

PUBLICATION: 20TH June 2014

DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: 25th June 2014

FOLLOWING THE CALL-IN PERIOD, DECISIONS INCLUDED IN THESE MINUTES MAY THEN BE IMPLEMENTED WHERE THEY HAVE NOT BEEN SUBJECT TO A CALL-IN BY A SCRUTINY COMMITTEE.

** DENOTES KEY DECISION*

CABINET MEETING

At a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Huyton on Wednesday, 18 June 2014, the following Members were

P r e s e n t:

Councillors

M Murphy
Vice-Chairperson of the Cabinet
(in the Chair)

E Connor, Ms S E Gaffney, Mrs J Harris, N F Keats, D Lonergan MRICS, A Moorhead, G J Morgan and G See.

APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor R J Round.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Cabinet held on 2 April 2014 and the special meeting held on 3 June 2014 were received as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Deputy Chief Executive's representative reported that no declarations of interest had been submitted by Members.

3. KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN CORE STRATEGY: APPROVAL OF MODIFICATIONS (*)

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Housing which sought approval to publish and consult on modifications to the emerging Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy.

Members were informed that the Plan was currently undergoing an Examination in Public by a Government Inspector to assess whether it satisfied all legal requirements and was 'sound', as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework. The Inspector's Interim Findings had identified key aspects of the Plan which required modification before he could find the Plan to be sound and in this

respect a detailed schedule of the proposed modifications had been drawn up. The Cabinet was recommended to approve the modifications so that these could then be subject to the remaining stages of Plan preparation as set out in the report.

In moving the recommendations, Councillor D Lonergan MRICS, Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Regeneration, Economy and Skills, commented that the absence of a sound Plan would lead to particular pressure from landowners submitting speculative planning applications.

RESOLVED – That:

- (i) the progress which had been made in preparing the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy, as detailed at section 3 of the report, and the Inspector's Interim Findings following the hearing sessions in November 2013, as detailed at section 4 of the report, be noted;
- (ii) in order to address the points raised by the Inspector, it be agreed that:-
 - (a) all of the sites previously identified in the Plan as 'reserve locations' for long-term release from Green Belt be identified as Sustainable Urban Extensions to be released from the Green Belt on adoption of the Plan, allocated for the primary land uses indicated in paragraph 5.3.1 of the report, and with Policies included to guide their master planning and development;
 - (b) the affordable housing target to be applied to proposals for market sector housing in current urban areas be reduced from 25% to 10% (with the target for sites being removed from the Green Belt remaining at 25%) and that these target levels of provision remain subject to consideration of development viability in each case; and
 - (c) other detailed policy changes be made to the Plan as summarised in section 6 of the report;
- (iii) the full schedule of modifications to the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy, as set out at Appendix B to the report, be approved so that these may be considered during the next steps in preparing the Plan, as set out in section 7 of the report; and
- (iv) delegated authority be granted to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Regeneration, Economy and Skills to authorise further typographical or other minor revisions to the modifications in Appendix B to the report should this prove necessary as referred to in paragraph 7.2 of the report.

4. A NEW APPROACH TO DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS IN KNOWSLEY (*)

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Housing which sought approval for changes to the Council's approach to developer contributions which would ensure that the Council's approach remained legally compliant.

Members were advised that 'developer contributions' referred to the process by which local authorities could seek infrastructure provision or financial contributions from applicants for planning permission for new development. The report set out the Council's existing approach and why this had to change, both to comply with the law and also to take account of changing local and national policy context. The report also provided an assessment of the options available to the Council and the recommended next steps in developing a new framework for developer contributions in Knowsley.

Councillor D Lonergan MRICS, Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Regeneration, Economy and Skills, commented that the decision not to pursue a Community Infrastructure Levy would be reviewed annually to ensure that it remained the best approach for Knowsley.

RESOLVED – That:

- (i) the rationale and urgency for changing the Council's approach to developer contributions be noted;
- (ii) a Community Infrastructure Levy should not be implemented in Knowsley at present and this decision be subject to annual review; and
- (iii) the proposed strategic approach to developer contributions in Knowsley, including the preparation of a Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document to guide the implementation of developer contributions in Knowsley be endorsed.

