

Corporate Scrutiny and Governance Board Recommendations from the meeting held on 10 November 2015
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Council Cabinet Agenda – 11 November 2015

Item 2 Late Item - East Midlands Devolution Agreement

Members discussed a late report of the Cabinet Member for Strategy and Policy updating members on the current position on the devolution deal negotiations with Government. The report recommended that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to continue negotiations and to sign the devolution deal, subject to ratification of the deal by Full Council. Members of the scrutiny board expressed concerns that wider members of the Council were not currently aware of the content of the negotiations and recommended that Group Leaders be kept informed of these negotiations.

Members sought legal assurances from officers that the decision would not commit the Council to taking forward plans for Devolution. The Board were reassured that the DCLG Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill has not yet received Royal Assent and as such plans for Devolution could not yet be implemented.

Recommendation 1 – The Board recommended that group leaders are kept informed of the negotiations.

Recommendation 2 – The Board recommended that all further reports in relation to the East Midlands Devolution Agreement are provided to members in a more timely fashion to enable proper scrutiny.

Item 8 Service Delivery Model for the Council's Care Homes and Day Centres

Members considered a report of the Cabinet Member for Integrated Health and Care which seeks to receive Council Cabinet approval for the commencement of a consultation exercise gain feedback on an alternative service model for Council owned care homes and day services.

It was reported that the homes require major investment for maintenance and refurbishment. Members of the board expressed concern that information provided on how the services are being run, the standards that are set, room specifications, on-going maintenance and details of maintenance backlogs was limited and difficult to understand, making it hard for prospective service providers to understand the investment potential.

Recommendation 3 – The Board generally support the decision to undertake the consultation exercise, however recommended that more comprehensive information and guidance be provided to potential care home administrators.

Item 9 Housing Strategy 2015-2019

Members considered a report of the Cabinet Member for Urban Renewal which set out the key elements of Derby's Housing Strategy 2015-2019 and the vision and key priorities which form the

basis of the Council's strategic approach to housing over the next four year period.

Members were informed that the Council is required to adopt a housing strategy which covers the authority's geographical area and that this overarching strategy brings together a number of existing housing related strategies.

The Board supports the adoption of the Housing Strategy 2015-2019.

The board made the following recommendations to Council Cabinet relating to Housing Strategy:

Recommendation 4 – That a list of properties with disabled adaptations be compiled and managed to enable the Council to make better use of adaptations that have already been carried out and paid for and match these adapted properties to future suitable tenants where possible.

Recommendation 5 – That an extension of the Right to Buy scheme should be rigorously opposed to and challenged by Council Cabinet in order to ensure the maintenance of the city's scarce affordable housing stock.

Item 10 A52 Wyvern Transport Improvements land acquisition

Members considered a report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and City Centre Regeneration which seeks Cabinet approval to initiate compulsory purchase proceedings in relation to land interests required to facilitate the A52 Wyvern Transport Improvements scheme.

The Board resolved to support the recommendations to Council Cabinet outlined in the report.

Item 11 Consultation on whether to introduce a Policy on Parental Contributions towards the Cost of Care Placements

Members considered a report of the Cabinet Member for Safeguarding and Children and Young People which seeks agreement to take forward and consult on proposals to means test as a way of calculating parental contributions to the cost of care placements to reduce the cost to the public purse of caring for certain categories of looked after children.

Although Members agreed in principle with the proposals, the Board expressed concerns on the cost effectiveness of the scheme's implementation and the lack of analysis that has been carried out to determine this.

Recommendation 6 – Although in agreement with the principles of the scheme, the Board recommends to Council Cabinet that a full cost benefit analysis of the scheme, including holding conversations with other local authorities on the success and costs of similar schemes already in place, be completed and considered prior to agreement and implementation.

Item 12 Reconfiguration of Children Centre Services

Members considered a report of the Cabinet Member for Safeguarding and Children and Young People which sets out proposals to save in the region of £300K by re-configuring seventeen children's centres to ten. Members were informed that that there is no intention to reduce the delivery of Children's Centre services and that the Children's Centre core offer will be maintained.

It was reported to Members that Council Cabinet agreement is being sought to consult with

Headteachers on the handover of ownership, running costs and management responsibility of seven Children's Centre buildings to the schools they are located with.

Members sought assurances from officers on the level of risk of the DfE to attempt to claw-back capital funds provided for building costs. Officers assured members that the risk of this is very low and that there has been no evidence of this happening in other areas.

