

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday 30 May 2023, 7.00 pm - 7.50 pm

Conference Suite - Civic Offices

Members Present:	Councillors C Whitbread (Chairman), N Bedford (Vice-Chairman), R Balcombe, S Kane, S Patel, J Philip, H Whitbread and K Williamson
Other Councillors:	Councillors R Brookes, C McCredie and S Murray
Officers In Attendance:	Georgina Blakemore (Chief Executive), Andrew Small (Strategic Director, Corporate and Section 151 Officer), Surjit Balu (Interim Director of Housing and Property), Tom Carne (Corporate Communications Team Manager), Christopher Hartgrove (Interim Chief Financial Officer), Paula Maginnis (Service Director (Corporate Services)), Vivienne Messenger (Democratic Services Officer) and Steven Mitchell (PR Website Editor)

[A RECORDING OF THIS MEETING IS AVAILABLE FOR REPEATED VIEWING](#)

1 WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Leader of Council made a short address to remind everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the internet, and would be capable of repeated viewing, which could infringe their human and data protection rights.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor S Kane declared a pecuniary interest in the item on Acquisition of Leasehold Interest of Council owned commercial property and disposal at Cartersfield Road, as he was a Trustee of Waltham Abbey Youth 2000, 154 Brooker Road, Waltham Abbey. The Councillor had determined he would leave the meeting for the consideration of the item.

3 MINUTES

Decision:

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting of 13 March 2023 be taken as read and signed by the Leader as a correct record.

4 REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

(a) Leader Portfolio

Councillor C Whitbread welcomed his two new Cabinet members, Councillor R Balcombe and S Patel. The Leader especially thanked officers for their terrific work in making Ride London, which went through Epping and Ongar on 28 May 2023, a very successful day for the community.

(b) Finance and Economic Development

Councillor J Philip reported that the Council's Section 151 Officer and Deputy 151 Officer were now in a shared working agreement with Colchester City Council. The Portfolio Holder supported shared services. It increased EFDC's resilience as the two teams shared best practice and staff costs were shared between two councils.

(c) Housing and Strategic Health Partnerships

Councillor H Whitbread reported the Ninefields play area had recently opened, but as she had been away, Councillor S Kane had attended the well-supported community event.

(d) Community Health and Wellbeing

Councillor S Patel attended a Waltham Abbey primary school earlier today, her first Portfolio Holder engagement, and visited Epping Forest District Museum's The Tiger Who Came To Tea exhibition.

5 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE CABINET

The Cabinet noted that no public questions or requests to address the Cabinet had been received for consideration at the meeting.

6 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

It was noted that there was nothing to report as the first Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting this municipal year would be held on 18 July 2023.

7 LAUNCH OF THE NEW PEOPLE STRATEGY 2023-2027

Councillor S Kane (Customer and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder) introduced the People Strategy 2023-2027 that set out how the organisation would support our people to deliver the vision for the District, as specified in the new Corporate Plan. It provided a framework for how we planned to implement and deliver our ambitions. The aim of the Strategy was to attract the best people to work for us and support the Council to be a more modern, digital, efficient, and inclusive organisation. It was a live and agile document, able to adapt and respond to future challenges.

The report set out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendation and the decision.

Decision:

- (1) That the Cabinet agreed the refreshed People Strategy for 2023 – 2027; and
- (2) That the Cabinet requested the People Strategy be reviewed on an annual basis by the relevant scrutiny committee.

8 ASBESTOS POLICY

Councillor H Whitbread (Housing and Strategic Health Partnerships Portfolio Holder) and S Balu (Interim Housing and Property Director) introduced the report on the new, revised policy. Pennington Choices, an expert company on matters of compliance for social housing landlords, had been working with officers over the last 12 months to review all the Council's compliance policies and the new policies would be presented to Cabinet over the coming months. This policy formed part of the Council's wider organisational commitment to driving a

health and safety culture amongst staff and contractors. It was noted that the Chief Operating Officer would fulfil the role of the Responsible Person and would be the Council's overall responsible person.

