

Minutes of Cabinet

15 July 2014

Present:

Councillor R.L. Watts, Leader of the Council, Chairman of the Cabinet and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Human Resources
Councillor P. Forbes-Forsyth, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Young People, Leisure and Culture
Councillor T.J.M. Evans, Cabinet Member for Finance
Councillor N. Gething, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Fixed Assets
Councillor V.J. Leighton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Corporate Development
Councillor T. Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Environment
Councillor D. Patel, Cabinet Member for Parking services and ICT
Councillor J.M. Pinkerton OBE, Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Wellbeing and Independent Living
Councillor J. Sexton, Cabinet Member for Communications and Procurement

2079. Minutes

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 24 June 2014 were agreed as correct.

2080. Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

2081. *Replacement payment system for Elmsleigh surface and multi-storey car parks – Key Decision

Cabinet considered a report on a request to recommend that Council agrees to capital funding of an additional £40,000 to allow installation of a replacement payment system for Elmsleigh multi-storey and surface car parks.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that Council agrees to capital funding of an additional £40,000 to allow installation of a replacement payment system for Elmsleigh multi-storey and surface car parks.

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet noted that the proposed new payment system will allow improved customer facilities and payment methods, including online payments.

2082. Leisure Centre Needs Analysis

Cabinet considered a report on the future provision of leisure centre facilities in Spelthorne.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- Notes the needs analysis report which indicates a requirement for the provision of a leisure facility.
- Requests a specification for a feasibility study.
- Approves the marketing of the specification.
- Decides on the future direction on the basis of the specification.

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet noted that a feasibility study would potentially indicate the future direction to be taken in this project.

2083. Developing a Housing Strategy for Spelthorne Borough Council

Cabinet considered a report on the proposed development of a Housing Strategy for the Borough.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- Notes the report and agrees the recommendations set out in Section 9.0 (Appendix 1) and the action plan.
- Agrees a policy and procedure for the discharge of the homelessness duty into the private rented sector as set out in Appendix 3.
- Agrees to consult partners and the public on the draft housing strategy.
- Requests that officers, in consultation with the portfolio holder, prepare a report for October's Council detailing practical and financial solutions to the shortage of temporary, private sector rented properties, as outlined in Appendix 1, para. 6.7 of the report.

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet noted the urgent need to increase both the supply of temporary accommodation and the availability of affordable private rented sector accommodation.

2084. Contract for the monitoring of calls from the Spelthorne Alarm Network (SPAN)

Cabinet considered a report on the need to renew the current contract which is due to expire in September 2014.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agrees to delegate the appointment of a suitable contractor to the Head of Housing and Independent Living in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet noted that, by agreeing on this occasion to an exemption to the requirements of Contract Standing Orders, this would allow a full evaluation of all potential providers in the market and ensure that the best quality solution is provided for the best price.

2085. Energy Procurement – Laser 2016-2020

Cabinet considered a report on the proposed continuation of the purchase in advance of Spelthorne's energy needs.

RESOLVED that Cabinet supports officers' recommendation and continues to purchase in advance with Laser for 2016-2020.

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet noted that, as well as saving the Council money through lower energy prices, Laser also saves the Council resources and time spent on monitoring and searching for energy providers.

2086. Local Government Association (LGA) report on Economic Development

Cabinet considered an update on the progress of economic development in Spelthorne.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the report and endorses it to the effect that officers will report back to a future Cabinet with specific recommendations and business case for additional resources as required.

2087. Bailiff Contract Review

Cabinet considered a report on a proposal to extend the current Bailiff contract.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agrees to extend the existing Bailiff contract for Chandlers until 30 June 2018.

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet noted that Chandlers already provide an effective, efficient service and value for money.

2088. Review of Discretionary Compensation Policy (redundancy payments)

Cabinet considered a report on the need to update the Discretionary Compensation Policy to reflect changes in the Local Government Pension Scheme from 1 April 2014.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the current arrangements and agrees any changes required as a result of the new Local Government Pension Scheme.

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet noted that Councils are required to have a policy on how they will exercise discretionary powers deriving from the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006.

2089. Leader's Announcements

The following are the latest service updates from various Council departments.

The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester visited Surrey on Tuesday 8 July to hear about the devastating floods which affected the County earlier in the year and to meet the staff, agencies, and volunteers who helped residents. The couple visited the Hythe Centre in Runnymede before visiting some of the worst hit flood areas in Runnymede and Spelthorne and then moving onto Spelthorne's Council Offices. There the couple met local councillors and staff who provided essential support such as taking calls from residents and providing emergency accommodation and sandbags. They also spent time with the volunteers who helped their communities during the critical phase and subsequent clean-up efforts.

The Communications team is increasing the resource dedicated to social media such as Twitter and Facebook for a trial period of six months. It is hoped the trial will improve awareness of Council news and events and help residents to feel more closely involved with the Council.

Communications is continuing to work with Brooklands Radio to arrange interviews with Cabinet Members. Interviews with Cllrs Watts, Forbes-Forsyth, Evans and Sexton have already been aired and the next interview, with Cllr Nick Gething, can be heard at 1pm on Wednesday 16 July.

