of Terms were agreed the details should be presented to the Committee for agreement.

The Chairman said the Head of Community Partnerships should be delegated to issue and sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). There were clear parameters set out for the MoU and it was a statutory instrument and was an agreement between a team of agencies not just one person. Once the Memorandum of Understanding was compiled it would be circulated to the Committee Members. The issuing of CPNs had to be carried out within the law.

On being put to the Committee the recommendations at Section 11 in the report with the additional recommendation that the agreed Memorandum of Understanding be circulated to all Councillors was CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RECOMMEND:

1. To designate both Thrive Homes and Watford Community Housing Trust to issue Community Protection Notices (CPNs) and Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for the breach of CPNs subject to the Solicitor for the Council being satisfied that their proposed designated officers have been appropriately trained.
2. To authorise the Chief Executive to designate any other appropriate Housing Provider to issue CPNs and FPNs subject to the Solicitor for the Council being satisfied that their proposed designated officers have been appropriately trained.
3. That the Head of Community Partnerships be delegated to issue and sign a Memorandum of Understanding with each designated Housing Provider, and appropriate protocols for the issue of CPNs and FPNs.
4. That when the Memorandum of Understanding is agreed a copy be circulated to all the Councillors.

PR37/16 REVIEW OF STRATEGIC RISKS

This report gave details of progress against the Risk Treatment Plans for the Strategic Risks identified in the Strategic Plan 2016-19.

The Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services advised that the Members had requested that an additional risk be added with regard to staffing and resilience. The Emergency Planning and Risk Manager said that operational risks were critical in some services but not others. The operational risk was owned by the Individual Head of Service. A report could be presented to the Audit Committee around operational risks.

It was noted that the public perception of the Council remained above the Hertfordshire average. Members asked if further information could be provided on this. It was agreed that officers would circulate headline information from the recent surveys on this.

RESOLVED:

That the Policy and Resources Committee note the review of the Strategic Risk Register and approve the amendments to the Risk Assessment & Treatment Plans.

PR38/16 EXEMPTION FROM PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE RULES

The report advised Members that a partial exemption to the Procurement process was approved by the Director of Community and Environmental Services and the Head of Property Services under the Limited Market exemption and the Exceptional Circumstances exemption as permitted by the Council's Constitution.

On being put the Committee the recommendation was declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the action taken.

PR39/16 RENEWAL OF THREE RIVERS MUSEUM LEASE

The report provided an update on the current lease arrangements for Three Rivers Museum in Basing House which would expire on 29 September 2016.

A Member asked if the business rates for the Museum, which the Council paid, could be presented as charity business rates which provided an 80% reduction.

In response to a question on the proposed increase in the rent from £100 to £700 and whether it could be incremental, the Head of Property and Assets said the Museum had offered £700 as the rent charge.

On being put to the Committee the recommendations in the report were declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

1. To agree a 5-year lease of part of Basing House currently occupied by the museum to Three Rivers Museum at a rent of £700 per year from 1 October 2016 to run concurrently with the Rivertech Lease
2. That all other details of the lease terms be delegated to the Interim Head of Property Services.

PR40/16 ADVERTISING REVENUE GENERATION

This report outlined progress on the advertising revenue generation project. Progress was reported to this Committee at its meeting on 13 June. A copy of that report together with an update, was sent to the Strategic Services Review Working Group for their meeting on 25 July at their request.

Members raised concerns with regard to the progress made on this project and the limited money generated. Members were concerned that there would be a 3rd edition of Three Rivers Times.

Members noted that budget monitoring would be updated to indicate that the income targets would not be met.

Members were of the opinion that the 3rd edition of Three Rivers Times should be

withdrawn. They requested that a report come back to the Committee at the next meeting with options available to recover the financial situation.

Members did not share the Officers' optimism that the income target could be generated in the second half of the financial year. They also asked that the maintenance costs for the roundabouts be clarified.

The report needed to clarify why the signs on the roundabout in South Way/Langley Way had been removed. It was noted that the signs had been removed at the request of the Council's Legal Team.

If Members of the Committee had any further questions they should be emailed to the Communications Manager.

RESOLVED:

That a report be presented to the October meeting responding to the points above raised by Members.

PR41/16 SOUTH OXHEY COMMUNITY BOARD

The Head of Major Projects advised that work had commenced on site that day.

The Committee were asked to agree the Terms of Reference of the South Oxhey Community Board as delegated by Council at their meeting on 12 July 2016.

The role of the Board was to provide communication between Countryside and Home Group and the residents of South Oxhey. The Board would not take any strategic or financial decisions but would focus on day to day issues

There was substantial discussion on various paragraphs of the draft SOCB Constitution as tabled. It was agreed that officers would provide a track changed version in accordance with the comments and circulate to the Chairman then Members for agreement. If agreement could not be reached the matter would come back to the Committee at the October meeting.

Members noted that the names of the Councillors nominated to be Members of this body had not been put forward.

RESOLVED:

That the establishment of the SO Community Board which will be administered by the Developers be agreed but that the final Terms of Reference be delegated to the DCES in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee and Group Spokespersons. If agreement could not be reached on the Terms of Reference they come back to the October meeting.

PR42/16 WORK PROGRAMME

To agree the Committee's work programme. Members noted the work programme.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

PR43/16 INVESTMENT IN PROPERTY VISION – WRVS SITE

The objective of this brief was to put forward a very realistic vision of the need to invest in property, without the need for a Special Purpose Vehicle, which can be mobilised very quickly upon approval by the Committee specifically of the WRVS building at The Bury.

The Chairman of the Committee asked for an additional recommendation to be added that planning permission be sought by the Council as soon as possible.

Members made the following comments:

Was this location the right place for this type of housing. The site could command a lot of money if sold to a developer. The hall was a community asset and there was no other public hall to use.

The Committee noted that the units were 14m x 31m. The Council would receive a capital return as the capital value increased each year and the scheme would be fully recoverable in 6.41 years.

Concern was raised this was a quick fix. There were longer term problems and a more permanent site was required for longer term use.

The Interim Head of Property and Assets said the Council were looking at longer term sites to enable Three Rivers Families to live in Three Rivers. These units would only be suitable for couples but future units would have 2 bedrooms

There was an urgent requirement for these types of units but Members noted that planning consent would be required.

The Director of Community and Environmental Services said the site was close to the town centre and Council offices, the CAB office and local shops. The site was located in a Conservation area but the current building had little architectural merit. Any decision on the buildings would be made by the Planning Committee.

A Member asked that residents be advised of the planning procedures and the need to apply for planning permission, and the requirement to provide temporary housing to reduce costs. The site was also next to a listed building and within the Conservation Area and next to public open space.

On being put to the Committee the recommendations were declared CARRIED the voting being 11 For, 4 Against and 1 Abstention.

RESOLVED:

1. That the P&R committee agrees to the development of the WRVS site for Temporary Accommodation either in partnership or solely a TRDC investment.
2. That all details of the development be delegated to the interim Head of Property Services in consultation with the Chair of Policy and Resources Committee
3. That officers submit a planning application as soon as possible.

PR44/16 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

“that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt

information as defined under paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act. It has been decided by the Council that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.”

PR45/16

SOUTH OXHEY INITIATIVE

This item had been withdrawn.

CHAIRMAN