

MINUTES OF CABINET MEETING HELD 21 MARCH 2011

PRESENT

Cabinet Members: Councillor Cereste (chair), Councillor S Dalton, Councillor Elsey, Councillor Hiller, Councillor Holdich, Councillor Lamb, Councillor Lee, Councillor Scott, Councillor Seaton and Councillor Walsh.

Cabinet Adviser: Councillor Benton.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Cereste declared an interest in item 6 on the agenda, the Long Term Transport Strategy and Local Transport Plan, as he had initiated the Water Transport project.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held 7 February 2011 were agreed and signed as an accurate record subject to the apologies from Councillor Lee and Councillor Scott being recorded.

ITEMS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

4. NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCIL REVIEW – PART 2

Councillor Hiller introduced the report and asked that Councillor Burton (chairman of the review group) inform Cabinet of the report on the outcome of the second stage of a review of Neighbourhood Councils which had been undertaken by the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Task and Finish Group. Cabinet was asked to consider the conclusions and agree the recommendations of the second part of this review.

Councillor Burton explained that recommendation 7, concerning Police Panels, intended to enable Police Panels to be held on the same night as the Neighbourhood meeting, not to be integrated into the meetings.

During debate on the recommendations, Cabinet Members highlighted that no cost implications had been presented with the report so the recommendations could only be implemented if they were within the existing budget and also questioned whether 30 minutes would be enough time for the Police Panels to conduct their business; it was suggested that 45-50 minutes would be more appropriate for the Police Panels. Councillor Burton responded that it would be for officers to ascertain the costs for the proposals from the review group. The Executive Director of Operations confirmed that the costs involved in implementing any agreed recommendations would need to be calculated before progressing the work.

Cabinet further discussed the proposed change of name to Area Committees. Cabinet Members were keen to retain the term 'Neighbourhood' and therefore any change should be to 'Neighbourhood Committee'.

Cabinet **RESOLVED** to endorse the recommendations to:

1. Change the name of Neighbourhood Councils to Neighbourhood Committees.
2. Adopt the following as the vision statement for Neighbourhood Committees:

“Neighbourhood Committees will deliver improvements for the local area by identifying, overseeing, monitoring and driving actions to support all issues relevant to the area, including service delivery, service improvements, and area developments”

3. Amend the relevant Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution to reflect these recommendations, and to ensure that Neighbourhood Committees are supported by similar procedures that support other Council committees.
4. Replace the existing terms of reference for Neighbourhood Councils with the following:
 - (i) Neighbourhood Committees are established in Peterborough in accordance with the provisions set out in Local Government Act 2000
 - (ii) Neighbourhood Committees will require the proactive support of all elected Councillors, officers, and partner organisations to ensure their full and positive success

Neighbourhood Committees should:

- (iii) Make decisions within the remit of their terms of reference and their formally delegated responsibilities, or make recommendations to the Executive as appropriate on issues which affect the area
 - (iv) Be the committee where members of the Neighbourhood Committee and members of the community can discuss issues of concern or interest, including those that are not the direct responsibility of the Council as well as those that are
 - (v) Set the standards for services to meet local needs which are outside the immediate responsibility or budget of the Neighbourhood Committee, and seek agreement for any changes from the Executive
 - (vi) Be the primary focus for public involvement and consultation within the area, working closely with other public, private and voluntary agencies, and advising and/or making recommendations that arise to the Executive as appropriate on issues which affect the area
 - (vii) Develop community action plans, and monitor their implementation, to ensure the promotion of economic, environmental, cultural and social wellbeing of the area, that service delivery improvements are made and that better outcomes are achieved
 - (viii) Carry out any non-Executive functions delegated by the council, and any Executive functions delegated by the Leader, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegations set out in Part 3 sections 1 and 3 of the Constitution
 - (ix) Be directly responsible for any delegated funding identified by the Council and invest that money in ways that support the priorities identified through the community planning process
5. That for the Municipal Year commencing May 2011, replace the existing Delegations to Neighbourhood Councils with those set out below. Keep this under review during that year, with a view to expanding the delegations from the start of the Municipal Year

commencing May 2012:

