

Minutes of: CABINET

Date of Meeting: 7 June 2023

Present: Councillor E O'Brien (in the Chair)
Councillors C Cummins, A Quinn, T Rafiq, L Smith and T Tariq

Also in attendance: Councillors R Bernstein, M Smith and J Rydeheard

Public Attendance: Five members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor R Gold and Councillor C Morris

CA.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Charlotte Morris and Richard Gold.

CA.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bernstein declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of item 6, Strategic Housing Review, as he was a Council-appointed Member of the Six Town Housing Board.

CA.3 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

CA.4 MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

CA.5 MINUTES

It was agreed:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2023 be approved as a correct record.

CA.6 STRATEGIC HOUSING REVIEW

Councillor Clare Cummins, Cabinet Member for Housing Services, presented the report regarding an independent strategic review of housing management arrangements commissioned from Campbell Tickell and future options for management of housing stock and related activities. It was noted that tonight's report only asked for an in-principle decision, with the subsequent transformation programme and engagement with stakeholders, tenants, and leaseholders critical in developing the proposals further.

Members discussed the report, noting that in 2019 the Council and Six Town Housing started a closer working relationship. Through that, it became clearer that closer working served to bridge communication gaps and had benefits for tenants, residents and the Council, and therefore the proposals outlined in this report were welcomed. It was noted that there were significant concerns and risks, which would be managed in due course, but ultimately this focussed on securing better value and better community for all.

Decision:
Cabinet:

1. Agreed an in-principle decision for the management and maintenance of Council Housing to be provided in-house through direct management;
2. Agreed that a further report be provided to Cabinet in December 2023 following due consideration of the outcome of the Tenants Test of Opinion; and
3. Approved the outline Transition Plan and timetable set out in Paragraph 7.2 of the report.

Reasons for the decision:

The recommendation is for the Council to directly manage its council housing. The strength of returning the service to the Council is that it gives back direct control at a time of considerable operating challenge and would enable the Council to realign services more broadly to achieve its corporate and service objectives. It would enable faster and more responsive decision making through one integrated management structure and would remove an additional layer of management and associated costs.

Other options considered and rejected:

The commissioned Strategic Housing Review considered four future management options and assessed them against the established criteria, these were:

- Do Nothing: The review has confirmed the view that 'doing nothing' is not a viable option in the current operating environment and that a significant perception gap has opened between what the Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) is set up to do, what it does now and what it could do.
- Retention of Six Town Housing (STH) ALMO: This option involves retaining the current delivery model and extending the STH Management Agreement. Whilst there are strengths, the review has highlighted the need for transformational change to respond to the regulatory environment and ensure that customer pathways and connectivity are achieved through creating seamless customer services.
- Hybrid Model: A hybrid approach is an approach which would see the retention of the ALMO and a closer relationship with shared services; clarity for regulatory purposes would be required. In theory a Council appointed, and accountable Chief Operating Officer (COO) should make it easier to align objectives and delivery plans, however retaining a limited company would mean the COO would be ultimately accountable to the Board and there would continue to be duplication of resource and governance.
- Stock transfer: Voluntary stock transfer is still formally part of the Government's Housing Policy; however, the Government last financially supported this option in 2015/16. A dowry would be required to facilitate a transfer with estimated transaction costs of £1.5M and a statutory tenants ballot. Without Government funding this option is not financially viable.

CA.7 PROPOSED NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA AND FORUM FOR PRESTWICH

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth, presented the report regarding applications submitted to the Council for the formal designation of a Neighbourhood Area and Forum in Prestwich. Members discussed the report, noting this was an exciting time for Prestwich and this would offer new ways for residents to engage and new opportunities for the Council to develop plan alongside residents and in dialogue with them.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Approved the application for the establishment of the proposed Neighbourhood Area for Prestwich; and
2. Approved the application for the establishment of the proposed Neighbourhood Forum for Prestwich.

Reasons for the decision:

The applications for the neighbourhood area and neighbourhood forum for Prestwich have satisfied the legal requirements and the consultation responses have not raised any significant objection to either proposal.

Other options considered and rejected:

To refuse the applications for the neighbourhood area and neighbourhood forum. However, the applications have satisfied the legal requirements and the consultation responses have not raised any significant objection to either proposal.

