

Contact Officer: Andrea Woodside

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CABINET

Tuesday 16th June 2020

Present: Councillor Shabir Pandor (Chair)
Councillor Viv Kendrick
Councillor Musarrat Khan
Councillor Naheed Mather
Councillor Peter McBride
Councillor Carole Pattison
Councillor Graham Turner
Councillor Rob Walker

Observers: Councillor Masood Ahmed
Councillor Martyn Bolt
Councillor Andrew Cooper
Councillor Aleks Lukic
Councillor Bernard McGuin
Councillor Alison Munro
Councillor Anthony Smith
Councillor John Taylor
Councillor Michael Watson

Apologies: Councillor Cathy Scott

194 Membership of Cabinet

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Scott.

195 Minutes of Cabinet - 21 May 2020

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 May 2020 be approved as a correct record.

196 Interests

No interests were declared.

197 Admission of the Public

It was noted that exempt information had been submitted in respect of the late/urgent item at Agenda Item 9, and was appended at Agenda item 11 (Minute 204 refers).

198 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

199 Questions by Members of the Public (Written Questions)

No questions were received.

200 Questions by Elected Members (Oral Questions)

Cabinet received the following questions from Members of the Council;

Question from Councillor Cooper:

“Was a business plan produced by the Council for the George Hotel before you decided to purchase it?”

A response was provided by the Leader of the Council.

Question from Councillor Bolt:

“Could you tell me if the commitment that you’ve just expressed about the George Hotel extends to restoring other iconic town centre buildings?”

A response was provided by the Leader of the Council.

Question from Councillor J Taylor:

“I’m sure that you welcome the gradual reopening of the town centre and the reopening of the shops as of yesterday. Amongst the shops that have reopened are bookshops. Do you agree with me that it’s rather disappointing that Kirklees Council hasn’t managed to find a way to reopen its libraries to allow people to borrow books, yet they can actually go into book shops to buy books?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services (Councillor Turner)

Question from Councillor McGuin:

“I’ve had a number of representations from disabled people and business owners complaining about the access to the town centre for their cars and for deliveries. Why did you do no consultation with these people to see what you could do before you went ahead and closed some of the streets off?”

A response was provided the Cabinet Member for Regeneration (Councillor McBride)

Question from Councillor Lukic:

“The Council recently completed the purchase of The Arcade in Dewsbury so as far as I’m aware there’s no reason why the amount paid can’t be disclosed in the interests of transparency. Can this amount be given?”

A response was provided the Cabinet Member for Regeneration (Councillor McBride)

Question from Councillor A Smith:

“I think it’s obvious that many care homes are facing severe pressures and it’s anticipated that many of them may actually be forced to close due to the consequences of Covid 19. Are the Council aware of any care homes in Kirklees that are in this position?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Health and social Care (Councillor Khan).

Question from Councillor Munro:

“What level of risk of flooding has to be reached before the Council puts a stop to building more new houses in an area that had a serious impact by increasing the level of risk of flash floods in the immediate vicinity and downstream?”

A response was provided the Cabinet Member for Regeneration (Councillor McBride)

Question from Councillor Cooper:

“I’ve been around Huddersfield Town Centre today and there are direction indicators on the pavements but they are not being observed, so could we have direction markers for pedestrians to help us with social distancing on lampposts down New Street and other streets. When could these be introduced?”

A response was provided the Cabinet Member for Regeneration (Councillor McBride)

Question from Councillor Bolt:

“Having had it confirmed at a scrutiny meeting that Planning Services, before and after the decision making process, are the responsibility of the Cabinet member, could we see more responsibility for the lack of enforcement, the failure to collect developer contributions, and the delay in delivering contributions from the Cabinet – can we see some accountability?”

A response was provided the Cabinet Member for Regeneration (Councillor McBride)

Question from Councillor J Taylor

“One of the concerns I have about the impacts of Covid 19 will be the financial resilience of a lot of the small groups that we have across the Council area, and by small groups I mean from uniform groups who have been unable to collect subs because they have not been meeting, through to sports clubs that may have cafes and bars. Have we started to put in place any plans or thoughts around how we could as a Council support them through what is a difficult period. We hear a lot of talk about business and charities, these are what make our communities what they are and interesting, good places to live.”

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A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Culture and Environment (Councillor Walker)

Question from Councillor Watson:

“For a number of weeks now there have been some caravans living at the recreation park in Skelmanthorpe and we’ve been getting regular updates from Officers which seem to show that the Council is doing everything it can to look after these people, but the situation is causing concerns amongst some of the people I have spoken to in the area in that they feel that the Council is essentially pandering to what are law breakers. Does the Council consider that it is acceptable for people to be living in caravans on play areas and if not when are we likely to see some action to address this?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services (Councillor Turner)

Question from Councillor McGuin:

“When King James’s expands its capacity, will pedestrian access be improved as many pupils will be coming on foot from the Almondbury area down to King James’s and a lot of residents in the area are particularly concerned about traffic and the narrowness of the pavements. Would the Council commit to doing something about that?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Culture and Environment (Councillor Walker)

Question from Councillor A Smith

“I ask on behalf of a resident about the restrictions on Firth Street which are currently restricted to cyclists only. She asks, can the Council suggest an alternative route for vehicles approaching Firth Street from Colne Road who are travelling to Almondbury or Newsome in order to avoid being caught up in queuing traffic at Kings Bridge Road?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Culture and Environment (Councillor Walker)

Question from Councillor Munro:

“Can the Council confirm whether they have purchased the former County Court building on Queen Street in the town centre?”

