

CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING

Tuesday 25th June 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Brett (Chair); Councillors Daalat Ali, Neil Emmott, Emsley, Iftikhar Ahmed, Blundell, Heakin and Wardle

OFFICERS: Steve Rumbelow (Chief Executive), Neil Thornton (Director of Resources), Mark Widdup (Director of Neighbourhoods), John Searle (Director of Economy), David Wilcock (Assistant Director – Legal, Governance and Workforce), Danny Brierley, Michael Brook, Peter Maynard, Robert Scott, Martin Taylor and Ian Trickett (Neighbourhoods Directorate), Keith McKenzie and Alison James (Resources Directorate)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Robinson

APOLOGIES

13 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rowbotham.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

14 There were no declarations of interest.

URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

15 There were no urgent items of business.

MINUTES

16 Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 28th May 2019 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

ENFORCEMENT AGENT PROCUREMENT

17 Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Resources which informed Members that the enforcement agent and debt collection services contract expires on 31 October 2019 and that a new contract needs to be procured.

Alternatives considered:

The Council could choose not to employ external companies to collect the debts, but this would require an additional staffing resource to maintain collection levels. If no additional staff were employed, arrears would significantly increase.

Resolved:

1. That approval be given to commence procurement using a mini-competition against a Government approved procurement framework.

In this case, a framework from Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.

2. That the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Director of STaR Procurement, be authorised to conclude and agree the contract awards, following the completion of the procurement exercise.

Reasons for the decision:

The current enforcement agent and debt collection services contract which commenced on 1 November 2014 is due to expire on 31 October 2019. Discussions had taken place with STaR Procurement and they were recommending using a mini-competition against a Rotherham Council procurement framework.

The services are required to collect the following debts - Council Tax, National Non-Domestic Rates (business rates), Housing Benefit overpayments and sundry debts due to the Council.

Eligible for call in – yes

**BOROUGH OF ROCHDALE (148 DRAKE STREET, ROCHDALE)
COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2019**

18 Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Neighbourhoods seeking approval of a proposed Compulsory Purchase Order for 148 Drake Street, Rochdale.

Alternatives considered:

The following alternatives had been considered:

- To continue with negotiations with the owner of the property – this was not considered to be likely to bring the building back into use.
- To do nothing – this was not acceptable due to the negative amenity impact an empty property in a prominent position near the railway station and town centre, and particularly since the incidences of breaking and entering and the resulting criminal activity.

Resolved:

1. That the making of the “Borough of Rochdale (148 Drake Street, Rochdale) Compulsory Purchase Order 2019” utilising powers contained in Section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 be approved;
2. That the Assistant Director of Legal, Governance and Workforce and the Director of Economy be authorised to undertake the necessary

legal procedures and associated action in relation to the Order listed at paragraph 2.1 and described in Appendix 1 of the submitted report;

3. That consideration has been given to the implications of the Human Rights Act 1998, and that Cabinet does not consider there to be a breach of the Act if compulsory acquisition of the land within the Order described in paragraph 2.1 and Appendix 1 of the submitted report is authorised.

Reasons for the decision:

Given the long-term dereliction of the building and the lack of ability on the part of the owner to bring the site back into productive use, a Compulsory Purchase Order is considered to be the only mechanism available to the Council to facilitate development of the site.

The Council's Empty Property Team has been in contact with the owner since April 2014 in an effort to facilitate redevelopment. However the owner has not been willing or able to invest the necessary capital to bring the building back into use.

The building was purchased by the current owner in March 2010 for £85,000. In April 2014, the Council commissioned a feasibility study on options for redevelopment. Two options were proposed:

Option 1 – Demolition of existing building and construction of 6 x 1 bedroom apartments with an estimated cost of £390,000.

Option 2 – Conversion of existing building into 8 x 1 bedroom apartments, with an estimated cost of £380,000.

In July 2014, the Council presented the owner with two options:

Option 1 – The Council purchase the property at market value plus compensation for loss

Option 2 – The Council complete external refurbishment work at a cost of £12,000.

The owner chose Option 2, agreeing to place the property on the market for sale following completion of the external refurbishment. This has not happened, but the owner has repaid the reimbursement costs in full.

In October 2017, planning permission was granted for conversion to 8 x 1 bedroom apartments. However, 20 months later, no substantive work has been completed, and the Council understands that it is highly unlikely that the approved plans will be executed and the building brought back into use.

The building was recently broken into, resulting in crime and anti-social behaviour including objects thrown at passing cars. As a result, the building

was secured by the Council's Building Control service. This further demonstrates the necessity of bringing the building into active use, and in the shorter term, the Council acquiring the building in order to properly secure it on an ongoing basis.