CA.8 ADULT DISCHARGE SCHEMES

Councillor Tamoor Tariq, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, presented the report which sought permission to commission eight General Nursing Discharge to Assess beds to form part of the wider Adult Discharge Schemes that will be available to support hospitals, residents and the health and social care system over the coming year. The beds would be funded via the Adult Social Care Discharge Grant and therefore not impact the Council's Budget.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Agreed to commission eight Nursing Discharge to Assess beds at Heathlands Nursing Home, Prestwich for a period of 12 months at a cost of £552,578;
2. Noted that this will be funded using Bury's allocation of Adult Social Care Discharge Fund and Winter Resilience Monies and will therefore have no impact on the Care in the Community budget and that a procurement waiver will be required to approve the 12-month commission of this service; and
3. Noted the update on residential intermediate care, step down dementia beds and the multi-disciplinary team.

Reasons for the decision:

- The Council and NHS GM (Bury) have received £5.629m of Urgent and Emergency Care monies, which includes Bury Council's allocation of Adult Social Care Discharge Fund, from the Department of Health and Social Care to support system flow, NHS waiting lists and rapid discharge from hospital. The commission of the beds above will ensure the Council spends the money in line with the DHSC criteria and support the people of Bury to leave hospital safer and earlier.
- There are currently 29 commissioned Discharge to Assess and Intermediate Care beds in the borough, not including the Council's own Intermediate Care Facility.
- These beds have been consistently full and the failure to approve the commission will result in people remaining in hospital longer while waiting to have their long term needs assessed.

Other options considered and rejected:

An increased number of Nursing Discharge to Assess beds over and above the eight proposed in this report were considered but there was insufficient budget available.

CA.9 SALE OF FORMER POLICE STATION, IRWELL STREET, BURY - PART A

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth, presented the report regarding the proposed sale of Former Police Station, Irwell Street, Bury. The site is part of the Accelerated Land Disposal Programme and has been vacant for many years; this proposal would address the vacant site and also the Council's Housing Strategy through developing it into a residential care home.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Noted the results of the tender exercise for the sale of the Former Police Station;
2. Approved the grant of the freehold to the selected purchaser, upon the gaining of planning permission, which is to be submitted within 3 months of exchange of contracts. Following Cabinet approval, the exchange of contracts to be completed within 12 weeks of receiving the contractual documentation; and
3. Delegated the signing of all contracts required to complete sale of the site the Director of Law and Democratic Services.

Reasons for the decision:

The sale will bring forward the redevelopment of the land bringing in a capital receipt.

Other options considered and rejected:

Do Nothing - In this scenario the property would be left vacant, its condition may further continue to attract anti-social behaviour. The Council would be responsible for ongoing security and maintenance. The property is within the Accelerated Land Disposal Programme and ongoing security and maintenance costs would have to be incurred if the sale did not proceed. This option would not ensure the on-going rejuvenation of the Town Centre. As such, this option has been discounted.

CA.10 BURY CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY REPORT QUARTER FOUR & END OF YEAR 2022-23

Councillor Tahir Rafiq, Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and HR, presented the report which provided a summary of key delivery and performance that occurred during Quarter Four (January – March) 2022-23, aligned to the 3R priorities, and provided an End of Year summary. Members discussed the forthcoming review of the strategy and the potential role of scrutiny.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Noted the performance and delivery against the 3R priorities and the 2022-23 Corporate Plan delivery objectives; and
2. Noted the ongoing developments to strengthen and improve this reporting process and functionality.

Reasons for the decision:

This report continues our commitment to “strengthening the basics” by embedding the corporate business planning process across all the work of the Council and NHS Bury Integrated Care Partnership (ICP). This will allow for more effective performance management at organisation, departmental and officer level.

Other options considered and rejected:

No alternative option considered.

CA.11 MINUTES OF ASSOCIATION OF GREATER MANCHESTER AUTHORITIES / GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

Members discussed the minutes of the GMCA meeting in March, in particular the development of infrastructure to support electric car use and the role of private and public sector partnership working in order to facilitate it.

It was agreed:

That the minutes of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority meeting held on 24 March 2023 be noted.

CA.12 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Decision:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100 (A)(4), Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, for the reason that the following business involves the disclosure of exempt information as detailed against the item.

CA.13 SALE OF FORMER POLICE STATION, IRWELL STREET, BURY - PART B

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth, presented the Part B report which set out the full financial details.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Noted the results of the tender exercise for the sale of the Former Police Station;
2. Approved the grant of the freehold to the selected purchaser, upon the gaining of planning permission, which is to be submitted within 3 months of exchange of contracts. Following Cabinet approval, the exchange of contracts to be completed within 12 weeks of receiving the contractual documentation; and
3. Delegated the signing of all contracts required to complete sale of the site the Director of Law and Democratic Services.

Reasons for the decision:

As set out for the Part A report.

Other options considered and rejected:

As set out for the Part A report.

COUNCILLOR E O'BRIEN

Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.35 pm)