

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday 26 January 2022

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Committee members present:

Councillor Brown

Councillor Hayes

Councillor Aziz

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Upton

Councillor Turner

Councillor Arshad

Councillor Clarkson

Councillor Rowley

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Caroline Green, Chief Executive

Tom Bridgman, Executive Director (Development)

Stephen Gabriel, Executive Director for Communities and People

Susan Sale, Monitoring Officer and Head of Law & Governance

Tanya Bandekar, Service Manager Revenue & Benefits

Laura Bessell, Benefits Manager

Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services

Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Officer

Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy

Lisa Smith, Regeneration Manager

Carri Unwin, Regeneration Manager

Emma Lund, Committee and Member Services Officer

Apologies:

Councillor Walcott sent apologies.

91. Declarations of Interest

None.

92. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public

None.

93. Councillor Addresses on any item for decision on the Cabinet agenda

None.

94. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None.

95. Items raised by Cabinet Members

None.

96. Scrutiny reports

None.

97. Exploring future options for Council owned land in the City centre

The Executive Director (Development) had submitted a report to seek approval to delegate to officers the process and selection of a preferred commercial partner for the potential redevelopment of Council-owned land in the city centre. This would enable the Council to make an informed choice about its next moves.

Cllr Ed Turner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, highlighted that the Council owned a number of assets in the City centre. The approach outlined in the report formed part of a pro-active, medium term land-management plan for one of these sites and would involve an options evaluation, including possible redevelopment. It was noted that a further Cabinet decision would be required in the event that redevelopment was determined as the best option.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director Development, in consultation with the Council's Section 151 Officer, the Head of Law and Governance, and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, to agree the terms, route to market, and then select a preferred commercial partner for the potential redevelopment of council owned land in the city centre; and
2. **Note** that any decision to enter into contract with the preferred commercial partner for the redevelopment of the land would require a separate Cabinet decision. This would be taken in the round with consideration of other options, including the potential to renew the lease with existing lease holder.

98. Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022/23

The Head of Financial Services had submitted a report enabling Cabinet to consider the feedback from the recent consultation on the proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTR) for 2022/23 and to agree the principles of the new scheme to be drawn up for approval by Council.

Councillor Shaista Aziz, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities, reported that the proposal before Cabinet included a recommendation to continue to support a 100% Council Tax Reduction entitlement. This was an approach which had been managed by only a few local authorities in the country, and was to be welcomed given the

inflation pressures, particularly in relation to energy costs, which households were facing. The response to the consultation had been good, and it was considered that the proposal also addressed concerns which had been raised about keeping the scheme simple to navigate so that those who needed help could easily find it.

Cabinet Members spoke in support of the proposal and commented that it would support those who had been most adversely affected by the pandemic, helping communities to recover and promoting equal participation.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Note** the outcome of the consultation on the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme; and
2. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Financial Services to draft the details of the new Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022/23 in accordance with paragraphs 8 to 11 of this report which sets out the proposed implementation and changes to the Scheme; and
3. **Recommend** to Council to resolve to adopt the new Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022/23 taking into account the following:
 - To increase the Income Bands in line with paragraph 8 Table 1 using CPI for the Benefit Cap uprating;
 - To continue to support a 100% CTR entitlement;
 - To continue with a Banded Scheme based on Income rather than family composition;
 - To leave non dependant deductions as they are currently.

99. Proposal to remove and sell car parking decking from Oxpens car park

The Executive Director for Development had submitted a report to seek approval to remove and dispose of car park decking at Oxpens Car Park.

Cllr Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, highlighted that the decking had been installed as a temporary fixture whilst the older, larger, Westgate Car Park was being demolished and prior to the opening of the new, smaller, car park. Planning permission for the decking had now expired, and the site on which it was located was due to be transferred to OxWED LLP to enable development. Whilst the option of relocating the decking elsewhere had been investigated, no viable option had been identified. It was therefore proposed that the decking should be dismantled and disposed of.

The Leader commented that the proposal before Cabinet represented a sustainable solution in that it involved recovering as much steel as possible for re-sale.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Grant** project approval for the removal of the car park decking located at Oxpens car park and sold for recoverable steel rather than stored for potential reuse; and
2. **Delegate** to the Director of Development in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery and the Head of Law and Governance and Head of Financial Services the authority to procure, and enter into all appropriate contracts to implement the recommended option.

100.Minutes

Cabinet resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2021 as a true and accurate record.

101.Decisions taken under Part 9.3(b) of the Constitution

The Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) had submitted a report asking Cabinet to note a decision taken by the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) using the urgency powers delegated in Part 9.3(b) of the Constitution for the reasons set out in the report.

The decision had involved increasing the budget for the purchase of shares in the OxWED Limited Liability Partnership from £360,000 (agreed by Council on 29 November 2021) to £750,000,

Cabinet resolved to **note** the decision taken as set out in the report and **recommend** to Council to note the decision.

102.Dates of Future Meetings

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

9 February 2022

16 March 2022

13 April 2022

15 June 2022

13 July 2022

All meetings start at 6.00pm.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.18 pm

Chair

Date: Wednesday 9 February 2022