

COUNCIL

THURSDAY 17TH JANUARY 2013

MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION

CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2012

55. Review of Town Twinning

The Leader of the Council and the Director of Law and Democratic Services submitted a joint report setting out a review of the current position of Town Twinning activities in and around Swindon and highlighting issues raised by members of the Town Twinning Network in response to the review.

The Chair commented on the importance of Town and Civic Twinning to Swindon.

Councillor Kevin Small, a member of the Town Twinning Network, welcomed the report and highlighted the views of the Network on the merits of Town Twinning. He believed more could be done to link Town Twinning with the Council's economic development goals and, in particular, to secure access to European Union grant funding through utilising Twinning and Twinning links. He believed that more effort should be put into encouraging young people to become involved in Twinning activities. He felt that newer Councillors should also be helped to learn more about, and become involved in, Twinning activities and that Cabinet Members should act as ambassadors within their portfolio areas to promote Twinning opportunities and service involvement.

Councillor Stan Pajak, Leader of the Minority Group, welcomed the report and commented that he believed that Twinning was not often taken as seriously in the UK as it was by its international partners, where it was often seen as a matter of considerable civic pride. He referred to the Friendship Agreement with Torun in Poland and how this had developed over the years.

The Chair thanked Councillors for their thoughtful contributions and he endorsed the importance of international links to achieving a successful local economy.

Resolved – (1) That the Cabinet confirms its commitment to Town Twinning activities in and around Swindon and recognises the potential of twinning in promoting international links involving Swindon's citizens, groups and businesses.

(2) That the Cabinet records its recognition of the value of the Town Twinning Network in providing a forum for discussion and exchange of information, in addition

to supporting the development of other international links.

(3) That the importance of the Civic and Mayoral roles in supporting and promoting Town Twinning activities and that formal recognition by the Mayor's Office would provide support to the development of important international relationships, be noted.

(4) That the Council be recommended that the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor be formally appointed as *ex officio* members of the Town Twinning Network.

(5) That Cabinet Members and Board Directors be asked to consider what further support could be provided to support Town Twinning activities such as promotional and marketing activities, through the use of existing Council services.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2012

71. Economic Strategy for Swindon Consultation and Adoption (Minute for Confirmation)

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture and the Head of Commissioning, Economy and Attainment submitted a joint report concerning the outcome of the consultation undertaken on the Council's proposed "An Economic Strategy for Swindon 2012-26". (Minute 50 refers.)

Councillor Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture, referred to the significance of the Council's proposed Economic Strategy to the future of Swindon. He highlighted the comments received from the consultation exercise and the officer's response to these comments and drew attention to the suggested changes to the draft strategy to reflect the consultation responses. He thanked all the businesses and individuals who had contributed to the exercise.

The Chair welcomed the strategy and the favourable comments received in respect of its contents. He believed its adoption would provide a good framework for moving Swindon forward.

Resolved – (1) That the positive reception the proposed Economic Strategy for Swindon has received, and the constructive comments received in response to the consultation, be acknowledged and welcomed.

(2) That the Head of Commissioning, Economy and Attainment, in consultation with Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture, be authorised to agree officer responses to received comments.

(3) That the revised "Economic Strategy for Swindon 2012-26" be endorsed and the Council be requested to formally adopt it at its meeting on 17th January 2013.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the

report to the meeting.

79. Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances - Recommendations 2012/13 (Minute for Confirmation)

The Leader of the Council and the Director of Law and Democratic Services submitted a joint report setting out recommendations arising from a meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances.

The Chair advised that the Cabinet was required to consider recommendations arising from a meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances and to make appropriate recommendations to the Council. He highlighted the key recommendations of the Panel in particular that there should be no increase in the level of Councillors' Basic Allowance, and the recommendations relating to the Standards Committee and the new joint Police and Crime Panel.

Resolved – (1) That the Council be recommended to adopt the recommendations arising from the meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances held on 25th September 2012, as set out in Appendix 1 to the joint report.

(2) That the proposal of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances that there should be no change in the level of Councillors' Basic Allowances for the 2013/14 Municipal Year, be noted.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

82. Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Sites Allocations Plan- Inspectors Report and Adoption (Minute for Confirmation)

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability and the Head of Planning submitted a joint report setting out the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan, as amended by the changes identified in the Inspector's Report, to be submitted to the Council for formal adoption.

Councillor Russell Holland, Cabinet Member for One Swindon, Localities and Housing, referred to the minor changes to the Plan proposed by the Inspector. He asked whether these minor non-material changes could impact on the Council in the future.

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability, Mr Andy Brown, Service Manager-Development, Planning, advised that he believed the changes were of a minor technical nature and should not have any significant implications for this Council. However, he would consult with Planning colleagues on this issue and ensure that any matters of significance be included in the report to be presented to the Council in January 2013.

Resolved – (1) That the Council be recommended to adopt the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan, as amended by the changes identified in the Inspector's Report.

(2) That the Head of Planning and the Director of Law and Democratic Services be authorised to make minor changes to the content of the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan, if required, prior to publication, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Strategic Planning, and appropriate representatives of Wiltshire Council where necessary.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

COUNCIL

THURSDAY 17TH JANUARY 2013

MINUTES TO NOTE

CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2012

52. Financial Update 2012-13 and 2013-14.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and the Board Director, Finance, Revenues, Benefits and Property submitted a joint report concerning (a) the current forecast outturn position of the Council's Revenue Budget as at the end of August 2012, (b) the proposed move of the Integrated Community Equipment Store, (c) proposed Budget Virements, (d) the current financial position of the Housing Revenue Account and the Dedicated Schools Grant, (e) a response to a Motion at Council concerning possible financial support to first time buyers, (f) arrangements for bringing empty properties into use, (g) the transfer of Private Finance Initiative Schools to Academy status, (h) proposals for the 2013/14 Budget, and (i) proposed changes to fees and charges for Leisure services from 1st January 2013.