5. HEALTHY HOMES INITIATIVE 2014-16 (*)

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Public Health which provided a detailed outline of the Healthy Homes Initiative and sought approval for implementation timescales.

Members were advised that significant development work had been undertaken to establish the Healthy Homes Initiative which was a proactive and preventative initiative to tackle housing and health issues in the borough. It was indicated that the Initiative would target areas of poor quality housing and health for implementation via a team of trained Advocates who would visit every home within an identified area. A structured conversation would be held with residents in relation to the condition of their property and a range of other issues affecting their health and wellbeing. Where appropriate, and with the resident's consent, the Advocate would then generate an automated referral to one or more local services. By facilitating access to existing support services in this way the initiative would encourage residents to be healthier, more financially secure, able to work, and to look after themselves and their properties in the long term.

A full overview of the process was set out at Appendix A to the report and it was proposed that the initiative be implemented over a maximum of two years dependent on the levels of need identified and service capacity required in meeting this need.

RESOLVED – That:

- (i) progress in the development of the Healthy Homes Initiative since formal Council approval in March 2014 be noted; and
- (ii) the testing phase be implemented with effect from August/September 2014.

6. HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY 2014 (*)

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Housing which sought approval to adopt a revised Housing Assistance Policy.

It was reported that the adoption of a revised Housing Assistance Policy would allow the Strategic Housing Team to reopen the Housing Assistance Programme and prioritise existing funding towards those most in need. The Policy would extend the length of time during which repayment conditions for housing assistance applied, from 5 years to 20 years, which would maximise the likelihood of grant being recovered and being made available for recycling. This would contribute towards the sustainability of the programme and enable the Council to support more residents in the future. The revised policy would also provide a framework to allow for the provision of housing assistance following referrals made from the Healthy Homes Initiative.

RESOLVED – That:

- (i) the revised Housing Assistance Policy be adopted, in accordance with the draft set out at Appendix A to the report;
- (ii) future housing assistance programmes be delivered in accordance with the adopted Policy; and
- (iii) the Deputy Chief Executive be authorised to publish the adopted Policy.

7. 2013/14 REVENUE BUDGET - FINAL OUTTURN POSITION (*)

The Cabinet considered the joint report of the Chief Executive, the Director of Finance and Information Technology, and Chief Officers which:-

- (1) presented the Council's revenue budget outturn for 2013/14;
- (2) set out the key issues arising from the outturn position; and
- (3) proposed options for the allocation of revenue resources which were now available.

It was reported that the overall 2013/14 outturn position presented a positive picture for the Council and meant that one-off resources of £3.580m were now available to be re-prioritised. In this context, the Cabinet was asked to consider proposals to pool one-off resources and use them on a phased basis to help the Council to manage the impact of ongoing and significant reductions in Government funding.

It was further proposed that the Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Information Technology should lead a fundamental challenge of the appropriateness of all Portfolio and Council-wide reserves, and identify options to release resources to be pooled in the manner set out in the report. The Director of Finance and Information Technology would also develop a framework for how the pooled resources could be managed and released to support the Council's future Financial Strategy.

RESOLVED – That:

- (i) the Council's 2013/14 revenue budget outturn position, as set out in sections 4 and 5 of the report, be noted;
- (ii) the revised approach to the proactive use of one-off resources for treasury management purposes, as described in paragraph 4.2.3 of the report, be endorsed;
- (iii) the funding of the provision for future Business Rates Appeals as part of the outturn position relating to the Council's Collection Fund at 31 March 2014, as set out in section 6 of the report, be approved;
- (iv) the principles set out in section 7 of the report regarding the use of one-off resources in the Council's financial strategy, including the pooling of one-off resources to be released on a phased basis, be endorsed;
- (v) the Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Information Technology should undertake a fundamental review of all Council-wide and Portfolio reserves and report back to the Cabinet with proposals on the resources which can be reallocated to contribute to the Council's Financial Strategy;
- (vi) a further report be requested to inform the 2015/16 budget process on the development of priority 'ready-to-deliver' schemes which could be funded in the event of any future windfall income (such as that discussed at paragraph 4.4.1 of the report) and/or from the reallocation of unused resources; and
- (vii) the resources identified at the 2013/14 outturn stage (£3.580m in total as summarised in section 11 of the report) be set aside to contribute to the Council's proactive use of the one-off resources element of the Financial Strategy.

