

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at The Forum, Towcester, NN12 6AF on Tuesday 3 May 2022 at 6.00 pm.

Present Councillor Jonathan Nunn (Chair)
 Councillor Adam Brown (Vice-Chair)
 Councillor Fiona Baker
 Councillor Lizzy Bowen
 Councillor Rebecca Breese
 Councillor Matt Golby
 Councillor Mike Hallam
 Councillor Phil Larratt
 Councillor Malcolm Longley
 Councillor David Smith

Substitute N/A
Members:

Also
Present: Councillor Karen Cooper
 Councillor Jonathan Harris
 Councillor Suresh Patel
 Councillor Bob Purser
 Councillor Wendy Randall
 Councillor Danielle Stone

Apologies
for
Absence: Councillor Malcolm Longley

Officers Gillian Baldock - Political Assistant to the Conservative Group
 Paul Hanson – Democratic Services Manager
 Nick Henstock - Head of Highways and Transport
 Chris Kiernan - Assistant Director, Education
 Sofia Neal-Gonzalez – Democracy Officer (minutes)
 Jed Scoles - Political Assistant to the Labour Group
 Chris Wales - Chief Information Officer

1. **Apologies**

Councillor Malcolm Longley

2. **Declarations of Interest**

None

3. **Minutes**

RESOLVED: That the minutes from the Cabinet meeting on the 12th of April 2022 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

4. **Chair's Announcements**

None

5. **Urgent Business**

None

6. **Highways Contract Procurement Update**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Phill Larratt presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. Members were advised that the procurement process had been a competitive one and that two separate contracts would be awarded. The final decision would be taken in consultation with the portfolio holder for finance, Councillor Malcolm Longley, and there was a plan in place arrange an all-member briefing on the subject. It was advised that the team was evaluating the tenders of the final 3 bidders with a decision due in early June and the new contract starting in September of 2022.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the delegation of the decision would be given to those who would have direct involvement in the bidding process.

Councillors made the following comments.

- It was questioned whether this item should also be presented at the Scrutiny Committee.
- What inflation rate had been built into the contract? The previous one had built in 3%.
- It was queried whether the council was confident in their capacity monitor the contractor.
- Would the council be leading in the promotion of the net zero emission promise for this project, or would that be the contractor? It was important to make demands on of the contractor on environmental standards.
- It was noted that the Central Government had reduced local authority funding for highways projects, how constrained would the council be by this?
- Would the contract include provision for the bringing of roads up to standard, such as the filling of potholes or resurfacing, the investment in this had been stopped in the past.
- What penalties if any would be in place?
- Public maintenance schedules seemed to be different to the information that the public sees.

Nick Henstock, Head of Highways and Transport, made the following comments.

- The contract did include movement for inflation, this would be reviewed on an annual basis.
- Environmental standards had been part of the bidding process.
- Contractors were aware of the importance of communication and the consistency of service to the council.
- It would be possible for contracts to be extended, this would be based on the relationship created between the council and the contractor.

Councillor Phil Larratt made the following comments.

- The restoration of standards was important, and it was hoped that some would be able to be included in the work due to be carried out.
- Scrutiny could be provided with a briefing, but it was important to follow due process.
- It was important to have a strong contract management team in place.
- It was advised that the council had its own net zero emissions ambitions in place but was open to the contractors being innovative about this.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- a) Noted the continued progress to procure new arrangements for highways and transport services and the readiness to make an award post Final Tender submission and evaluation in May 2022.
- b) Agreed to delegate authority to the Executive Director Place, Economy and Environment and Executive Director Finance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste Services, and the Portfolio Holder for Finance to award the contract.

7. **Modern Income Management Solution**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Mike Hallam presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated.

Councillors made the following comments.

- It was noted that there hadn't been an explanation of the possible risks involved, such as the capacity of the finance teams.
- It was queried how capacity within the service would be increased as the council had been unable to fill some vacancies.
- Why had the council chosen to continue to look at shared services after LGSS?

Councillor Mike Hallam made the following comments in response.

- The service was more of a shared procurement than a shared service.
- It was important for the service to be able to integrate with the systems from the previous authorities.
- The number of vacancies would be kept under review.
- Members were advised that payment options were not being removed, but new ways of paying were being added

RESOLVED: That Cabinet.

- a) Noted the completion of the procurement of the Income Management Solution; and
- b) Delegated authority to Executive Director Corporate in consultation with Cabinet Member for HR & Corporate Services to award the contract to the identified best fit supplier

8. **Hunsbury Park SEND unit**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Fiona Baker presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. Members were advised that this project was part of an ambitious programme and was a statutory requirement. Action was required as there were not enough places for children and sending them to out of county schools was expensive and detrimental to the child.

The recommendations were presented to Cabinet who were advised that the item would return to Cabinet in July after the consultation has occurred.

Councillors made the following comments.

- The numbers of places needed might increase, how confident is the council in being able to provide for these going forward and where would any additional facilities be located?
- It was noted that the report stated that £12 million had been provided, would this be enough?
- Provision was also needed in mainstream school.

The Assistant Director for Education made the following comments.

- Confidence was high, there had been agreements with schools and capital was in place for those places.
- The consultation for the new 250 place special school would begin the next day.
- It was noted that the £12 million from the DfE was a larger amount that had been provided to the council in the past.

Councillor Fiona Baker made the following comments.

- It was for the benefit of the child that they be educated near their own homes.
- There would continue to be conversations with all the schools in order to work on what they could provide.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet.

- a) Approved the publication of the statutory notice of its intent to establish a new, 50 place, SEND unit catering to pupils with a primary need of ASC, at Hunsbury Park Primary School.
- b) Noted that following the publication of the statutory notice a four-week period of consultation on this matter will commence.
- c) Noted that a further, final decision will be required in July as to whether or not to establish the proposed SEND unit at Hunsbury Park Primary School.

9. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Cabinet - 3 May 2022

The meeting closed at 7.10 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____