

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting held: 18th September 2019

Present: Councillor Russell Roberts (Chair)

Councillors Lloyd Bunday, Mark Dearing, Scott Edwards,
David Howes, Ian Jelley, Mark Rowley and Lesley
Thurland

Also Present Councillors Dutton, Lee and Scrimshaw

19.EX.10 APOLOGIES

None.

19.EX.11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Graham Soulsby and Mark Dickenson declared a personal interest in Item 11 as Head of Paid Service and Chief Financial Officer respectively and would leave the meeting for the duration of that item.

19.EX.12 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12th June 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.

19.EX.13 ISSUES REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES - WELLINGTON HOUSE

The Committee received a report, as referred from Research and Development Committee (R&D) in relation to the shortfall in temporary housing provision arising as a result of the closure of Wellington House in Kettering.

It was noted that R&D had considered a report on homelessness

and temporary accommodation at its meeting on 25th June and had expressed concerns that Wellington House had been closed by its owners at end of March. The R&D Committee had requested that the attention of Executive be drawn to this issue and the loss of a valuable resource.

It was reported that the Council was in discussions with Home Move regarding the future of Wellington House and hoped to be in a position within the next few weeks to know whether a purchase of the facility would be possible. Should this not be feasible, then proposals for replacement facilities would need to be formulated and presented to a future meeting of the Executive Committee.

Cllr Scrimshaw addressed the meeting and stated that the concerns of the R&D Committee had been wider than just the issue of Wellington House, with general concern regarding homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation across the Borough.

In response it was heard that the Council took a varied approach to tackling homelessness in the Borough with homelessness prevention a key focus. Officers had witnessed a significant drop in those approaching the Council for assistance over the previous few weeks with the number of households in temporary accommodation falling from a peak of 233 to 206 currently.

RESOLVED

that the Executive Committee:

- i) noted the Research and Development Committee comments concerning Wellington House and that officers were actively working closely with Home Group to bring the premises back into use; and
- ii) that should this not be possible, officers would formulate proposals for replacement facilities to be submitted to the Executive Committee

19.EX.14 WORK PROGRAMME

The Council's draft work programme to be published on 19th September 2019 was noted.

19.EX.15 MAINTAINING A DURABLE BUDGET

A report was submitted which:-

- i) Reminded members of the context/background to the Council's budget and medium term financial strategy;
- ii) Provide updates (with appropriate commentary) on the latest projections of the Council's three main accounts;
- iii) Identified the key issues from the Government's recent 2019 Spending Round announcement;
- iv) Asked members whether they wished to consider alternative options for the operation of the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21 (through a formal consultation process) or whether they would prefer to leave the current scheme unchanged for a further year;
- v) Sought delegated authority for Business Rates Pilot or Business Rates Pool for 2020/21 (should the opportunity become available

In addition, an addendum to the main report had been circulated in relation to the Kettering Heritage Action Zone.

The meeting noted that the purpose of the addendum was to update members on the successful external funding bid of £1.985m from Historic England as part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone Fund. Members noted that Kettering was one of 69 towns nationally that had been successful in its bid with the grant award requiring match funding and KBC would look to work with the private sector to leverage additional investment.

The meeting heard that Stage 2 would include the creation of a programme design with a detailed business case and a demonstration of how match funding or in-kind resource commitment would be achieved. Details of the Stage 2 Programme Design would be supplied to a future meeting of the Committee with approval from Council required.

Councillor Scrimshaw addressed the meeting and spoke in relation to Council Tax Support and advised the Committee that it had the opportunity to increase the level of Council Tax Support it offered in light of the forthcoming move to unitary authority status and the inevitable harmonization of Council Tax levels that would occur.

Councillor Lee echoed Cllr Scrimshaw's comments in relation to Council Tax Support. Cllr Lee also asked when and where electric vehicle charging points would be installed in the Borough.

In response, it was heard that a wider ranging report on Climate Change would be submitted to the October meeting of Executive and would include details regarding electric vehicle charging points.

