

# CABINET - 11 October 2018

## MINUTES

Present: Councillors: I Courts, T Diccico, K Grinsell, R Hulland, K Meeson, T Richards OBE, A Rolf, J Tildesley, J Burn and G Slater

Officers: Nick Page, Paul Johnson, Deborah Merry, Andrew Kinsey, Anne Brereton, Sally Hodges, Jenny Wood, David Harris, John Pitcher, Rachel Westwood and Jane Game

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Sleigh OBE.

### 2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Cllrs Richards and Courts reminded Members that they represented the Council on the North Solihull Regeneration Partnership and Councillor Courts was also sat on ESCIF. Councillor Hulland reminded Members he sat on the Combined Authority Investment Board.

### 3. QUESTIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

A resident of the Borough Honorary Alderman Graham Craig had given notice that he wished to address Cabinet on North Solihull Regeneration – Proposed Disposal of Public Open Space Land at Three Locations in Smith's Wood. Honorary Alderman Craig's deputation was referenced under the relevant minute.

### 4. MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting held on 6 September 2018 were submitted for information only.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2018 be received for information.

### 5. NORTH SOLIHULL REGENERATION – PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE LAND AT THREE LOCATIONS IN SMITH'S WOOD.

The Cabinet was invited:

i) to consider objections and determine whether to approve the intention to dispose of an area of public open space land at Smith's Wood, following public notice advertisement as required by Section 123 (2A) Local Government Act 1972, to facilitate the delivery of the North Solihull Partnership (NSP) proposals for mixed tenure housing provision to be provided by WM Housing Group - **Clopton Crescent – Plan 1;**

ii) to note that the public notice advertisements for the intention to dispose of two further areas of land could be superseded by a proposal to develop the sites by

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Solihull Community Housing (SCH) on behalf of the Council under an 'Additional Housing Revenue Account Borrowing Programme' Bid. However, for completeness of process, the objections were reported for Cabinet to determine whether to approve the intention to dispose of the sites to NSP/WM Housing Group in the event that the SCH proposals did not precede - **Auckland Drive – Plan 2 and Angelsey Avenue –Plan 3**;

iii) to advise Cabinet that in the event that either the intention to dispose, and/or the SCH proposals were supported, a further resolution would be required to appropriate the land for planning purposes under Section 122 (2A) Local Government Act 1972, and a further advertisement process would be necessary, with any further objections received to that process also considered separately at a future meeting; and

iv) to advise Cabinet that there was a problem with the use of an email account for on-line objections to the public notices, but that officers were confident that as there would have been an automated failure response advising that the email had not been delivered, and that there was an alternative postal address on all the notices, that this did not invalidate the process and required the notice to be re-advertised.

Members were reminded that the North Solihull Partnership (NSP) approved Business Plan had an objective to deliver housing growth, improve housing mix, environmental improvements and quality of life in the North Solihull Regeneration Area. Following a series of public consultation events and member briefings an opportunity had been outlined to provide three mix tenure housing developments through the Regeneration Agreement partner, WM Housing Group at Clopton Crescent, Auckland Drive and Angelsey Avenue.

Members were advised that before WM Housing Group committed to a full design process and submitted detailed Planning Applications at risk, they needed certainty that the sites would be available for disposal to them. WM had indicated that should Cabinet resolve to proceed with the proposed Solihull Community Housing (SCH) on behalf of the Council under an 'Additional Housing Revenue Account Borrowing Programme' Bid, they would only continue with Clopton Crescent.

Following Cabinet approval the formal public notices had been advertised. The objections received had been collated and distributed to all Cabinet Members and Oppositions Leaders prior to the meeting, and a summary of objections had been included in the report as set out at section 3.7. Members were also advised that a petition had been handed in at full Council on 9 October objecting to the proposals.

Members were advised that in considering the intention to dispose of the areas of public open space, Cabinet also needed to take into account all relevant matters which included policy decisions already taken relating to the North Solihull Regeneration programme, and the Solihull Local Plan policies that established the principle of housing development and also required satisfactory mitigation through the Planning Application process.

The Planning Application consultation process would enable due consideration to be given to containing detailed design measures to mitigate concerns raised where appropriate, and the NSP, WM and/or SCH proposals would be subject to further engagement with local residents, Ward Members and other stakeholders wishing to contribute to that process.

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If Cabinet recommended to proceed with the intention to proceed with disposal, there would be subsequent resolution and consideration required at a future meeting on the outcome of the Planning Application process and any mitigating terms to be contained within terms for a Development Agreement that Cabinet would also need to approve.

Honorary Alderman Craig in addressing Cabinet advised Members of the concerns he had which in summary included:

- the issuing of the formal public notices, which he considered to be inadequate and the fact that interested parties had not been made aware of the proposals such as Smiths' Wood Parish Council;
- that the land in question was the only remaining green open space in a very built up area; and
- the impact the loss of this amenity would have on the community and environment.

In opening up the debate Members also raised concerns over the issuing of formal public notices, which may have been issued in accordance with the statutory procedure but perhaps more should have been done, given the significance of the proposal.

Members noted the need for more affordable housing but also recognised the benefits green open space afforded residents and the environment generally. Members wanted to understand the impact of the loss of the green space and questioned what mitigating actions could be taken to off set the loss of this amenity as this detail was missing in the report.