Team Spelthorne celebrated a successful weekend at the 18th annual P&G Surrey Youth Games. Young people from across the Borough represented Team Spelthorne in 28 teams at the weekend event at Surrey Sports Park in Guildford. The team won the Surrey County Playing Fields Fair Play Award as well as silver medals in girls' tag rugby and under nine girls' football. Bronze medals were won in tennis, Boccia and lacrosse. Nine judo competitors also picked up individual medals.

The Independent Living team recently held a vote to choose a name for the recently formed high needs group at the Greeno Centre in Shepperton. The chosen name, OPAL (older people actively living), was the clear winner. The group now has approximately 50 members attending each week and a number of successful trips and BBQs have already been held. The team is looking at the possibility of introducing a similar group at the Fordbridge Centre in Ashford.

As part of a community safety initiative, the Council has funded a replacement for the radio system which links retailers, pubs and restaurants with Police and the town's CCTV. The new digital radio link will enable shop staff to warn each other about suspicious behaviour and the presence of known shoplifters in the town centre. Around 75 shops pubs and restaurants have already signed up to the scheme.

Two tennis courts at Stanwell Recreation Ground have undergone refurbishment thanks to a grant of £21,000 given to Spelthorne Council by the SITA Trust. The work has included a new tarmac surface being laid, the courts being painted and remarked, new posts, sockets and nets and a new chain-link fence around the perimeter of the courts. By way of celebration, free coaching sessions for adults, juniors and wheelchair users will be provided by Tennis Focus Academy on Saturday 19 July.

Staines Cemetery, Sunbury Cemetery and Sunbury Walled Garden have been entered into South & South East in Bloom for the third year in a row; the judging took place this week and the initial feedback has been very positive. The judge was very pleased with the hard work carried out at all sites and was impressed by the close working relationship between Spelthorne Council, Lotus Landscapes and the Friends of Sunbury Park. Last year Sunbury Cemetery and the Sunbury Walled Garden were awarded first place in their respective categories; we will find out in the autumn how well out entries did this year.

Customer Services is introducing some improvements to the telephony system at the end of July which will provide customers with more functionality including the option to request a call back when phone lines are busy.

The Council is in discussions with the Surrey Social Services team to see if they are interested in renting more space on the ground floor to provide a hub of services for residents.

The Council has secured the conviction of an Ashford woman for fraudulently claiming Housing and Council Tax Benefit and Income Support. Joanne Hodgson of Metcalf Road in Ashford was convicted at Guildford Crown Court on 27 June and given a 26 week prison sentence which has been suspended for two years. Ms Hodgson had claimed she was a lone parent but in reality was living with her partner. The fraud, committed over a six year period, resulted in an overpayment to her of £48,717.

The Council also secured the conviction of Mrs Aysoo Ruhomaun of Staines-upon-Thames who failed to declare a change in her circumstances (receiving an occupational pension). This affected her Benefit claim and resulted in her being overpaid approximately £5,800 in Housing and Council Tax Benefit over a 33 month period. She was given a conditional discharge for 12 months and has already repaid most of the money.

All of the last 10 appeals against decisions made regarding planning applications have been dismissed - an indication of the quality of the original decision making.

All caravans and vehicles on land adjoining Sheep Walk in Shepperton have now been removed following extensive enforcement action by the Council.

Sir Bob Kerslake, the Permanent Secretary for the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) visited Spelthorne Council at the end of June to see the benefits of the Government's Troubled Families Programme in supporting Spelthorne families. During his visit Sir Bob met with the Supporting Families team and heard about their work and success in helping families control their debts and return to work and school.

All office moves at Knowle Green are now completed.

2090. Issues for Future Meetings

There were none.

2091. Urgent items

There were none.

NOTES:-

- (1) *Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are reminded that under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule, the "call-in" procedure shall not apply to recommendations the Cabinet makes to the Council. The matters on which recommendations have been made to the Council, if any, are identified with an asterisk [*] in the above Minutes.***
- (2) *Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are entitled to call in decisions taken by the Cabinet for scrutiny before they are implemented, other than any recommendations covered under (1) above.***
- (3) *Within three working days of the date on which a decision of the Cabinet or a Cabinet Member is published, not less than three members [one of whom must be the Chairman] of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are able to "call in" a decision;***

- (4) To avoid delay in considering an item "called in", an extraordinary meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be convened within seven days of a "call in" being received if an ordinary meeting is not scheduled in that period;**
- (5) When calling in a Cabinet decision for review the members doing so should in their notice of "call in":-**
Outline their reasons for requiring a review;
- Indicate any further information they consider the Overview and Scrutiny Committee needs to have before it in order to conduct a review in addition to the written report made by officers to the Cabinet;**
 - Indicate whether, where the decision was taken collectively by the Cabinet, they wish the Leader or his nominee (who should normally be the Cabinet Member) or where the decision was taken by a Cabinet Member, the member of the Cabinet making the decision, to attend the committee meeting; and**
 - Indicate whether the officer making the report to the Cabinet or the Cabinet Member taking the decision or his/her representative should attend the meeting.**
- (6) The deadline of three working days for "call in" by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the above decisions by the Cabinet is the close of business on 18 July 2014**