

Report from the Leader of the Council on the work of the Cabinet

This is my report as the Leader of the Council on the work of the Cabinet. It is an overview of the main business considered by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 23 September 2020. Two further items considered at this meeting on the replacement of Spelthorne Leisure Centre and Victory Place, Ashford included recommendations to Council and have been dealt with earlier on this agenda.

1. Recommendations from Committees

- 1.1 We considered recommendations from the Audit Committee concerning the Corporate Risk Register and the Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy. It was agreed to approve the Corporate Risk Register and recommend to Council the adoption of the Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy.
- 1.2 We considered and approved a recommendation from the Local Plan Task Group to publish the Local Plan Consultation Report Document.
- 1.3 We considered a report from the Property and Investment Committee to approve the acquisition of Property 'AA' for strategic regeneration within the Borough and agreed to:
 1. Approve the acquisition of the site (property 'AA') a key retail unit in the High Street, Staines for strategic regeneration within the Borough;
 2. Agree the offer submitted for the acquisition, and authorise the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Finance to undertake any necessary subsequent negotiations (including a further bid if required) and complete the acquisition of the asset;
 3. Authorise the Chief Finance Officer to decide (i) the most financially advantageous funding arrangements for the purchase, (ii) the most tax efficient method of holding the asset, and overall to ensure the acquisition is prudentially affordable; and
 4. Authorise the Group Head of Corporate Governance to enter into any legal documentation necessary to acquire the asset.

2. Affordable Housing at the former Brooklands College site, Ashford

- 2.1 We considered a report seeking approval for the payment of a grant to A2Dominion to support the provision of 26 homes for affordable rent on the former Brooklands College site in Ashford.
- 2.2 We agreed to approve the payment of the grant subject to the completion of a legal agreement which allows the Council to reclaim the grant should Brooklands Helix successfully challenge the Council's decision in relation to the CIL demand.

3. Annual Asset Investment Report

- 3.1 We considered the Annual Asset Investment Report which set out the performance at the end of the financial year March 2020 of the investment and regeneration portfolio.
- 3.2 We approved the report to ensure there is full transparency of the portfolio and its performance.

4. Asset Management Plan

- 4.1 We considered the Asset Management Plan which sets out how the Council will support delivery of its Capital Strategy.
- 4.2 The Asset Management Plan will minimise long term risk, help sustain the local economy and ensure continued and effective delivery of Council services. We agreed to:
 - 1. Approve the Asset Management Plan (AMP) for the period 2020 to 2025; and
 - 2. Delegate authority for any annual updates which may be required (excluding any substantive changes in approach) to the Group Head for Regeneration and Growth in consultation with the Deputy Leader who has responsibility for Asset Management.

5. Community Asset Policy

- 5.1 We considered the report on the Community Asset Policy which set out the proposed application and assessment process to be followed in future for the use of the Council's community assets by various organisations and community groups.
- 5.2 The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee attended the meeting to put forward that Committee's recommendations as discussed and agreed at their meeting the previous evening.
- 5.3 The views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were welcomed and it was considered that the policy could be further refined to take account of the recommendations put forward.
- 5.4 It was agreed that any decision should be deferred to the next Cabinet meeting on 4 November to allow further changes to be made to the policy and a complete list of community assets to be appended to the policy.

9. White House Hostel and Harper House Managed Services

- 9.1 Cabinet considered an exempt report on the tenders for the managed service provider for the White House Hostel and Harper House.

9.2 Cllr Bateson, as Ward Councillor, spoke of residents' concern about the management of the White House Hostel and sought assurance that the preferred bid would meet the Council's need and the monitoring of performance of the provider. Officers advised that the preferred bidder met or exceeded the requirements of the specification document. There were robust Key Performance Indicators within the contract and mechanisms to monitor performance.

9.3 It was agreed to:

1. Award the tender for the Managed Service Provider at White House and Harper House to the provider named in this report;
2. Authorise the Group Head of Corporate Governance to enter into any legal documentation necessary to formalise the appointment; and
3. Note the financial implications of the award of the tender, which will be addressed as part of annual budget setting for the 2021/22 financial years

Councillor John Boughtflower
Leader of the Council

22 October 2020