

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET
TUESDAY 12 JUNE 2012**

Held At 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Pavilion Road, West Bridgford

PRESENT:

Councillors J N Clarke (Chairman), D G Bell, J A Cranswick, J E Fearon,
D J Mason, Mrs J A Smith

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor S J Boote
Two members of the public

OFFICERS PRESENT:

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|--------------|-----------------------------|
| C Bullett | Deputy Chief Executive (CB) |
| P Randle | Deputy Chief Executive (PR) |
| L Reid Jones | Democratic Services Manager |
| P Steed | Director of Finance |
| D Swaine | Head of Corporate Services |

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

There were no apologies for absence

1. Declarations of Interest

There were none declared.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 15 May 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Exploring Future Opportunities for Bridgford Hall and Park Lodge

Councillor Cranswick presented a report of the Chief Executive outlining the options for exploring future opportunities for the use of Bridgford Hall and Park Lodge. The report stated that the Council owned the Hall which was a Grade II listed building and was leased to Nottinghamshire County Council until September 2013. Park Lodge was leased to Rushcliffe CVS until June 2011 and was currently let to the Spiritualist Church.

The report indicated that the County Council had vacated most of the Hall but still ran its register office from the ground floor of the building. Councillor Cranswick informed Cabinet that this was the start of the process to consider options for the future of the Hall, and to ensure that all of the facts were available before any decisions were made. He explained that the Hall was in a poor state of repair, and as such if the County Council vacated the premises, work to remedy dilapidations would be required. This, he stated, could be

carried out either by the County Council or by way of a cash sum from the County Council.

Councillor Cranswick continued by stating that initial discussions had taken place with the County Council in order to consider how their service needs fitted with the options for the future of the hall. He stressed that the Council's purpose was to ensure the building provided best value for all residents of Rushcliffe, and not only those using the register office. He informed Cabinet that the proposal was to soft market the Hall by way of creating a brochure which would be circulated nationally to gauge potential as a development opportunity. He also reminded Cabinet that consideration would also have to be given to the Council's disposal policy for land and buildings when making any decision on the future of the Hall. Furthermore the provisions within the Localism Act 2011 regarding Assets of Community Value were also relevant and if necessary should be considered when determining any future options., In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Smith regarding the condition of the building Councillor Cranswick stated that the repairs were part of the lease arrangements and therefore it was expected that the County Council would be required to hand the building back to the Borough Council in a sound condition.

Councillor Bell supported the proposal and stated that it was an appropriate way forward.

Councillor Clarke stated that by starting the process now, there would be sufficient time to consider the range of options resulting in a measured and evidence based approach.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) approve the soft marketing of Bridgford Hall, and
- b) agree the principle that the Hall will need to be developed in some way around the current footprint to protect the future viability of the building.

4. Provision of Taxi Ranks in West Bridgford

Councillor Fearon presented the report of the Head of Environment and Waste Management regarding a proposal to extend the hours for which the taxi rank on Bridgford Road, West Bridgford could be used and also to create a new additional rank on Central Avenue for evening use only. He informed Cabinet that the number of licensed hackney carriages in Rushcliffe had increased considerably in recent years and consequently there had been requests from drivers for the Council to create more taxi ranks. He stated that the proposed changes would result in the safer and more orderly dispersal of the public from this lively part of Borough with its vibrant night time economy. Councillor Fearon informed Cabinet the proposed changes were being made pursuant to Section 3 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

Councillor Mason stated that the changes reflected the success of Central Avenue and the night time economy. Furthermore this success was due to the work carried out by the Council in promoting businesses, and the work they did to promote themselves.

Councillor Clarke re-iterated that the proposed changes showed how vibrant and diverse the local economy was. Furthermore at a time of significant financial difficulties nationally this evidenced the success of the Council in ensuring there were very few vacant premises in Central Avenue. Commenting further he added that this gave a clear indication that West Bridgford had a vibrant and robust local economy and it was important to ensure that it remained that way.

In response to a point raised regarding the consultation process the Deputy Chief Executive (PR) confirmed that the necessary consultation had been carried out and the highway authority had not raised any objections.