- (i) The Leader retains responsibility for functions delegated and may exercise those functions in person, regardless of further delegation. Further, the Neighbourhood Committees must act with due regard to all other Council policies and procedures
 - (ii) To promote the Council's role as a community leader in its area, giving a meaningful voice to the community and fostering good and productive working relationships with the Council's partner organisations, including Parish Councils, Police, Fire, Probation, criminal justice agencies, health and social care agencies, education agencies, young peoples' services, community associations, residents associations and voluntary sector agencies
 - (iii) To take a leading role in promoting the economic, environmental, cultural and social wellbeing of the area, and develop community action plans to achieve this that improve service delivery and achieve better outcomes
 - (iv) To set the standards for all former City Services operations now contracted to Enterprise to ensure effective delivery of all services, including making decisions on the maximum amount of any delegated budgets allowable within the terms of the contract to be deployed on local priorities (*to be confirmed subject to details of the contract*)
 - (v) To agree the annual programme of works contained within the Highways Capital Programme for 2012/13 onwards
 - (vi) To act as consultees on all major or significant Executive and Council proposals that affect the area, including those affecting both capital and revenue spend
 - (vii) To act as consultees in respect of Major Planning applications relevant to the area, and report views to the relevant Committee
 - (viii) To carry out any actions that the Executive authorises in addition to those set out above, until such time as that authorisation is revoked
6. Deliver the recommendations set out in the report from the sub-group of the Neighbourhood Council Task and Finish Group which has focussed on rural/parish issues, specifically:
- (i) create a new committee to replace the Rural North Neighbourhood Council, that comprises rural Ward Councillors and one co-opted representative from each of the 23 rural Parish Councils
 - (ii) appoint a rural Ward Councillor as the Chair of this committee
 - (iii) hold all meetings at a rural location within any of the 23 rural Parish Council areas
 - (iv) decisions relating to non-financial matters or those that are not formally delegated responsibilities will be debated by all members of the committee, with all members having a single vote each
 - (v) matters relating to financial or delegated responsibilities will be decided solely by elected City Councillors
7. Create a single, seamless approach to neighbourhood engagement by creating a structure which enables the following to be delivered in each Neighbourhood Committee area during the same session:

- Ward Forum: a ward-specific informal forum where ward councillors can engage with their constituents and discuss informal issues or issues which may require escalation to the Neighbourhood Committee. During these forums, key officer representation should also be available, including from the Neighbourhood Management team, Trading Standards, Community Safety, Police, and Enterprise
- Neighbourhood Panel: formally Police-led but now partner-wide meetings during which three local priorities are identified for resolution
- Neighbourhood Committee: re-launched former Neighbourhood Council meetings, focussing on more strategic or impactful issues affecting the area

For example, the Ward Forums may run from 6pm until 6.50pm, and the Neighbourhood Committee meeting may run from 7.00pm until 9.00pm with the first 30 minutes given over to the business of the Neighbourhood Panel.

8. Ensure the broader neighbourhood management framework is in place and is able to respond to the opportunities provided in the Localism Bill and other relevant emerging legislation. Further, ensure that monthly Neighbourhood Management Delivery Team meetings are in place for all Area Committee areas, that there is full commitment from all councillors, and that the role of community partnership organisations is firmly established.
9. Organise a minimum of two Neighbourhood Committee locality 'tours' per annum, during which *ALL* members of the Committee, the nominated CMT member, key PCC officers, key officers from partner organisations, key community leaders/representatives and the local media explore the area in more depth focussing on particular problems, hotspots and successes.

Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve recommendations to:

10. Agree to the creation of a job description for the roles of Chair and Vice Chair of the Neighbourhood Committee that reflects the changes of emphasis and focus set out in these recommendations, and the role these posts will play in support of the broader neighbourhood management structure.
11. Agree to the creation of a lead officer role within the Neighbourhoods division to co-ordinate and facilitate the entire Neighbourhood Management meeting and engagement structure, including:
 - Developing, co-ordinating and monitoring delivery of action plans at Neighbourhood Committee, Neighbourhood Panel, Ward Forums, and locality tour levels, holding Members, officers and partners to account as necessary
 - Liaising with key PCC departments, notably Democratic Services and Communications, to ensure all required actions are delivered
 - Arranging agenda setting and planning meetings for Neighbourhood Committees in accordance with the Constitution
 - All logistical arrangements for Neighbourhood Committees, Neighbourhood Panels, Ward Forums, Neighbourhood Management Delivery Team meetings and any other related forums, including venues, refreshments, access, transport etc
 - Liaising with Council departments and partners regarding information to be made available at each meeting (e.g. literature or a staffed information stand)
 - Managing the agenda plan for each Neighbourhood Committee containing items for future discussion
 - Developing, managing and co-ordinating a full contacts database of residents, community groups, officers and partners to ensure maximum awareness of all relevant meetings and opportunities for engagement

12. Agree that alongside formal minutes from the Neighbourhood Committee, comprehensive action plans should be created from (i) every Ward Forum and (ii) every Neighbourhood Committee meeting, setting out clearly what actions have been agreed, and naming a lead officer (with the consent of the officer named) and a lead councillor jointly responsible for ensuring the action is achieved.
13. Agree to formalise the seating arrangements at Neighbourhood Committee meetings so that all Members sit at the front of the audience in a horseshoe arrangement, making it clear who has voting rights, how those rights are used, and who is not in attendance.
14. Agree to identify a different member of the Corporate Management Team to act as champion and advocate for each of the seven Neighbourhood Committees, and to ensure that the principles of Neighbourhood Committees are given the appropriate status amongst all officers.
15. Agree to develop a single media and communications strategy, supported by an action plan, which proactively promotes Neighbourhood Committees and Ward Forums and their achievements in a timely manner.
 - (a) To help achieve this assign an officer within the Communications team to have responsibility for coordinating publicity and marketing for Neighbourhood Committees and Ward Forums
 - (b) Produce a publicity 'pack' of template materials and formats that promote Neighbourhood Committees, including 'soft' formats (via the use of the web, social networking etc) and 'hard' formats (posters, leaflets etc)
16. Agree to be creative and flexible with the logistical arrangements for neighbourhood engagement activities set out in recommendation 7, providing they follow the Access to Information rules. For example, vary the start and end times of the meetings to ensure engagement with different residents, and ensure venues have enough space and capacity to cope with the requirements of both formal and informal forums during the same session
17. Agree that officers should explore transport initiatives as and where appropriate for each of the Neighbourhood Committee meetings to support attendance from residents
18. Agree that the recommendations, when agreed, form part of an overall implementation plan for Neighbourhood Councils alongside the recommendations that emerge from stage one of the review. This implementation plan should be overseen by the cross-party working group formed from the task and finish group, and become a standing item at all Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee meetings, with regular updates also provided to Cabinet and Group Representatives
19. Agree to re-brand and have a major re-launch of Neighbourhood Councils as Neighbourhood Committees. This should include raising awareness to all councillors, PCC officers, external partners, and residents to actively promote their purpose including the vision set out in recommendation 2 along with the new delegations and terms of reference

