

Cabinet

Held at: Remote meeting - Zoom

Date: Wednesday, 17 March 2021

Present: Councillors John Collier, Ray Field, David Godfrey, Mrs Jennifer Hollingsbee (Vice-Chair), David Monk (Chairman), Stuart Peall, Tim Prater, Lesley Whybrow and David Wimble

Officers Present: Andy Blaszkowicz (Director of Housing and Operations), Gavin Edwards (Performance and Improvement Specialist), Ewan Green (Director of Place), Cheryl Ireland (Chief Financial Services Officer), Amandeep Khroud (Assistant Director), Sue Lewis (Committee Services Officer), Tim Madden (Director of Transformation and Transition), Susan Priest (Chief Executive), Charlotte Spendley (Director of Corporate Services), Helen Sudbury (Housing Operations Lead Specialist), Lee Walker (Capital and Treasury Senior Specialist) and Jemma West (Committee Service Specialist)

Others Present: Councillor Patricia Rolfe.

NOTE: All decisions are subject to call-in arrangements. The deadline for call-in is 26 March 2021 at 5pm. Decisions not called in may be implemented on Monday 29 March 2021.

84. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations at this point in the meeting. However, during the consideration of the item relating to Oportunitas Limited, Councillor Peall made a voluntary declaration in that his wife was employed by Smith Wooley, who were referred to in the report.

85. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2021 were submitted, approved and signed by the Chairman.

86. Housing Operations Policies

The report sought approval for the new policies which form the framework for the Housing Operations service.

Proposed by Councillor Godfrey,
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee; and

RESOLVED:

- 1. That report C/20/82 be received and noted.**
- 2. That the following new Housing Operations policies be approved:**
 - 1. Tenancy Policy**
 - 2. Housing Management Policy**
 - 3. Housing Community Safety Policy**
 - 4. Home Ownership Policy**
 - 5. Shared Ownership Policy**
 - 6. Right to Buy Policy**
- 3. That delegated authority be given to the Director of Housing and Operations, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Transport and Special Projects, to approve minor amendments to housing operational policies in the future, and substantive changes be brought back to Cabinet for approval as necessary.**

(Voting figures: 9 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

REASONS FOR DECISION:

As the Housing Service has returned to the Council, it is important to have a framework of policies to ensure operational effectiveness and good governance. The policies form part of a library of policies that members will be asked to approve in due course.

87. Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2019/20

The Equality Act 2010 places a statutory duty on the council to prepare and publish information annually to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The draft Equality & Diversity Annual Report was therefore presented for consideration and approval prior to publication.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee;
Seconded by Councillor Godfrey; and

RESOLVED:

- 1. That report C/20/84 be received and noted.**
- 2. That the draft Equality & Diversity Annual Report outlined in Appendix 1 be approved.**

(Voting figures: 9 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The council needs to ensure that it meets the statutory requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. The report demonstrates the council's commitment to positively contributing to the advancement of equality and good relations, summarises the activities undertaken in 2019/20 to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion, and highlights the positive measures that have been taken to remove barriers, improve access to services, and increase customer satisfaction.

88. Equality and Diversity Policy 2021-25

The report presented the draft Equality and Diversity Policy for 2021-2025 for consideration by Cabinet. The existing Policy covered the period 2016-2020 and therefore a refresh was required. The duties with regard to equality and diversity have not changed and therefore the proposed changes to the Policy are minor. The aim of the Equality and Diversity Policy remains the same; to ensure everyone has the right to be treated fairly at work or when using the council's services.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee,
Seconded by Councillor Peall; and

RESOLVED:

- 1. That report C/20/83 be received and noted.**
- 2 That the draft Equality & Diversity Policy for 2021 – 2025 outlined in Appendix 1 be approved.**

(Voting figures: 9 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

REASON FOR DECISION:

The council is committed to ensuring that everyone has the right to be treated fairly at work or when using council services. In addition, the council needs to ensure that it meets its requirements under the Public Sector Equality Duty. The recommendations made in this report are aimed at achieving these measures.

89. Oportunitas Limited Update to 31 January 2021

This report provided an update from the Board of Oportunitas Limited (the company) on its activities undertaken so far in the current financial year to 31 January 2021, outlined its latest projected financial outturn for 2020/21 and summarised the financial benefit to the Council as Shareholder of the company. This report is a requirement of the Shareholder Agreement between the Council and the company. The Chairman of Oportunitas will be available to present the report and to address any questions from Cabinet.

Councillor Rolfe, Chairman of Oportunitas, attended the meeting to present the report.

During the consideration of this item, Councillor Peall made a voluntary declaration in that his wife was employed by Smith Wooley, who were referred to in the report.

Proposed by Councillor Monk,
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee; and

RESOLVED:

1. That report C/20/79 be received and noted.

(Voting figures: 9 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Cabinet is asked to agree the recommendations because Oportunitas Limited is required to provide Cabinet with regular updates of its financial position and activities under the Shareholder Agreement with the Council.

90. HRA Revenue & Capital Qtr 4 budget monitoring

The monitoring report provided a projection of the end of year financial position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue expenditure and HRA capital programme based on net expenditure to 31 January 2021.

Proposed by Councillor Godfrey,
Seconded by Councillor Collier; and

RESOLVED:

That report C/21/78 be received and noted.

(Voting figures: 9 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Cabinet is asked to agree the recommendations because Cabinet needs to be kept informed of the Housing Revenue Account position and take appropriate action to deal with any variance from the approved budget and be informed of the final 2020/21 position.

91. General Fund Capital programme Qtr 4 budget monitoring

The monitoring report provided the latest projection of the current financial position for the General Fund capital programme in 2020/21, based on expenditure to 31 January 2021, and identified variances compared to the latest approved budget.

Proposed by Councillor Monk,
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee; and

RESOLVED:

That report C/20/80 be received and noted.

(Voting figures: 9 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Cabinet was asked to agree the recommendations because it needs to be kept informed of the General Fund capital programme position and take appropriate action to deal with any variance from the approved budget.

92. **General Fund Revenue Qtr 4 budget monitoring**

The monitoring report provided a projection of the end of year financial position of the General Fund revenue budget, based on expenditure to the 31 January 2021.

Proposed by Councillor Monk,
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee; and

RESOLVED:

1. That report C/20/86 be received and noted.
2. That £300k be utilised to provide interim capacity for the delivery of Corporate Priorities, which meet the conditions outlined in paragraph 2.3, to be agreed by the Head of the Paid Service in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

(Voting figures: 9 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Cabinet was asked to agree the recommendations because it needs to be informed of the council's General Fund revenue budget position and take appropriate action to deal with any variance from the approved budget.