The Council made an offer to purchase the property at market value in April 2019 but this was rejected.

Eligible for call in - yes

GREATER MANCHESTER BEENETWORK

19 Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Neighbourhoods which informed Members that the Bee Network is Greater Manchester's proposed new cycling and walking network which will connect every neighbourhood in Greater Manchester across all ten local authority areas. The Bee Network Plan shows what is required to deliver such a network. It is a plan of what is needed: not necessarily what is possible to deliver. The Plan shows Greater Manchester's ambition for Cycling & Walking and will guide GM's approach to securing funding for, and the delivery of, Cycling & Walking infrastructure over the coming years.

Alternatives considered:

No alternatives had been considered.

Resolved:

1. That the process by which version 2.1 of the Plan was generated and updated be endorsed.

Reasons for the decision:

To provide approval by each District in Greater Manchester for the Bee Network.

Eligible for call in – yes

INTRODUCTION OF NEW VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

20 Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Resources which informed Members that the Local Government Association (LGA) had been commissioned to conduct a review of the current Values and Behaviours, contained within the 'Rochdale Way'. Between November and December the LGA conducted a number of focus groups and one-to-one interviews and met with over 100 people including staff from across the Council & CGG, Elected Members, senior managers and Trade Union representatives. On the basis of this review, the LGA were recommending replacing the Rochdale Way with three new Values and associated Behaviours.

The proposed values were: Proud, Passionate, and Pioneering & Open.

Alternatives considered:

No alternatives had been considered.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet recommends that the new values and behaviours be approved by Council (and CCG Governing Body);
2. That the implementation suggestions from the LGA be accepted subject to some additional focus on implementing and embedding the new values, for example training on diversity and equalities.

Reasons for the decision:

The suggested new values resonate more closely with Rochdale than the existing 'Rochdale Way' values.

Eligible for call in – no

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

21 Resolved:

That the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business, in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

Reason for Decision:

Should the press and public remain during the following item of business there may be a disclosure of information that is deemed to be exempt under Part 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

FALINGE PARK - PROPOSED COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER

22 Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Neighbourhoods to grant the lease of Falinge Park to Vintage Worx Community Development Trust (Vintage Worx CDT).

Alternatives considered:

The Council could continue to manage and maintain the park. The Council has previously failed to attract funding to restore the façade and lacks resources to move the project forward. There is space and buildings in the park that the Council cannot afford to occupy and maintain. The park could see on ongoing gradual decline into disrepair.

The whole of the park could be transferred immediately by way of long term lease. This would likely overburden the project before it has chance to get off the ground as there is no revenue funding available and insufficient income generation to enable Vintage Worx CDT to adequately manage the park.

There is a risk that Vintage Worx CDT would have a long term lease of a Council asset irrespective of whether they are able to deliver the project or not and it would prove difficult to bring back the park into Council ownership during the term of the lease unless Vintage Worx CDT would be agreeable to an early surrender of that lease.

The Council could approve the long term vision for the park and allow other organisations to bid to deliver different phases. This could see the park being brought back to use in a shorter timescale but could lead to a less cohesive regeneration.

Resolved:

1. That the long term vision and plan for Falinge Park be supported;
2. That approval be given to the grant the lease (in phases) of Falinge Park to Vintage Worx CDT. This would confirm the original decision by Cabinet to grant a provisional lease subject to the delivery and review of a detailed business which as far as practicable satisfies the Council that it will sufficiently support the group's development aspirations for the park.
3. That the grant of subsequent leases be delegated to the Director of Neighbourhoods in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Resources and Environment;
4. That the Head of Legal Services be authorised to prepare the appropriate legal documents and execute such documents on behalf of the Council as required.

Reasons for the decision:

Vintage Worx CDT has, in consultation with the Council, put together an ambitious regeneration plan for Falinge Park which aims to tackle both the physical park asset and the economic and social deprivation in the surrounding area.

Vintage Worx CDT is seeking to raise significant funding to refurbish and regenerate the valued historic public asset which is Falinge Park. The funding bodies will need to know that the Council is supportive of the proposals before they would release the required funds. The recommendation of the granting of the lease/leases to Vintage Worx CDT would vest the interest in Falinge Park in Vintage Worx CDT as a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) and would allow them to draw down grants to implement the business case over a number of years.

If successful, the planned ongoing activities relating to training, small business start-ups and also events will provide an income stream for the group to help facilitate its ongoing management model. The group hopes to use this CAT as a catalyst to address a number of underlying issues within the local area

which relate to a perceived lack of inclusiveness, improve community cohesion, improve skills to address unemployment, contribute to improved health & wellbeing as well as reducing anti-social behaviour, local crime and fear of crime by park users.

Eligible for call in - yes