

MINUTES OF CABINET MEETING HELD 24 SEPTEMBER 2012

PRESENT

Cabinet Members: Councillor Cereste (chair), Councillor Fitzgerald, Councillor Hiller, Councillor Holdich, Councillor Lee, Councillor Scott, Councillor Seaton and Councillor Walsh.
Cabinet Advisers: Councillor Elsey and Councillor North

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Dalton and Councillor Goodwin.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

3. MINUTES OF CABINET MEETING 10 JUNE 2012

Cabinet agreed that the minutes of the meeting held 10 June 2012 were accurate subject to an amendment that Councillor Seaton, not Councillor Cereste, introduced the report on the Budget Monitoring Report Final Outturn 2011/12.

STRATEGIC DECISIONS

4. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) – PRELIMINARY DRAFT CHARGING SCHEDULE (PDCS)

Cabinet received a report requesting its approval of a set of documents for the purpose of public consultation, this being the first step in an 18 month process for bringing into force a CIL for Peterborough. The most important element Cabinet was being asked to approve was the 'Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule' (see Table 1 below). If, following due process, CIL was subsequently adopted by full council in late 2013 or early 2014, it would signify an important shift in the way the council collects and administers developer contributions to help pay for the necessary infrastructure Peterborough needed to grow sustainably.

Councillor Hiller introduced the report stating that the planned growth for the city must have the necessary infrastructure in place and this Levy would contribute to achieving this. Simon Machen, the council's Head of Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services advised that infrastructure projects already identified would amount to around £400 million of funding and this Levy should provide around £70 million of that.

Regarding the Greater Haddon Development, Cabinet was advised that major infrastructure such as schools and roads would be provided by the developers under section 106 agreements.

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

1. Approve the Community Infrastructure Levy Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule and supporting documentation, including the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule 2012, for 6 weeks public consultation commencing in October 2012;
2. Agree that a refreshed Infrastructure Delivery Schedule is scrutinised and approved by Cabinet annually each year (around summer), but that delegated authority is given to the Leader, as Portfolio Holder for Growth, to add or delete infrastructure items on the Schedule at any time via a CMDN; and
3. Agree to the request made by Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Group on 6 September 2012 that it is made explicit that the intention, subject to consultation, is for the element of the CIL receipts which is to be ringfenced for spend by Neighbourhood Committees should be distributed to each Neighbourhood Committee on an equal basis.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Government was introducing changes to the way Developer Contributions can be collected and spent. Charging Authorities had the option of adopting a CIL. From April 2014 the use of the Council's existing methodology for collecting Developer Contribution (POIS) would become unlawful and so unless a CIL was adopted, the collection and use of Developer Contributions would be severely limited from that date.

There are many potential benefits of adopting a CIL. In particular, a standard charge would:

- introduce a clearer and simpler system for collecting and spending Developer Contributions for strategic infrastructure considered necessary to accommodate future growth;
- aid infrastructure providers in planning the delivery and operation of infrastructure;
- aid developers in identifying the likely costs associated with development;
- improve accountability to the public for use of developer contributions for infrastructure;
- ensure that payments are made to town and parish councils when development occurs in their areas so that they can deliver local priority infrastructure; and
- increase the range of developments that are able to contribute towards infrastructure, including small residential developments which have often not been required to make contributions in the past.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The option to not prepare a CIL has been considered and rejected. This option may have been acceptable if, for example, Peterborough was only expecting very minimal growth over the plan period and the majority of that growth could be dealt with through the limited pooling of contributions for strategic infrastructure. This would have made the adoption of a CIL superfluous.

Any options to propose charging higher or lower CIL rates have been rejected, as to do so would result in development being unviable (if rates too high) or infrastructure not provided (if rates too low).

5. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

Cabinet received a report to obtain its views on the proposed review of the Common Housing Allocations Policy ahead of public consultation.

Councillor Hiller introduced the report highlighting the need to address the numbers of people currently on the Housing List and the revised policy included a priority for ex-service personnel. Councillor Hiller thanked officers for their work on the review.

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

Approve the proposed Allocations Policy for public consultation.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The proposed Allocation Policy has been written to meet the duties of Part VI of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and with regard to the Communities and Local Government Allocation of Accommodation: guidance for Local Authorities in England June 2012.

The Localism Act 2011 made an amendment to the Housing Act 1996, which gave local authorities the power to set their own qualifying criteria for people who are allowed to join the housing register. This allows councils to restrict entry to the housing register to those who are in the most housing need as well allowing exclusions for other reasons based on local criteria.

The proposed amended allocations policy makes full use of these powers by setting the entry criteria to the housing register to those who are in the most urgent housing need. Therefore reducing the number of households on the Housing Register and providing realistic options and expectations for households in housing need in the City.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

To not review the Policy and continue implementing the existing Policy- this would mean the Housing Register would continue to grow in number and households would be housed into properties which they would under-occupy (due to the bedroom standard) their housing benefit would not cover and they would fall into rent arrears.

Review the bedroom standard only – This would mean the Housing Register would continue to grow in number and the households on it would continue to have unrealistic expectations of being re-housed.

