
POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**MINUTES**

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Monday 10 December 2018 between 7.30pm and 8.37pm.

Councillors present:

Sara Bedford (Chairman)	Chris Lloyd (Vice-Chairman) (Leisure)
Rupert Barnes	Alex Michaels (Environmental Services)
Matthew Bedford (Resources and Shared Services)	Reena Ranger (sub for Cllr Angela Killick)
Stephen Cox	Andrew Scarth (Housing)
Stephen Giles-Medhurst (Economic Development)	Roger Seabourne (Community Safety and Partnerships)
Alex Hayward	Martin Trevett (Infrastructure and Planning Policy)
Paula Hiscocks	Alison Wall

Officers Present: Steve Halls, Chief Executive
Geof Muggerridge, Director of Community and Environmental Services
Joanne Wagstaffe, Director of Finance
Andy Stovold, Head of Community Partnerships
Ray Figg, Head of Community Services
Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager

PR40/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Angela Killick with Councillor Reena Ranger being the substitute Member.

PR41/18 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 5 November 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:

Minute PR28/18 Apologies for Absence

Add Councillor David Sansom.

PR42/18 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman ruled that the following item of business had not been available 5 clear working days before the meeting but were of sufficient urgency for the following reasons:

DELEGATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH (COMMERCIAL) SERVICE TO WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

To enable the Council to progress the delegation of Environmental Health (Commercial) Service to Watford Borough Council for April 2019.

Members noted that the PID on the Batchworth Depot offices had been deferred to the 22 January 2019 meeting and the work programme had been updated accordingly.

PR43/18 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None received.

PR44/18 POTENTIAL SITES - EXTENSION TO CONSULTATION PERIOD

The purpose of the report was for the Policy & Resources Committee to ratify the decision to extend the consultation deadline on the Potential Sites Document from 7 December 2018 to 21 December 2018.

A Member sought clarification on the people who had put forward the sites. The Chairman advised that the sites had been put forward by people who may have an interest in the land, were leaseholders or had a financial interest but were not Members of the Council or Officers.

RESOLVED:

That the decision be ratified to extend the consultation deadline on the Potential Sites Document to 5pm on 21 December 2018.

PR45/18 DELEGATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH (COMMERCIAL) SERVICE TO WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

This report recommended the delegation of the Environmental Health (Commercial) Service to Watford Borough Council (WBC) with effect from 1 April 2019, for a period of 5 years.

It is the culmination of two reports to Management Board (MB) dated 10 July and 2 October 2018, both of which are provided at Appendix 1.

Members raised the following questions:

Could Officers clarify the additional cost of £3,080 required to fully fund the project management costs.

Why had there been difficulty in recruiting staff? Was it the pay and conditions here as Watford seemed to have people to do the job?

Was the part-time officer happy to be TUPE to WBC?

Could Officers clarify the 0.5fte post from April to July?

The Chairman said a number of authorities were experiencing problems in recruiting staff in this area. The Lead Officer was retiring and the other staff would TUPE to WBC. The £3,080 was a one off cost. The recruitment problems were common as there were not sufficient professionals in this area. WBC had a larger department which would provide for wider career opportunities. The Council would still have responsibility for setting policy.

There would be more work due to the number of establishments in Watford particularly in central and west Watford.

Members wished to be assured that residents would get an equal share of the time spent by Officers and that updates would be provided to the appropriate Committees when required. The Director of Community and Environmental Services advised that the Service Level Agreement (SLA) would include the requirement to report back to the Council through the appropriate Committee.

It was noted that the staff satisfaction levels were very high at the Council and Officers worked together well within a happy environment.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chairman the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

1. The Environmental Health (Commercial) service is delegated to Watford Borough Council with effect from 1 April 2019; and
2. Officers identify resources to fund the shortfall in 2018/19 project management costs of £3,080.

PR46/18 REVISION OF COMPREHENSIVE EQUALITY POLICY

This report recommended updates to the Council's Comprehensive Equality Policy.

Members raised the following points:

Councillor Chris Lloyd wished to thank Andy Stovold and his team for all their hard work and duly moved the recommendation to agree the policy.

In response to a question on the 14.5% of the resident population living with a long-term health problem or disability and how this compared nationally the Head of Community Partnerships agreed to provide a written response.

The Head of Community Partnerships advised that the population was getting bigger and more than half of the elderly people in the District were living with a long-term health problem or disability, which reflected what the national picture was with the majority of over 65s having one or two long term health conditions.

On career and income deprivation the Council were gathering data on residents with caring responsibilities and to ensure they were sign posted to the services available to them. Officers could pull together a briefing for Members.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chairman the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED

That Policy and Resources Committee agree the revised Comprehensive Equality Policy and that officers undertake a further review of the policy in 2021.

PR47/18 STRATEGIC, SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PLANNING 2019-2022

This report enabled the Committee to comment on the Draft Strategic Plan, the Committee's draft service plans, and the growth bids to support them for the three years commencing on 1 April 2019.

Strategic Plan

No comments made.