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Smith the Head of Corporate Services indicated that the provision of taxi ranks in the borough were intended for use by hackney carriages vehicles licensed by the Council.

RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 Cabinet approve:

- a) an increase to the hours of use of the existing rank on Bridgford Road to twenty four hours for four spaces whilst keeping a 1900 to 0700 hour restriction on the remaining two spaces, and;
- b) the creation of an additional evening rank between the hours of 1900 and 0700 capable of accommodating six vehicles in the layby on Central Avenue, nearest to the junction with Tudor Square.

5. Revision of Policy Regarding the Relevance of Previous Convictions

Councillor Fearon presented a report of the Head of Environment and Waste seeking endorsement of the revised Policy Regarding the Relevance of Previous Convictions. The report set out how these were considered in relation to persons applying for a hackney carriage/private hire driver's licence and private hire operators' licences. Councillor Fearon informed Cabinet that the Nottinghamshire Licensing Officers Group had recently reviewed the policy in conjunction with advice given by the Local Government Better Regulation Office and the intention was now that each Nottinghamshire authority adopts the revised policy.

Councillor Cranswick expressed concern that a person who had been convicted of murder could apply for a taxi licence after 10 years. In response the Head of Corporate Services explained that the framework was set giving consideration to the Rehabilitation of Offenders legislation. Furthermore when any application was made consideration would be given to ensuring the applicant was a fit and proper person. He stated that in making this judgment consideration would be given to a range of factors particularly the circumstances of the offence and subsequent evidence to show good character.

Councillor Mrs Smith sought clarification regarding applicants who may have previous offences and their inclusion on the Sex Offenders Register. In response the Deputy Chief Executive (PR) confirmed that regard would be

given to all relevant factors when determining licence applications in order to ensure public protection was not compromised. However he would make further enquires with the relevant Council officers in order to clarify the position.

RESOLVED that Cabinet endorse the revised policy regarding the relevance of previous convictions for submission to full Council for approval.

6. **Financial Outturn 2011/12**

Councillor Cranswick presented a report of the Interim Head of Finance outlining the provisional Financial Outturn position for 2011/12. He anticipated that the accounts would be finalised by 30 June. He informed Cabinet that the current position on revenue outturn indicated an underspend of £1.3 million, however the majority of this had been generated through additional income particularly from the green waste scheme and the early delivery of savings through the revenues and benefits and environment & waste service reviews. He explained that the level of underspend could have a significant impact on the Council's general fund balance and earmarked reserves position. Furthermore it was likely that the Council would continue to suffer pressure on its revenue budget and lower income particularly from interest receipts.

In relation to the capital outturn Councillor Cranswick informed Cabinet that there were underspends as projects were not always completed in year, eg Cotgrave Masterplan. He announced that the Council had completed the acquisition of the precinct in Cotgrave the previous afternoon and the HCA were now moving towards appointing developers.

Councillor Cranswick continued by explaining that a review of earmarked reserves had been undertaken and these fitted in to three categories: investment reserves, smoothing reserves and operating reserves. By reference to paragraphs 20, 23 and 27 of the report he gave examples of how some of the earmarked reserves had been merged.

In response to a question from Councillor Cranswick regarding the projections for March 2011 – March 2016 some of which had not changed, the Director of Finance explained that some of the projections were historic. He stated that it related to the management of risk and gave the example of equal pay audit reserves, which had been held 'just in case' there had been a challenge: if so, the money would be there to fund it. He continued by stating that this year the intention was to consider whether the risk was being managed effectively and how reserves were being dealt with.

Councillor Mason sought clarification on the 'smoothing reserves' category, which she was not familiar with. In response the Deputy Chief Executive (CB) explained that this was a relatively new term for the Council under which some of the existing reserves had been placed. It referred to reserves held for funding future predicted and potential items of one off expenditure.

Councillor Cranswick thanked officers for their hard work in finalising the outturn position.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) note the outturn
- b) approve the principle that any underspend be used to maintain the level of earmarked reserves before increasing general fund balance
- c) approve the capital carry forwards
- d) approve the proposed changes to the Council's earmarked reserves.

The meeting closed at 7.45 pm.

CHAIRMAN