A response was provided the Cabinet Member for Regeneration (Councillor McBride)

Question from Councillor J Taylor:

“With regards to the Dewsbury Town Centre Fund, there were some further announcements this week by the Government about any changes to the criteria for the fund and I was wondering if there was a comment from the Council whether we’ve looked at that? This is in light of Covid 19 and whether that will change our proposals in terms of our bid for town funding.”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration (Councillor McBride)

Question from Councillor Munro

“How many more accidents and how many more people have to be injured at the road junctions along Penistone Road in Fenay Bridge before the Council will install filter lights or traffic lights at the dangerous junctions?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Culture and Environment (Councillor Walker)

201 2020/21 to 2024/25 Council Capital Plan – Proposed Allocation of Capital Funding from the Directorate for Children’s Achieve & Aspire Strategic Priorities and Basic Need Baseline Funding Sections of the Capital Plan
(Under the provision of Council Procedure Rule 36(1) Cabinet received representations from Councillors Ahmed, McGuin and Munro).

Cabinet gave consideration to a report which identified potential projects to be funded from the 2020/2021 to 2024/2025 Achieve and Aspire Strategic Priorities and Basic Need funding sections of the Capital Plan. The report provided information relating to specific individual school related capital projects identified to be funded from the Directorate for Children’s Services Achieve and Aspire Section of the Council’s Five Year Capital Plan, as approved by Council on 12 February 2020.

Cabinet were asked to consider and approve the projects as detailed within the report, along with the capital allocation, in regards to (i) Brambles Primary Academy – Temporary Modular Accommodation for September 2020 Intake (ii) King James’s Development to Increase Capacity (iii) Almondbury Community School – Primary Provision in the Greenside Building (iv) Netherhall Learning Campus High School (v) SEND Schools – Potential Sites Masterplan (vi) Proposal for Post 16 Provision at Ravenshall Special School (vii) Scissett Middle School .

RESOLVED –

- 1) That approval be given to the capital allocation of £402k for the provision of modular accommodation for Brambles Primary Academy to ensure that there is sufficient space for September 2020 intake.
- 2) That approval be given to the capital allocation of £5.25m for the implementation of new build and remodelling works at King James’s School to enable the provision of 150 additional secondary school places.

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- 3) That approval be given to the capital allocation of £275k for the implementation of a package of works required to ensure that the Greenside Building at Almondbury Community School (Primary) is fit for purpose for a 210 place primary school.
- 4) That approval be given to the capital allocations of £200k for the implementation of a package of works to enable the existing accommodation at Netherhall Learning Campus High School to be adapted to accommodate increased pupil numbers and implement a PAN increase of 15 places.
- 5) That approval be given to capital allocations of £151k for the conversion of the former Thornhill Lees Library and Information Centre to a post 16 centre for Ravenshall Special School.
- 6) That the progress and expenditure incurred to date on the development of an SEN Masterplan to deliver additional specialist SEND places across the system in Kirklees be noted and that approval be given to the expenditure of £150k of further development funds to enable the masterplan to move into a phase 2 study.
- 7) That approval be given to the proposed use of Section 106 funds to implement a package of works at Scissett Middle School at a cost of £210k to enable its PAN to increase from 195 to 200.

202 The George Hotel, Huddersfield (Urgent Item)

(The report was considered as a late urgent item. Cabinet were advised that the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee had agreed to (i) the addition of the item for consideration, having not been listed on the forward plan and (ii) that the right to Call-In be waived).

(Under the provision of Council Procedure Rule 36 (1) Cabinet received representations from Councillors Cooper and A Smith).

Cabinet gave consideration to a report which sought approval for funding to carry out remedial works to the building, and to enter into discussions with third parties with a view to them re-opening the building for uses that would be appropriate to the town centre location, including negotiations with Rugby League Cares to establish a national museum for rugby league in the George Hotel by 2023. It was also proposed that some early improvements be undertaken to improve the appearance of the hotel and its frontage onto the square.

The report advised that the Council had been shortlisted as one of the two potential locations for the national museum, but had been asked by the Rugby League Cares charity to demonstrate a clear intention to purchase the hotel. The report highlighted the benefits that the opportunity of being the home of the national museum for rugby league would bring to the town, including economic benefits through tourism and the wider benefits of promoting Huddersfield positively and to a global audience. It was noted that the report was brought to this meeting of Cabinet in order to enable a decision to be taken urgently.

(Cabinet gave consideration to the exempt information at Agenda Item 11 (Minute No. 204 refers) prior to the determination of this agenda item.)

RESOLVED –

- 1) That approval be given to the acquisition of the George Hotel by the Council, on the terms as set out within the exempt appendix to this report, in order to progress the delivery of a key project within the Huddersfield Blueprint.
- 2) That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (Economy and Infrastructure) in consultation with the Cabinet Member (Economy Portfolio) to negotiate and agree the terms of any lease of the hotel, or part thereof, that is to be granted to a third party, and the terms of any supporting or ancillary management agreement or operating that may be entered into with the third party in order to enable the effective delivery of the George Hotel project.
- 3) That approval be given to the funds required to purchase the building, as set out within the exempt appendix to this report.
- 4) That approval be given to the funds required to carry out remedial works to the building, as set out within the exempt appendix to this report.

203 Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED – That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

204 The George Hotel, Huddersfield

(Exempt information relating to Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely that the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information and providing greater openness and transparency in the Council's decision making).

Cabinet gave consideration to the exempt information prior to the determination of Agenda Item 9 (Minute No. 202 refers).