The report set out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendation and the decision.

Decision:

That the Cabinet adopted Epping Forest District Council's Asbestos Policy.

9 QUALIS QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 2 (YEAR 4)

Councillor J Philip (Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder) presented the second quarter monitoring report for the 4th Qualis trading year 2022/23, which covered the period from 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023. Beyond the difficulties and challenges created by the economic factors previously reported, Qualis continued to make positive returns in 3 of its 4 companies, albeit below target levels.

The report set out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendation and the decision.

Decision:

That the Cabinet considered and approved the Qualis Quarterly Monitoring Report – Q2 (Year 4) 2022/23.

10 NEXT STAGE – DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH WEALD ALLOCATED EMPLOYMENT LAND

The Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder introduced the report, which set out options and proposals for developing out the Employment Land released on the North Weald airfield site, following the adoption of the Local Plan by the Council on 6 March 2023 and the approval of the North Weald Masterplan.

The report set out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendation and the decision.

Decision:

- (1) That Qualis be commissioned to undertake the next stage of design, costing and options development for the balance of employment land released at North Weald under the Local Plan;
- (2) That Qualis be permitted to undertake preliminary work and commissioning using the earmarked provision held by the Council for North Weald; and
- (3) That the Cabinet recommended that Council be requested to make provision in the Capital Programme for £500,000 to fund this work ahead of proposals coming forward for the next stages of work to progress this scheme.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS - QUARTER 4 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 (PROVISIONAL OUTTURN)

The Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder introduced the quarter 4 (Provisional Outturn) report for 2022/23 financial year. This set out the 2022/23 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account positions for both revenue and capital, as at 31st March 2023.

The report set out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendation and the decision.

Decision:

- (1) That the Cabinet noted the General Fund revenue position at the end of Quarter 4 (Provisional Outturn) for 2022/23 (Appendix A);
- (2) That the Cabinet noted the General Fund capital position at the end of Quarter 4 (Provisional Outturn) for 2022/23 (Appendix B);
- (3) That the Cabinet noted the Housing Revenue Account revenue position at the end of Quarter 4 (Provisional Outturn) for 2022/23;
- (4) That the Cabinet noted the Housing Revenue Account capital position at the end of Quarter 4 (Provisional Outturn) for 2022/23 (Appendix C); and
- (5) That the Cabinet noted and approved the Movements on Earmarked Reserves presented in Paragraphs 3.3 to 3.5, including the proposal to fund one-off severance costs of £260,025 from available resources within the District Development Fund (DDF).

12 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press were **not** excluded from the meeting for the item of business set out below on grounds that it did not involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) or are confidential under Section 100(A)(2):

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Information Paragraph Number
14	Acquisition of Leasehold Interests of Council Owned Commercial Property and Disposal at Cartersfield Road	3

13 ACQUISITION OF LEASEHOLD INTERESTS OF COUNCIL OWNED COMMERCIAL PROPERTY AND DISPOSAL AT CARTERSFIELD ROAD

The Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder presented the report. The Council had the option to acquire a series of long leasehold interests in a number of properties. These acquisitions provided regeneration and employment opportunities with some of these properties having been vacant for several years. The Council could also secure commercial development to provide new industrial units creating further job opportunities and estate regeneration with a sale to Qualis.

The report set out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendation and the decision.

Decision:

- (1) That the Cabinet agreed the acquisition of the long leasehold interest set out in the confidential Appendix A to this report;

- (2) That the Cabinet agreed to the sale of 50, 51-52, 60 and Unit 10 Cartersfield Road, Waltham Abbey at the lower figure of £1,722,165; and
- (3) That the Cabinet recommended that Council varied the approved Capital Programme by £1,500,000 to allow the acquisition of the properties set out within Appendix A.

CHAIRMAN