Review the Policy but not include the awarding of additional preference – this would not promote full discussion and debate of the policy.

Review the Policy and adopt everything in the Communities and Local Government Allocation of Accommodation: guidance for local authorities in England – this would not take into account Peterborough's housing needs and issues.

6. BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Cabinet received a report as part of the council's agreed process for integrated finance and business planning. It continued the multi-year approach to budgeting to help plan for the financial challenges ahead. The drivers continued to meet the council's priorities by creating a sustainable budget strategy whilst responding to changes arising from decisions made in the distribution of local government funding.

Councillor Seaton introduced the report highlighting the current financial situation where further government cuts to the council's grant were expected along with the need to increase the budget provision for Adult Social Care due to increased demand

for services. Consultation timescales for the budget may need amending depending on the date the government grant is announced. However, the council had been given another clean bill of health from its auditors at PricewaterhouseCoopers.

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

1. Note the position in the current financial year and approve the actions to manage in year budgetary pressures that will ensure that the Council reduces the overall overspend;
2. Note the current consultations affecting future local government funding arrangements and the implications on the Council's future settlements and medium term financial strategy (MTFS); and
3. Approve the approach that is proposed for the budget process incorporating the MTFS and suggested approach to consult with Scrutiny and Stakeholders.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Constitution required Cabinet to outline its approach to developing the MTFS. This process helped to ensure that the Council achieves a balanced budget, aligned to corporate priorities.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The alternative option was to do nothing. This was rejected because the constitution requires the council to outline the approach to next year's budget setting by the end of preceding month of September.

7. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

Cabinet received a report updating it on the requirement of the council to develop a new local Council Tax Support scheme, the proposals of the draft scheme as the basis for undertaking public consultation along with the required approach and timescales for implementation.

Councillor Seaton introduced the report stating that funding for the most vulnerable would continue and the new support scheme would aim to deliver a fairer approach to all who were in receipt of council tax support and for those who paid council tax. The consultation on the scheme would include as many people as possible so that views from a wide range of residents across the city would be gained.

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

1. Approve the draft scheme as a basis for consultation and the approach to consultation outlined in the report; and
2. Approve further work on mitigating the impacts of these changes, as outlined in section 6 of the report, and for the outcomes to be reported back to Cabinet following consultation.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Constitution required Cabinet to approve the consultation on the new Council Tax Support scheme.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Over recent months the Council has undertaken detailed analysis and produced many different models looking at options for targeting savings towards particular aspects of the benefit scheme. These are listed with an outline of the possible savings below:

- **Maximum amount of Support** - Limit to £23.15 per week (Band C) saves £33,000 per year;
- **Minimum amount of Support** - Limit to £2.00 per week saves £10,000 per year;
- **Capital limit** - Reduce from £16,000 to £6,000 saves £33,000 per year;
- **Adjust the figures used in the benefit calculation** – the Council considered this but discounted changing these amounts as they are set by the Government as the minimum requirements for a person to live off and determine how much benefit someone may be entitled to. They also provide support for vulnerable claimants and those trying to return to work; and
- **Alternative Maximum Council Tax Benefit (Second Adult Rebate)** - this rebate of up to 25% considers the income of any second adult in the property whose occupation has removed the single person discount. There are currently only 55 second adult claims in Peterborough and removing this rebate from our Council Tax Support scheme will save £18,000 per year.

Overall, accepting all of these proposals would only reduce the overall reduction in benefit from 35% to 33%. As a result, it is not considered that these targeted savings, which impact directly on a limited number of claimants, should be part of the proposed scheme. The consultation will seek views in this area.

8. CITIZEN'S PANEL SURVEY

Cabinet received a report providing it with a summary of results from the Citizens' Panel survey undertaken in March 2012 sponsored by the Greater Peterborough Partnership (GPP) Executive prior to internal and external circulation.

Councillor Seaton introduced the report highlighting priorities given of reducing crime and creating jobs. An increased number of people agreed that the city was a good place to live, work and play and that the city council provided good value for money.

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

Note the findings from the Citizens' Panel Survey from March 2012 prior to submission to the Greater Peterborough Partnership and the Safer Peterborough Partnership.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Cabinet was requested to approve the report prior to the outcomes and findings of the recent survey being shared by local residents and the media.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

NWA was recruited via a tendering exercise to provide specialist market research consultation support to the Council and deliver Citizens' Panel surveys. Topics for inclusion in the surveys are agreed with the appropriate Head of Service prior to the survey format being developed. CMT approved the structure of the survey before it is printed and distributed.

9. OUTCOME OF PETITIONS

Cabinet received a report updating it on the progress being made in response to petitions in accordance with Standing Order 13 of the Council's Rules of Procedure.

Councillor Cereste introduced the report.

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

Note the action taken in respect of petitions presented to full Council.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Standing Orders require that Council receive a report about the action taken on petitions. As the petitions presented in this report have been dealt with by Cabinet Members or officers it is appropriate that the action taken is reported to Cabinet, prior to it being included within the Executive's report to full Council.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Any alternative options would require an amendment to the Council's Constitution to remove the requirement to report to Council.

11.05 a.m.