



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 10th OCTOBER 2024

PRESENT: Councillors C Dean, D Foster, N Arkney, B Clarke and S Daniels

The following officers were present: Stephen Gabriel (Chief Executive), Rob Barnes (Executive Director Communities), Anna Miller (Assistant Director – Growth & Regeneration), Tina Mustafa (Assistant Director Neighbourhoods), Hannah Peate (Assistant Director Environment, Culture and Wellbeing), Tracey Pointon (Legal Admin & Democratic Services Manager) and Laura Sandland (Democratic and Executive Support Officer)

Apologies received from: Councillor(s) L Smith

48 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor L Smith.

49 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th September 2024 were approved as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor B Clarke and seconded by Councillor N Arkney)

50 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

51 QUESTION TIME:

None

52 MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES

Councillor C Bain Chair of Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee presented the recommendations from the Updated Armed Forces Covenant Plan item that was discussed at the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on the 17th September 2024.

Following consideration of the item the Committee agree to the following recommendations being made to Cabinet:

1. Consider the appointment of a nonpolitical role for an Armed Forces Champion whilst there are serving Members who are veterans.

(Moved by Councillor S Doyle and seconded by Councillor C Bain)

RESOLVED that Cabinet

Agreed the appointment of a nonpolitical role for an Armed Forces Champion whilst there are serving Members who are veterans.

(Moved by Councillor B Clarke and seconded by Councillor S Daniels)

53 NATURE DECLARATION UPDATE

Report of the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Environmental Sustainability, Recycling and Waste to update the Cabinet on the authority's work around the Nature Recovery Declaration that was made in November 2023.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet

1. approved the Biodiversity Consideration, following IS&G Committee scrutiny as set out in Appendix 1; and
2. endorsed the progress and updates provided

(Moved by Councillor B Clarke and seconded by Councillor D Foster)

Members thanked officers for their support and hard work in compiling this report

54 SOCIAL HOUSING REGULATORY PROGRAMME UPDATE

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Homelessness and Planning To update Cabinet on the latest position regarding compliance with the Regulator Social Housing (RSH) Consumer Standards, published with effect from 2nd April 2024 and to support any emerging and/or additional recommendations arising from Corporate Scrutiny meeting on 09th October 2024; further informed by discussions at the Homelessness & Housing Advisory Board meeting on 1st October 2024.

RESOLVED That Cabinet

1. Acknowledged progress regarding the areas identified for self-referral to the Regulator Social Housing, summarised at Annex one
2. Approved the Tenant Impact & Risk Assessment arising from the Self-referral developed with Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Services, shown at Annex Two
3. Supported Homelessness & Housing Advisory Board discussions on the 1st October 2024 to progress the Autumn Roadshow consulting on the Tenant Involvement & Engagement Strategy launched at the Tenant Conference (16/9/24), Summarised at Annex Three; and
4. Agree recruitment of an independent Tenant Advocate to the Homelessness & Housing Advisory Board to support the Tenant Voice – referring details to Appointments & Staffing Committee for formal approval

(Moved by Councillor B Clarke and seconded by Councillor S Daniels)

Members thanked officers for their work and support on this report.

55 STAFFORDSHIRE LEADERS BOARD UPDATE

This item was deferred

56 UPDATE ON STRATEGIC REVIEW OF LEASEHOLD SERVICE CHARGES

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Homelessness and Planning/ Executive Director Communities to provide an update on the work done by Campbell Tickell in relation to Leasehold Service Charges and sets out a series of recommendations in relation to that report.

Councillor S Smith Chair of Corporate Scrutiny attended to notify Cabinet of the report and recommendations from this item that was discussed at Corporate Scrutiny on the 9th October 2024.

Councillor Smith presented Cabinet with an amendment to Recommendation 4 and an additional recommendation as set out below:

Amendment to recommendation 4

Cabinet approve the process for remedial works based on the completed surveys and utilising the QLTA approach. A detailed cost breakdown must be submitted to the next available Corporate Scrutiny Committee as a briefing note. Both these costs and the final invoices require approval from the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Homelessness & Planning

(Moved by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Couchman)

Additional recommendation

Review & revise the payment plan criteria including the statement of means to ensure fairness and consistency.

