

**MINUTES OF THE CABINET
MONDAY, 28 JULY 2008**

Councillors Meehan* (Chair), Reith (Vice-Chair), Adje* Amin, Basu*, Bevan*, Canver*, Haley*, B. Harris*, and Santry*

*Present

Also Present: Councillor Gorrie, Councillor Whyte

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTION BY
CAB45.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillor Amin.</p>	
CAB46.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interests.</p> <p>NOTED</p>	
CAB47.	<p>FUTURE ACCOMMODATION FOR CIVIC AND CEREMONIAL FUNCTIONS (Report of the Director of Corporate Resources – Agenda Item 4)</p> <p>The Appendices to the interleaved report were the subject of a motion to exclude the press and public from the meeting as they contained exempt information relating to the business or financial affairs of any particular person.</p> <p>We received an introduction to the report by the Cabinet Member for resources and we acknowledged the wonderful opportunity there was to revitalise Woodside House by relocating the existing Civic Ceremonial functions and registrars service into the heart of the Park. With regard to the proposed refurbishment we were advised that investment in a heritage building would provide a modern state of the art council chamber, meeting rooms and civic space, a sustainable civic building, and provide attractive facilities for the registrar service.</p> <p>We acknowledged that consideration would need to be made as to when the best time to sell the current civic centre site would be.</p> <p>We noted that this proposal was in line with the accommodation strategy and provided value for money. Alternative options to Woodside House have been explored and had been rejected.</p> <p>We noted that all the existing users of Woodside House, including the drop in provision would be found alternative accommodation in the area and their services re-provided. There were a number of options being</p>	

**MINUTES OF THE CABINET
MONDAY, 28 JULY 2008**

considered and current users would be kept fully informed. The concerns regarding consultation and provision of information to the users of Woodside House were noted, together with those of a leaseholder of a building in the park. Contact had been made with relevant groups and individuals by officers, further contact would be made. There would be opportunity for all stakeholders to engage and express views on the proposals during the pre-planning consultation planned for end August and beginning of September.

We received a number of comments from Councillor Gorrie in respect of the proposals and in particular that whilst there was acceptance in terms of the proposals, was Woodside House the best alternative location; given the current economic climate was this the best time to embark on this course of action; whether the proposed expenditure could be more usefully spent across the Borough and whether there was a need for a static Council meeting place; what had been the level of consultation in respect the existing users of Woodside House.

In response to a number of the points raised we were advised by cabinet member Councillor Adje that there would be opportunity for engaging with the public and users during the late August and September period. Organisations either using or operating at Woodside House had already been contacted. The proposed refurbishment would offer value for money and would provide a new civic amenity with facilities and a suitable ambience for meetings and excellent registrar facilities. The proposals had also been embedded in the Council's accommodation strategy for a considerable period.

We commented on the need to ensure, in respect of relocating existing users of Woodside House, that the alternative accommodation be suitable to users and near to good transport links. In response to clarification we were informed by Councillor Gorrie that he was aware of one Local Authority who was considering the idea of a non static meeting arrangement concept, which in his view, was novel, and that perhaps consideration should be given to the possibility.

Our Chair stressed that there would be provision of alternative accommodation for all existing users of Woodside House. It was the case that in terms of currently unused council buildings in the Borough the Council was looking at bringing these back into use as it was a fact that the Council could not afford to have them remaining unutilised. The Chair also reiterated earlier comments that officers would continue to have dialogue and meetings with existing users.

The Chair then MOVED and it was:

RESOLVED:

1. That, having considered the options for the future provision of democratic and civic functions as outlined in the interleaved report together with the Feasibility Report prepared by Capita Symonds, approval be granted to the

DCR

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	<p>engagement in the design process and carry out enabling works.</p>	
<p>CAB48.</p>	<p>CIVIC CENTRE SITE DISPOSAL (Report of the Director of Corporate Resources - Agenda Item 7)</p> <p>The interleaved report was the subject of a motion to exclude the press and public from the meeting as it contained exempt information relating to the business or financial affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information).</p> <p>We noted that this disposal would contribute towards the council's accommodation strategy, giving both regeneration benefits and generating capital receipts that would be used for the re-provision of the Civic Centre. The Cabinet member for Resources - Councillor Adje advised that in respect of concerns in relation to the fact that the Civic Centre was located in a conservation area there would be a requirement at a later stage as part of the necessary planning consents to ensure a proper process to be followed for the necessary conservation consent.</p> <p>We were advised that the BSF team would be relocated and the Children and Young People's Service were aware of this.</p> <p>In noting the position regarding site 3, the implications of alternative locations would need to be examined by officers.</p> <p>In response to further comments the Chair advised that the sites would be marketed at an appropriate time .</p> <p>The Chair MOVED and it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That approval be granted to the disposal of sites 1 and 2 of the Civic Centre site as detailed in the interleaved report and shown on Drawing No. BVES A4 misc. on the open market; 2. That the position regarding site 3 as described in the interleaved report be noted; 3. That the Head of Corporate Property be authorised to prepare a development brief to market the site and negotiate and agree Heads of Terms for the subsequent disposal of the Civic Centre site to the preferred purchaser; and 4. That in respect of the report to be submitted to Cabinet in October 2008 officers be asked to detail both revenue and capital costs of the accommodation strategy and the overall savings that the strategy would bring. 	<p>DCR</p> <p>HP</p> <p>DCR</p>

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The meeting ended at 18.58hrs.

GEORGE MEEHAN
Chair