

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 17th October 2012

**Present: Councillor A Barnes (in the Chair)
Councillors Jackson, Lamb, MacNae, Marriott and Serridge**

**In Attendance: Mrs H Lockwood, Chief Executive
Mr S Sugarman, Director of Business
Mr P Seddon, Head of Finance & Property Services
Mrs J Cook, Committee Officer**

**Also Present: Councillors Ashworth, Creaser, Crawforth, Eaton,
Farrington, Gill, Hughes, McInnes and D. Smith**

**2 members of the public
1 member of the press**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Cabinet members were present.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5th September 2012 be approved as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Leader of the Council stated that public questions could only be asked at this point in the meeting.

Mr Entwistle stated that the council should not sell off their property assets but should lease them instead. The Leader of the Council noted Mr Entwistle's comment.

6. PETITIONS SCHEME REVIEW

- 6.1 The Portfolio Holder for Customers, Legal and Licensing introduced the report which informed Members of the proposed amendments to the Council's Petitions Scheme.

It was noted that the Localism Act 2011 had repealed the requirement for the Council to have a Petitions Scheme; however, it had been decided to keep the procedure in a simpler format.

6.2 The Portfolio Holder noted that the recommendations from Policy Overview and Scrutiny had been implemented and that a petitions leaflet would be produced to explain and simplify the process to members of the public.

6.3 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-

- It was noted that it was important in terms of community engagement for the Council to retain the Petitions Scheme and simplify the process.

Resolved:

1. That the existing process for submitting petitions be simplified by adding the following wording to the Council's Constitution (page 9 part 2 – 3.01 a) voting and petitions) and withdrawing the current petition scheme:-
Other petitions, either paper based or in electronic format can be submitted to the Council who will decide how to deal with the petition and notify the petition organiser. To submit a petition please address it to: Legal and Democratic Services, The Business Centre, Futures Park, Bacup, OL13 0BB
2. That a petitions leaflet be produced as a best practice guide for people to submit petitions.

Reason for Decision

To make the scheme simpler and less onerous.

Alternative Options Considered

None

7. DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT – TRAIL HEAD CENTRE

7.1 The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Tourism and Leisure introduced the report which updated Members on the progress made with negotiations on this project and asked for delegated authority for himself and the Director of Business to finalise the development agreement and dispose of the site at an undervalue. It was noted that this was an exciting development for the area and would result in an increase in visits to the facility and spend in this area of the Borough.

7.2 The Portfolio Holder noted that a local firm, Ride On, had been appointed as the preferred partners for this project and an outline scheme and agreement were being developed. It was noted that the firm was funding this project, however, it would be necessary to dispose of the land at an undervalue. The Portfolio Holder further noted that the land to the rear of Futures Park had been offered for sale for 6 years with no buyers.

Resolved:

1. That the progress on negotiations to develop a Trail Head Centre be noted.

2. That delegated authority will be granted to the Director of Business in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Tourism and Leisure to finalise the details of the development agreement and dispose of the site at an undervalue.
3. That all future minor amendments to the project be delegated to the Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for Decision

To progress the development of the Trail Head Centre.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

8. ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

- 8.1 The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources introduced the report which provided Members with an interim update on the options available to the Council regarding the efficient use of its operational and surplus buildings. It was noted that this report had been to previous Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet meetings.
- 8.2 The Portfolio Holder drew Members' attention to paragraph 5.2 of the committee report which outlined the proposed actions to be taken with regard to the operational and surplus buildings.
- 8.3 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
 - It was noted that it would be good to have officers in one building which would improve communication.
 - It was noted that this was an opportunity to work with partners and stakeholders to seek value for money for the surplus buildings.

Resolved:

1. That subject to any further approval as required by the Constitution, Members approved the proposed course of action as noted in paragraph 5.2 of the report and that delegated authority be to proceed is given to the Head of Finance and Director of Business in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources.
2. That, following consultation on the One Stop Shop, a further report is brought back to Cabinet in November 2012 for a final recommendation to Full Council.

Reason for Decision

To rationalise the council's operational assets and assist the council in realising some of its financial savings target.

Alternative Options Considered

None

9. FINANCIAL MONITORING 2012/13

- 9.1 The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources introduced the report which updated Members on the financial monitoring position for 2012/13 as at the end of August 2012. It was noted that there was a favourable variance on the General Fund of £269k.
- 9.2 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
- It was noted that the report demonstrated a positive performance against the budget and strong financial controls.

Resolved

That the contents of the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

To continue robust monitoring of the council's finances.

Alternative Options Considered

None

10. QUARTER 1 FRAUD UPDATE REPORT

- 10.1 The Portfolio Holder for Customers, Legal and Licensing introduced the report which updated members on the work carried out by the Benefits Investigation Unit during quarter 1, being April to June 2012. Members' attention was drawn to section 5.5 of the report which outlined examples of some of the more extreme cases. The Portfolio Holder noted that the fraudulent claims made up less than 0.1% of the benefit claims made.
- 10.2 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
- It was noted that it was important to emphasise that the fraudulent claims made up a tiny minority of the total benefit claims made.

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

To provide members with an update on the actions taken by the Benefits Investigation Unit.

Alternative Options Considered

None

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 6.43pm

_____ CHAIR _____ DATE