(Moved by Councillor S Smith and seconded by Councillor M Summers)

Following a discussion Cabinet did not approve the recommendations from Corporate Scrutiny.

RESOLVED That Cabinet

1. Cabinet notes the recommendations set out in the Campbell Tickell report at Appendix 1 and specifically endorses the recommendations from that report for implementation. Details on the specific recommendations contained within the report are set out in the Executive Summary. (see report at Appendix 1)
2. endorses and reaffirms the recovery of sums related to Leasehold Service charge invoices in accordance with the Corporate Credit Policy (previously approved by Cabinet on 31st August 2023)
3. Cabinet approved the development of a service improvement plan that considers the timing and resources required to implement the recommendations set out at point 1 above. (see draft at Appendix 2)
4. Cabinet approved the commencement of remedial works in line with the surveys that have been completed, this would include commencement of consultations and the issuing of invoices upon completion.
5. Cabinet approves the use of Campbell Tickell to assist in the development of the Leaseholder Policy [recommendation (d) in Campbell Tickell report]
6. Cabinet approves the updated s20 notices produced by Campbell Tickell [recommendation (a) in Campbell Tickell report] (see Appendix 3)

7. Cabinet approves the responses to matters referred to Cabinet as set out in the table in the report; and
8. Cabinet approves taking a test case through the First Tier Tribunal to test assumptions in relation to component renewal. This will be subject to identifying one or more Leaseholders who are willing to participate in such a test case and is likely to take place once further engagement mechanisms are in place with Leaseholders.

(Moved by Councillor B Clarke and seconded by Councillor D Foster)

57 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That members of the press and public be now excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that the business involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

(Moved by Councillor D Foster and seconded by Councillor S Daniels)

58 HOUSE PROJECT WITH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Homelessness and Planning to update and seek approval for the pilot House Project Staffordshire which is a Staffordshire County Council SCC) proposal/initiative of which is over arched by County Council's Sufficiency Strategy – Homes for Children in our Care 2023-2026.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet

1. Approve the House Project (HP) proposal put forward by Staffordshire County Council for Care Leavers who wish to live in Tamworth and who are part of the project as shown in Annex 4.
2. Endorsed the request of three – five direct matches per annum to Care Leavers who are part of the House Project and who have been selected in line with their Care plan to live independently and receive the full support of the House Project and its aspirations; and
3. Delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder of Housing, Homelessness and Planning with the Executive Director for Communities to agree any further extensions to the project, past the two years remaining that County have commissioned for subject to a full evaluation

(Moved by Councillor B Clarke and seconded by Councillor S Daniels)

Members thanked Tina Mustafa, Sarah Finnegan and Tim Leese with the work and support on this project.

59 UPDATE ON HOUSING REPAIRS CONTRACT

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Homelessness and Planning to provide an update on the commercial position of the current repairs and investment contract with Equans, it identified terms of a commercial negotiation and provides details of contract value amendments to reflect the commercial/financial position of the contractual arrangements, including a contract reset and internal service transformation with the aim of improving service to tenants and leaseholders.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet

1. Cabinet endorsed the contents of the report produced by ARK Consulting [Appendix 1] and delegates authority to the Assistant Director (Assets), Executive Director (Communities) and the s151 Officer to enter into deed of variation with Equans on the basis of a revised Price Per Property Rate [PPP] of not more than £580.59 and a revised uplift on the Schedule of Rates for Voids of not more than +36.30%, with figures being subject to further due diligence checks; and
2. approved the payment of £228,000 to Equans in relation to an uplift of the Schedule of Rates that reflects an abnormal period of inflationary pressure in the construction industry in previous years of the contract.

(Moved by Councillor B Clarke and seconded by Councillor N Arkney)

Members asked for thanks to be passed to ARK Consulting for the help regarding this report and also thank to Rob Barnes and Paul Weston.

60 UPDATE ON COMMERCIAL LEASE

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Infrastructure, Heritage and Local Economy.

Resolved that Cabinet:

1. Approved the recommendations in the report

(Moved by Councillor N Arkney and seconded by Councillor B Clarke)

Leader

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