Service Plans

Economic and Sustainable Development

With regard to Performance Indicators ESD09 “Vacancy rate for town and district centres” and ESD02 “Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)” they were not within the remit of this Committee. The reason the service plan had been presented to the Committee was with regard to the Local Plan which was within their remit.

Corporate Services

A Member asked about the public perception of not printing Three Rivers Times. Should the Council be looking at more efficient use of social media to improve contact with residents? The District had a high elderly population who may not be looking at facebook or twitter regularly. Should the Council be looking at other marketing outlets e.g. libraries, the website, local paper or my news? On the publicity for the local plan consultation there was misinformation circulated that residents did not know about the consultation.

The Chairman advised that some Members provided newsletters to their Ward residents. She reminded Members that the consultation on the Local Plan was not statutory and no other Council was undertaking this form of consultation. This Council was getting more information to residents and making the process more transparent.

The Head of Community Partnerships advised that the Council were able to engage with the older generation via the internet it was the younger generation that the Council had problems engaging with.

Customer Service Centre

The Chairman wished to comment this was a great success of this Council.

Elections

A Member commented on the Performance Indicator ES01 “Canvass return” which had a target of 90%. He noted that the return was currently at 91.37% but if drilled down further the returns varied for each polling districts with his particular polling district being only 78.43%.

Property and Major Projects

On the Performance Indicator to provide additional temporary accommodation in the district the target was 37 in 2019/20 and 37 2020/21 could the Council look to provide a minimum of 2 bedrooms in a property. The Director of Community and Environmental Services advised that the accommodation would be different sizes.

Revenue and Benefits

No comments.

Finance

No comments.

Legal

No comments

Committee

A Member supported the enhancing of the facilities in the meeting rooms and asked if the reports could all be published with the agendas.

Project Initiation Documents (PIDs)

South Oxhey Playing Fields Green Flag Facilitation Works – Phase 1

Welcomed the PID.

Watersmeet Cinema Screen Replacement

Welcomed the contribution of £15k from the Friends of Watersmeet Film Society and asked if the Council could formally thank them. Replacing the screen would allow the films to be shown during the day when other productions were taking place.

Watersmeet Hot Water Pipework Replacement

No comments made.

Community Safety Partnership

Noted.

ASB Casework

Noted.

Integration via service connectors from Firmstep to Uniform for Licensing applications

Noted the PID would provide a more efficient and cost effective system.

Three Rivers House Transformation

The Committee recognised the need for external use of the building but with the proposal for the depot could the Council use the building for their own staff?

The Chairman said both projects would look at the best use of the accommodation available.

Migration to the Cloud

Noted the PID.

RESOLVED:

1. Considered and noted the draft Strategic Plan attached at Appendix 1; and
2. Considered the draft service plans and PIDs and noted their contents.

PR48/18 LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT – FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The purpose of the report was to furnish Members with a summary of the initial results of the leisure consultation and needs analysis. This included an

overview of the financial considerations for pricing of activities within the Leisure Management Contract, which, if the recommended pricing was approved, provided Members with the further recommendation to retain the full sports hall.

The Chairman wished to thank the Head of Community Services and a number of other staff including the Leisure Contracts Officer, Section Head Financial Planning and Analysis and Leisure Development Manager for all their work with the Lead Members in getting a resolution to retain the full sports hall at William Penn Leisure Centre. Councillor Sara Bedford moved the recommendations, duly seconded by Councillor Chris Lloyd.

A Member said it was good to see the Council had listened to the community and the sports hall would be retained but would mean the prices would need to be increased but hoped this would not deter people from using the sports hall.

It was advised that the increased charges across the Council's leisure facilities were generally below our neighbours and a number of users of the sports hall at William Penn had advised that they would be happy to pay at least £1 a week more. An annual presentation by Sports and Leisure Management (SLM) on their performance would be presented to the Leisure, Community and Environment Committee in due course.

A Member noted the large increase in playing badminton at the Centre when compared with other charges. The Head of Community Services advised that when compared with our neighbouring authorities the charges were very comparable even with the increases.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RESOVLED:

1. The comparative price increases as detailed in the 'Proposed Above Inflation Price Increase' column of Appendix 1 be adopted;
2. As a result of the agreement between TRDC and SLM on fees and charges, together with proposals for new sports and leisure activities across Three Rivers, the William Penn Leisure Centre Sports Hall remain as a four-court hall;
3. A budget variance of circa £37,000 per annum over the remaining 19 years of the contract be included in the budget setting process for 2019-2022;
4. The capital budget of £635,000 be removed from the capital programme for 2019-20;
5. Negotiations continue to take place between Head of Community Services and SLM to investigate options to reduce the average annual budget deficit over the remaining life of the contract; and
6. Information obtained from the Open Space Sport and Recreation Strategy, Public Health Data and Needs Analysis be utilised to develop a new programme of physical activity projects targeted at inactive sectors of the community, most at risk from health related conditions.

The Committee received their work programme and noted that the PID on the Batchworth depot office had been deferred to the 22 January meeting and the work programme had been updated accordingly.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be agreed.

CHAIRMAN