8. CORPORATE PLAN ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2013/14

The Cabinet considered the joint report of the Director of Policy and Partnerships and the Director of Change and Transformation which provided Members with an end of year update against the strategic outcomes within the Council's Corporate Plan.

It was reported that the Council's Corporate Plan 2013-16 had ten long term strategic outcomes, underpinned by a number of intermediate outcomes, and included a revised corporate indicator set which helped to demonstrate where Knowsley continued to face significant challenges and where Knowsley was doing relatively well. In this respect, the report provided an analysis of three of the ten

strategic outcomes where the borough continued to face its most significant challenges which had to be overcome if the vision of the 'Borough of Choice' was to be achieved. These were highlighted as:-

- children get the best possible start in life;
- residents are empowered to realise their economic potential; and
- everybody has the opportunity to have the best health and wellbeing throughout their life.

Appendices A-C provided more analysis and contextual information against each of these outcomes, detailing the key issues that had to be addressed in order to improve. Details on all remaining outcomes and indicators were set out at Appendix D to the report.

RESOLVED – That:

- (i) the end of year position against the corporate indicators, as set out in section 4.1 of the report, be approved;
- (ii) the three most significant challenges highlighted at section 4.2 of the report, each of which is discussed in more detail in appendices A, B and C to the report, be noted;
- (iii) a further update be presented to the Cabinet in November 2014 to review how the Council is using its resources to help address the three significant challenges;
- (iv) the outturn position against all of the corporate indicators, as shown in Appendix D to the report, be noted;
- (v) the Corporate Plan reporting arrangements to Cabinet, and timetable for 2014/15, as outlined at section 5 of the report, be approved; and
- (vi) a Council service performance report be submitted to Cabinet twice per year, with a focus on service performance measures rather than outcome indicators, to enable all Members of the Cabinet to review how Council services are performing.

9. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTIVITY 2014/15

The Cabinet considered the joint report of the Director of Regulation and Enforcement and the Director of Change and Transformation which provided an opportunity to influence the activity of the Overview and Scrutiny function during 2014/15.

Members were advised that the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Board formed two key elements of the Council's governance arrangements and it was crucial therefore that their activities supported and complemented each other. Both operated within the same strategic and policy framework, i.e. the Strategy for Knowsley and supporting documents, such as the Council's Corporate Plan. There was therefore an expectation that an ongoing dialogue was maintained between the two functions to ensure that activity was aligned and mutually supportive. In this respect, the report provided an opportunity for the Cabinet to reiterate its priorities and formally highlight to the Overview and Scrutiny Board where it felt the Overview

and Scrutiny function could make the greatest contribution to the achievement of those priorities.

Councillor A Moorhead, Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Corporate and Customer Services, welcomed the report and requested that the Ofsted Inspection of Knowsley's Children's Services be incorporated within the referrals to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

RESOLVED – That:

- (i) when considering its Work Plan for 2014/15, the Overview and Scrutiny Board should prioritise activity which will contribute towards the achievement of the six Pledges and the outcomes incorporated within the Corporate Plan; and
- (ii) in view of resolution (i) above, the Overview and Scrutiny Board be asked also to consider a focus on:-
 - Careers Advice for Young People;
 - Impact on Welfare Reform – Supporting People in Crisis;
 - Commissioning Review of Children's Social Care; and
 - Recycling.

Minutes 1 to 9 received as a correct record the 16th day of July 2014.

Chairperson of the Cabinet

(The meeting closed at 2.25 pm)