In light of the issues raised Members felt that the report needed to be deferred until the issues highlighted above could be addressed, and a further report be presented to Cabinet. Members also noted this decision would need to be reflected in minute 6.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the report be deferred so the points above can be addressed and a further report be presented to Cabinet.

## **6. ADDITIONAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BORROWING PROGRAMME**

The Cabinet was provided with details of the housing schemes to be funded by the Council's bid under the 'Additional Housing Revenue Account Borrowing Programme' and invited to provide approvals for the delivery of these schemes by Solihull Community Housing on behalf of the Council.

The report before Cabinet updated Members following their previous decision made in September 2018. Members were advised that the "Additional Housing Revenue Account Borrowing programme" bid had been submitted at the end of the September. Section 3.7 of the report detailed the housing schemes to be funded by the borrowing bid, and the report provided further detail regarding the proposed schemes and financial implications.

Members were advised that the development of new Council homes would increase the revenue base of the HRA. The social rented homes would be allocated to

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households on the Council's housing waiting list; the shared ownership homes provided an opportunity for local first time buyers to become home owners.

The proposed bid was consistent with the approved Action Plan for 'strengthening the delivery of and access to housing' and it complemented other approvals which were using the HRA to invest in additional affordable homes.

In light of the decision previously made (minute 5) by Cabinet to defer a decision on Anglesey Avenue and Auckland Drive, schemes 1 to 3 set out in the table in section 3 of the report needed to be deferred, which meant decisions (i),(ii), (iii) and (v) before Cabinet were deferred.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the submission of a planning application for schemes 4,5,6 and 7 in the report be approved and the receipt of a further report on the detailed business cases at a future Cabinet meeting be received.

## **7. UPDATE ON 'GREENING THE GREY' PROGRAMME OF WORKS**

The Cabinet was provided with an update on the 'Greening the Grey' programme of works.

Members were reminded that 'Greening the Grey' was a £16.8m programme of integrated projects that collectively sought to provide more sustainable travel choices by implementing and promoting enhancements to corridors that included the provision of walking and cycling. The programme would result in the creation of travel options with associated environmental and biodiversity improvements in the Borough that would be: attractive, interesting, sustainable and healthy.

The report detailed the individual projects as well as the financial implications which were set out in section 4.4.of the report.

The Director of Managed Growth and Communities updated Members on the fact that bids for Small Habitat Grants had been oversubscribed, that the routes set out in the report were an enhancement to what already existed. The Director also confirmed that a clear communication strategy would be devised to insure residents and members understood what the programme was trying to achieve.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the update of the four projects that fall under 'Greening the Grey' Programme and the name change to 'Wildlife Ways' be noted;
- (ii) That the routes and interventions proposed – Section 1.3 of Appendix 01 be supported;
- (iii) That the project team be authorised to advertise the shared use/cycle track statutory notices in the third year of the programme (20/21) – Section 3 of Appendix 01; and

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- (iv) That it be agreed that the Council adopt a flexible approach to grant payments to successful applicants to the Small Habitat Grants Programme – Section 4.4.3. to 4.4.5.

### **8. SOCIAL HOUSING GREEN PAPER**

The Cabinet was informed of the Green Paper 'A new deal for social housing'; invited to comment and agree delegated arrangements for approval of the Council's response.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Housing advised Members that following the Grenfell Tower tragedy in June 2017, the Secretary of State for Communities announced that the Government would bring forward a Green Paper on social housing.

The Housing Minister instigated a series of housing events to meet with social housing tenants. These events and online submissions helped to inform the Green Paper. The deadline for responses was 6 November.

The report detailed the five key principles the Green paper was based on, the main proposals, some significant announcements and a number of points the Council welcomed. There were 48 consultation questions set out in Appendix A along with draft responses, which would be further developed in light of recent announcements made by the Prime Minister in relation to the government lifting the borrowing cap on Councils to allow them to build more homes.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the content of the Green Paper 'A new deal for social housing' be noted;
- (ii) That the comments on any of the consultation questions be agreed; and
- (iii) That it be agreed that the Council's response be delegated to the Cabinet Portfolio Holders for Managed Growth, Environment and Housing and Stronger Communities and Partnerships.

### **9. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS – HALF YEAR REVIEW 2018/19**

The Cabinet was provided with an update on economic conditions in Solihull, specifically the investment trends for the first half of 2018/19, as a key indicator of economic health and an identified priority for the regional devolution agenda.

The report detailed national, regional and Solihull trends.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the investment trends and their implications for the delivery of Managed Growth be noted.

### **10. LEISURE, TOURISM & SPORT UPDATE**

The Cabinet was provided with a progress report of the new Leisure, Tourism and Sport portfolio.

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The report detailed progress on a number of projects which the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Tourism and Sport addressed which covered the following areas:

- Birmingham 2022 (The Commonwealth Games)
- Coventry City of Culture
- Velo Birmingham 2019 and beyond
- Sport England Active Communities Project
- Tourism
- Libraries and Arts
- Events

**RESOLVED:**

That the progress made to date be endorsed.

### **11. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED:**

That, pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting for the remainder of the business to be transacted, on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information in terms of paragraphs 3 and 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the said Act

### **12. TO SEEK AUTHORITY FOR THE ACQUISITION OF LAND AT SIMON DIGBY**

The meeting ended at 19:35