Cllr Dutton also commented on the level of Council Tax Support available to residents of the Borough and noted that an increase in support may help reduce the threat of homelessness for certain residents.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance referred to a number of key points in the main report and recommended that with formation of unitary authorities on the horizon, there be no change in the level of Council Tax support offered. He further stated that a request had been made to MHCLG to extend the current Business Rates pilot due to the impending unitary reorganisation.

RESOLVED

That the Executive Committee;

- a) Noted the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy and associated guiding principles;
- b) Noted the Council's updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the estimated level of savings required in the medium term;
- c) The Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21 remain unchanged with no consultation therefore required; and
- d) Delegated authority to the Council's Section 151 Officer (in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder) to formalise KBC's sign-off for either a Business Rates Pilot or a Business Rates Pool for 2020/21 depending on Government announcements.

In relation to the addendum to the report the resolution was as follows:

RESOLVED

That the Executive Committee;

- a) Noted the submission and success of an Expression of Interest for Kettering Town Centre to the High Street Heritage Action Zone Fund; and
- b) Endorsed that the Council move to complete Stage 2 – Programme Design

*(Prior to consideration of the next item Graham Soulsby
and Mark Dickenson left the room)*

19.EX.16 CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Committee received a report that sought approval for changes to the Council's constitution to reflect changes in regulations and best practice recommendations from the Committee for Standards in Public Life.

The first alteration requiring approval related to changes in regulations that described a new procedure in the event that disciplinary action needs to be taken against a statutory officer, with the second relating to recommendations from the Committee for Standards in Public Life around the Member Code of Conduct.

RESOLVED The Committee recommended to Council that it approve the changes to the constitution as set out in the appendices to the report.

19.EX.17 POLLING PLACE AND POLLING DISTRICT REVIEW

The Committee considered a report that provided details of the responses received in relation to the ongoing Polling Place and Polling District Review, the comments of the Research and Development Committee in relation to the review and sought Executive comments prior to the submission to Council at its meeting on 25th September.

Cllr Dutton addressed the Committee and stated that polling stations within walking distance were beneficial although online voting and increased engagement with the public, especially young people were required going forward.

RESOLVED That the Committee:

- a) Considered the responses to the review and recommended the draft recommendations attached to the report to the meeting of Council to be held on 25th September 2019;
- b) Authorise the (Interim) Head of Democratic and Legal Services to make a Polling Places Order that incorporates all of the above recommendations by 30th November 2019 at the latest, subject to Council approving them; and

- c) Agree that any other unexpected changes in circumstances to polling places and polling districts that occur between 2019 and 2024 shall be dealt with by way of interim reviews as appropriate.

19.EX.18 **REVIEW OF TENANCY POLICY**

A report was submitted which sought Executive approval of the updated Tenancy Policy that set out the Council's revised approach to the types and length of tenancy it would grant.

Members noted that the existing policy had been adopted in 2013 and offered five-year fixed-term tenancies to new tenants upon successful completion of their introductory tenancy. In practice it had been realised that the introduction of the current policy had added a significant level of bureaucracy and additional work to the system.

Following a consultation exercise, it was now proposed to offer all new tenants a secure, lifetime tenancy following successful completion of their introductory tenancy, with two exceptions relating to extended introductory tenancies and special housing solutions. This policy change would allow the Neighbourhood Management Team time to focus on tenants who required greater support and would provide tenants with security.

Cllr Scrimshaw spoke and welcomed both the report and the proposals within it and offered thanks to both the Portfolio Holder for Housing and the Housing officers involved.

RESOLVED That the Executive Committee approved the policy amendments as set out in the report.

19.EX.19 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that it involved items of business included the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraphs 1-7 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)

19.EX.20 AWARD OF TENDER FOR PROVISION OF DRY RECYCLING SERVICES

A report was submitted which sought acceptance of the recommended tender for the provision of dry recycling services.

A joint contract procurement process had been entered into with Corby Borough Council and East Northamptonshire Council to achieve best value through economies of scale.

Contractors had been invited to submit standard bids and variant bids as part of the tender submission process. Members considered the differences between to two forms of bid in budgetary terms.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED That the Executive Committee approved the variant bid for the tender for the provision of dry recycling services and awarded the contract to Contractor A

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 7.46pm)

Signed

Chair

DJP