The Board resolved to support the recommendations to Council Cabinet.

Item 13 Corporate Safeguarding Responsibilities update

Members considered a report of the Cabinet Member for Safeguarding and Children and Young People which seeks agreement from Council Cabinet on; the revised policy and new work plan, proposals for a Safeguarding Champion amongst elected members to become a member of the Corporate Safeguarding Group; and that completion of on-line Safeguarding training at an appropriate level, or attendance at a briefing, should be mandatory.

Members expressed concerns that the e-learning training was confusing and unclear, but received reassurances from officers that this was being addressed.

The Board resolved to support the recommendations to Council Cabinet.

Recommendation 6 – The Board recommends that all Councillors should attend and complete both Adults and Children's Safeguarding training as a matter of urgency and that the names of members who do not attend training sessions should be published.

Item 14 Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2015/16

A report of the Leader of the Council outlining the treasury management activity for the period 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015, which the Council is required to report under the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy - CIPFA - Code of Practice of Treasury Management was summarised for members by the Director of Finance.

The board made no recommendations.

Item 15 Quarter 2 Capital Budget Monitoring 2015/16 – 2017/18

A report of the Leader of the Council providing details of the revised financial position for the 2015/16 Capital Budget for Quarter 2 was outlined for Members by the Director of Finance. Details of and additions required to the 2015/16 capital programme were highlighted and explained to the Board.

The board made no recommendations.

Item 16 Quarter 2 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2015/16 – 2017/18

A report of the Leader of the Council providing details of the revised financial position for the 2015/16 Revenue Budget for Quarter 2 was outlined for Members by the Director of Finance. The financial monitoring position and the current progress of savings delivery as at quarter 2 was reported to Members and the detail of movement in reserves requested was highlighted and explained.

The board made no recommendations.

Item 17 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19

A report of the Leader of the Council outlining the Medium Term Financial Strategy - MTFS - for the revenue and capital budget over the three year period 2016/17 to 2018/19. Members were informed that the MTFS sets out the Council's strategic approach to the management of its finances and details the resource projections for the forthcoming three years, the financial challenges that the Council faces and the approach planned to meet the priorities set out in the Council Plan.

The board made no recommendations.

Item 18 Information Systems (IS) Strategy

A report of the Leader of the Council on the proposed new Information Systems Strategy was summarised for the Board by the Director of Digital Services. Members were informed that the previous IS strategy was written in 2011 and covered the period of the contract with Serco and that the new strategy covers the period during which the Council is moving to cloud computing and ending the out-source contract.

Members sought clarification on the use of the term 'combined authority' in relation to the IS Strategy, and were reassured that this relates to the future possibilities of collaborating with other local authorities to deliver efficiencies of service provision and rationalisation as opposed to a result of the creation of a 'combined authority' through the process of devolution.

The board made no recommendations.

Item 19 Contract and Financial Procedure Matters Report

A report of the Leader of the Council on items that require reporting to and approval by Council Cabinet under Contract and Financial Procedure rules was summarised for the Board by the Director of Finance and Procurement.

Members heard that changes to the current programme include:

- approval of a licensed deficit for Da Vinci Community College in 2015/16 and 2016/17
- approval of changes to the Council's Scheme for Funding Schools
- use of reserves
- award of contract

Members queried the changes to the Council's Scheme for Funding Schools and allowing a licensed deficit and were informed that this would allow schools to set their own budgets and take control of their own expenditure. The licensed deficit would also allow schools to have a 2 year budget deficit as long as the school can demonstrate plans to be back in balance by the end of 2017/18 when pupil numbers are set to rise.

The board made no recommendations.

Item 20 Performance Monitoring 2015/16 – Quarter Two Results

Members considered a report of the Leader of the Council highlighting the progress of key performance measures included in the Council Plan and departmental business plans. These priority measures form the Council Scorecard for 2015/16 and reflect key performance / budget risks that Chief Officers and Members need to be reviewing outcomes against on a regular basis.

The board made no recommendations.

Item 22 Acquisition of six properties to provide affordable housing funded through the Housing Revenue Account

Members considered a report of Cabinet Member for Urban Renewal seeking approval for the acquisition of up to six dwellings to provide affordable housing funded through the approved Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital budget for new build and acquisition.

The Board resolved to support the recommendations to Council Cabinet outlined in the report.