Cabinet further **RESOLVED** to:

1. Not endorse the proposed change of name from Neighbourhood Councils to Area Committees;
2. Ensure that the above recommendations be implemented subject to sufficient resources being available to do so; and

3. Ensure that future reports from Scrutiny review groups making recommendations to Cabinet include any resource and cost implications of those recommendations.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

This report came to Cabinet following a request from the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee to conduct a review of Neighbourhood Councils. The review had taken into account the learning and experience from the first year of operations, in order to produce the recommendations for their continued development.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Option 1. Not to agree to the recommendations. The Committee did not recommend this as they considered it to be detrimental to the ongoing improvement and development of Neighbourhood Councils.

Option 2. Develop alternative recommendations. The Committee did not recommend this as they considered that the Task and Finish Group had conducted an in depth and objective review and therefore the recommendations put forward were considered to be the most effective way of improving the provision of Neighbourhood Councils.

STRATEGIC DECISIONS

5. PETERBOROUGH LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN (LIP)*

Cabinet received a report following a change in approach to funding that had been adopted by the Housing and Communities Agency (HCA). The HCA now required local authorities to provide a document that focused on housing growth within the area with supporting evidence. Whilst this was a fluid document the HCA saw this as the key first step in securing funding for projects that provided housing growth.

Councillor Hiller introduced the report highlighting its two sections; current, evidence based situation; and future projects including HCA support and approval for the document.

Andrew Edwards, Head of Growth & Regeneration, advised Cabinet that Sustainable Growth Scrutiny Committee had recommended that any affordable housing must provide a certain percentage of 3-4 bedroom homes.

During debate, issues raised included the need to allocate sufficient land for prestigious homes which could be included in the next document to be submitted on this subject; development of an environmental business cluster and inclusion of environmental considerations in development documents; and the impact of the Greater Haddon development on existing residents.

Andrew Edwards advised Cabinet that the document was written to enable HCA funding and some of the specific issues, as highlighted above, could be found in other planning documents.

Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

Adopt the Local Investment Plan developed in conjunction with the Homes and Communities Agency, in order that it can be used to help to attract inward investment into Peterborough, primarily for the purposes of encouraging residential regeneration.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Approval of the LIP would allow the Council, with its partners, to move forward and seek further funding to support the Growth of the City.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The only other option was not to develop a LIP. If this were the action chosen then the Council would miss out on an opportunity to secure funding from the HCA to deliver Housing Growth. It should be noted that the HCA sees the LIP as the only avenue to secure funding in support of residential growth.

6. LONG TERM TRANSPORT STRATEGY AND LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP)

Cabinet received a report following a Joint Meeting of the Environment Capital and Sustainable Growth Scrutiny Committees and Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities as part of the democratic process leading to the adoption of the Peterborough Long Term Transport Strategy (2011-2026) and Local Transport Plan (2011-2016) at Full Council in April 2011.

Councillor Hiller introduced the report and advised Cabinet that a Local Transport Plan was produced every five years and this version included a fifteen year Long Term Strategy.

During debate issues raised by Cabinet Members included the need for a bus route in the Glinton and Northborough area, potential dependence on car travel for the Greater Haddon development resulting in possible gridlock situations, noise reduction surfaces on new roads and the need for improvement in road signs before any major new road schemes.

Mark Speed, Transport Planning Team Manager, advised Cabinet on specific points including that trigger points were still to be met in the Hampton development before further road infrastructure was installed, all new resurfacing would use noise reduction surfaces and a strategic sign review would take place over the next few years.

Cabinet considered the report and accompanying document and **RESOLVED** to:

Recommend to Council the adoption of the Peterborough Long Term Transport Strategy (2011-2026) and the Local Transport Plan (2011-2016).

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The statutory requirement of this document requires that it is submitted to Full Council for adoption and therefore Cabinet was asked to support the submission of this document to Full Council for consideration and adoption in April 2011.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The only other option considered was that the Council would not write and publish a LTP. This was rejected as the LTP is a statutory document and the Council is required to prepare and publish the plan.

11.05 a.m.