Councillor Mark Edwards, Cabinet Member for Finance, highlighted the contents of the report and the projected outturn of the Council's Budget. He referred to the actions being taken to manage spending and the demand pressures that the Council continued to face. Whilst he remained confident that a balanced Budget would be achieved at year-end as a result of the actions now being taken, he did not underestimate the difficulties the Council would face in both setting and achieving its Budget for 2013/14. He referred to the uncertainties around Government funding that made it extremely difficult to predict the financial position that the Council would find itself in over the next few years. He congratulated the Council's officers on their hard work and actions that they were undertaking now to equip the Council to be best placed to respond to the challenges it would face over future financial years.

Councillor Edwards commented on the various schemes available to support first time buyers in the housing market and in particular drew attention to the NewBuy Guarantee Scheme. He explained how the Council would continue to monitor the success and costs of this and similar schemes as delivered by other authorities. The Council would then be in a position to identify if this solution best met Swindon's need and to make an appropriate provision in its Budget as part of the Budget Planning process.

Resolved – (1) That the projected out-turn position of the Council's Revenue Budget for 2012/13, as set out in Table 1 and Appendices 1 and 2 of the joint report, be noted.

(2) That capital funding of up to £165,000 be made available to SEQOL to

support the move of the Integrated Community Equipment Store from Waterside to Enterprise Works, in order to help SEQOL secure a more sustainable on-going financial position, and this be funded from available Capital grants for Social Care.

(3) That the Revenue Budget virements, as set out in Appendix 3 to the joint report, be approved.

(4) That the position in relation to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) be noted.

(5) That the balance of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) School Academy conversion costs be met from within the PFI Equalisation Reserve after contributions from the schools' existing budgets, and the White Horse Federation.

(6) That, further to the decision in (5) above and noting the contents of Appendix 4 to the joint report, the Board Director, Commissioning (DASS/DCS) be authorised to negotiate and conclude agreement with the appropriate parties in respect of all necessary and ancillary documentation to be completed for a Swindon Private Finance Initiative (PFI) School to convert to an Academy, on such terms as may be approved by the Director of Law and Democratic Services in order to protect the Council's interests.

(7) That the Chief Executive, and relevant Board Directors and Directors, be authorised to progress in-year savings in connection with the Council's 2013/14 Budget, that do not impact front-line services, and to implement these as soon as possible to create cash flow capacity, including incurring severance expenditure for staff leaving the Council's employment.

(8) That approval be given to the proposed changes to Recreation (Leisure) fees and charges from 1st January 2013, noting that a further change in pricing will also be effected part-way through 2013 following a review of the overall pricing strategy.

(9) That the update provided on the options available to support first time buyers entering the housing market be noted and the Government's NewBuy Guarantee Scheme be endorsed as the most appropriate response to the Council motion of July 2011 (Minute 25, 2011/12 of the Council).

(10) That the Council be requested to note the contents of sections 9 and 10 of the joint report in response to the Motion to Council on 21st July 2011 regarding "Financial Support to First Time Buyers" (Minute 25, 2011/12 of the Council).

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2012

80. Houses in Multiple Occupation

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability and the Head of Planning submitted a joint report setting out a detailed response to a Council motion on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) that had been referred to the Cabinet and the Planning Committee by the Council on 22nd November 2011.

Mr Andy Brown, Service Manager-Development, Planning, on behalf of Councillor Dale Heenan, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability, who had left the meeting, presented the report and explained that the Motion promoted the use of using a "Direction" under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) to remove the permitted development rights that had been introduced in October 2010, and permitted the change of use of a dwelling into a HMO without the need to obtain planning permission. He referred to Government advice regarding the use of such Directions, experience from other local authority areas, and local evidence regarding HMOs.

Councillor Russell Holland, Cabinet Member for One Swindon Localities and Housing, welcomed the motion and the action of Eastcott Ward Councillors in raising the issue and the concerns of the local community. However, the Council had to take into account Government advice and it appeared that currently the area did not meet the criteria for the use of an Article 4 Direction.

Resolved – (1) That the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability write to the Secretary of State highlighting the evidence in respect of the Houses in Multiple Occupation situation in Swindon, and the problems attributed to them.

(2) That the Head of Planning be authorised to make a submission under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) to the Secretary of State once local evidence indicates that 10% of dwellings in the Ward are classed as Houses in Multiple Occupation. (This submission to request the removal of permitted development rights in Eastcott Ward that currently would allow a dwelling house to be used as a House in Multiple Occupation for occupation by up to six people.)

(3) That it be noted that the proposed planning policy HA4 in the Draft Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 endorsed by the Cabinet on 17th October 2012 (Minute 51 refers) and by the Council on 8th November 2012 (Minute 61 of Council) is to resist inappropriate levels of Houses in Multiple Occupation within the Borough.

(4) That the Board Director Delivery, be authorised to collate any data / evidence as it becomes available that may provide new or additional support for the preparation of an Article 4 Direction.

(5) That the Head of Planning investigate the feasibility of establishing a public Houses in Multiple Occupation Register to assist in the regulation, control and supervision of small Houses in Multiple Occupation.

(6) That the Council be advised of the contents of the joint report and of the decisions in (1) to (5) above.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.