

**MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING
HELD AT 10:00AM, ON
MONDAY, 15 JANUARY 2018
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Cabinet Members Present: Councillor Holdich (Chair), Councillor Ayres Councillor Elsey, Councillor Fitzgerald, Councillor Hiller, Councillor Lamb, Councillor Seaton, Councillor Smith, and Councillor Walsh

Cabinet Advisors Present: Councillor Allen and Councillor Stokes

47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 5 – Acquisition of Accommodation to Reduce Homelessness

Councillor Hiller declared that he was a Board Member of Medesham Homes and would not be taking part in debate.

49. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETINGS HELD ON:

(a) 20 November 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

(b) 4 December 2017 – Budget Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

(c) 18 December 2017 – Extraordinary Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

50. PETITIONS PRESENTED TO CABINET

There were no petitions presented to Cabinet.

STRATEGIC DECISIONS

51. ACQUISITION OF ACCOMMODATION TO REDUCE HOMELESSNESS

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the demand for accommodation created as a result of the increase in homelessness.

The purpose of the report was to set out and obtain approval for the recommended funding mechanisms, which in the earliest instances would see the increase in the

number of properties to help alleviate homelessness in Peterborough, and to reduce the financial pressure being experienced as a result of higher than normal volumes of households being accommodated in bed and breakfast or hotel accommodation.

The Housing Needs Manager introduced the report and explained that the report contained details of the mechanics for funding Medesham Homes to purchase homes in order to reduce reliance on Bed and Breakfast accommodation for homeless individuals. These homes would also then be available for use as affordable housing.

Cabinet debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Officers were confident that the action requested would enable them to reduce the current use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation down to zero.
- It was expected that the first hand over of units would take place in July, with the rest following in the next 18 months. This did not include work starting on site.
- The greatest demand on the Council was for two bedroom accommodation, which would make up the majority of the acquisitions. It was intended that rent would be set at the local housing allowance rate, so would be affordable to those in need.
- The Housing Needs team had gained four new members, supporting its aims to prevent situations of homelessness at an earlier stage. More work was to be undertaken to keep individuals in the houses they currently had.
- It was noted that considerable investment had already been made by Council in relation to homelessness provision and affordable housing. Affordable housing provision had doubled in the last month and the rate of homelessness was reducing.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** (unanimous) to:

1. Approve in principle the funding mechanisms and processes discussed in this report for managing the investment of previously agreed funding into Medesham Homes LLP for the purposes of increasing the supply of housing, helping address the demand for accommodation created as a result of the increase in homelessness;
2. In respect of the specific proposal in relation to Midland Road properties Cabinet delegated to the Corporate Director for Growth and Regeneration and the Service Director for Communities and Safety (in consultation with the Corporate Director of Resources and the Leader of the Council) the authority to approve funding of up to £4m to Medesham Homes LLP subject to the submission of an acceptable business case by Medesham Homes LLP through the process defined in this report;
3. In respect of the specific proposal in relation to providing funding for Midland Road, Cabinet delegated to the Director of Law and Governance the authority to finalise and put in place any agreements and legal documentation necessary to give effect to these proposals, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Growth and Regeneration and the Corporate Director, Resources.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Cabinet Report that established Medesham Homes specifically did not deal with the mechanisms and processes associated with investment into the joint venture; these were reserved for a future paper.

Continuing to provide temporary accommodation at the current rates was not sustainable for the Council nor was it sustainable for homeless households. These proposals sought to enable the Council to take greater control over the provision of accommodation for homeless households.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Doing nothing – this option was discounted as the previous Cabinet Report that established Medesham Homes required funding mechanisms to be put forward through the Council's governance. These mechanisms and approach would also help reduce the continued use of temporary accommodation that, coupled with the continued increase in demand, was not sustainable.

52. COUNCIL TAXBASE, BUSINESS RATES, AND COLLECTION FUND DECLARATION 2018/19

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the calculation of the Council Tax Base for 2018/19 and the estimated positions of the Collection Fund in respect of Council Tax and Business Rates as at 31 March 2018.

The purpose of the report was to form part of the preparation for setting the council's budget. It needed to be considered so that figures for the tax base, the Collection Fund and the amount of business rates to be collected could be used in setting the Council Tax and business rate income and could be notified to other affected authorities.

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the report and advised that this report was a standard annual requirement for Cabinet. The calculations contained within took into account council tax support, collection fund surplus and deficits within the business rates. It was noted that this deficit was, in part, due to the collection rate. It was proposed to delegated authority to officers to complete and provide these returns to the Secretary of State. The Cabinet Member advised that the second sentence within 4.2 should read, "the proposed tax base for 2018/19 has therefore reduced ...".

Cabinet debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- It was noted that under legislation the Council received 83% of the Council Tax income, and the police and fire receive the remaining.
- In relation to Business Rates, the Council receives 49%, the government receives 50% and the Fire Authority receives 1%.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** (unanimous) to:

1. Propose the calculation of the Council Tax Base for 2018/19 set at a level of 56,259.29 Band D equivalent properties based on the existing council tax support scheme of 30%;
2. Note the estimated position on the Collection Fund in respect of Council Tax as at 31 March 2018 being:

£1.431m surplus

3. Note the estimated position on the Collection Fund in respect of Business Rates as at 31 March 2018 being:

£0.194m deficit

4. Delegate to the Interim Corporate Director Resources authority for approving the final estimated position on the collection fund balance and for returning the final NNDR1 return to the Secretary of State by 31 January 2018 to include any further revision to the business rates position 2017/18 and Business Rate income 2018/19.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Council Tax Base could be set at a higher or lower level. However, this could have the effect of either inflating unnecessarily the amount of Council Tax to be set or setting the tax at a level insufficient to meet the Council's budget requirements. A similar position could arise if the surplus or deficit were set at a higher or lower level.

The calculation and return of the information included in the NNDR1 was a statutory requirement which could be formally delegated to an officer. As with council tax if the amount of business rates estimated to be collected was increased or reduced or the surplus or deficit was set at a higher or lower level then the amount of income available to the council would change with the consequent effect on service provision or council tax levels.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The report covered calculations that were all prescribed by regulations with the effect that no other options needed to be considered.

53. NOVEMBER 2017 BUDGET CONTROL REPORT

The Cabinet received a report as part of the Council's agreed process within the Budget and Policy framework that requires Cabinet to initiate and consider financial strategy and budget proposals in order to set a balanced budget for the forthcoming financial year.

The purpose of the report was to provide the Cabinet with an update in relation to the Council's November 2017 Budgetary Control position.

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the report and advised that the Council were currently facing pressures around homelessness. Risks had also been flagged in relation to the selling of assets. It was expected that the budget for 2017/18 would now result in a surplus position, as it was not considered that the projected capital spend would be met.

Cabinet debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Concern was expressed that the level of capital receipts received was still a significant risk.
- The Cabinet were advised that this was monitored on a weekly basis and officers were confident that future projects would enable the target to be reached.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** (unanimous) to note the Budget Control Position for 2017/18 set out in the report.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The report provided Cabinet with an update on capital receipts.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

There were no alternative options considered.

54. TREE AND WOODLAND STRATEGY

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the Tree and Woodland Strategy.

The purpose of the report was to present the City Council's updated Tree and Woodland Strategy for the Cabinet to approve for public consultation.

The Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development introduced the report and the reports for the four subsequent agenda items. The Cabinet Member advised that all the documents before Cabinet were in draft form, to be agreed for public consultation. The documents supported the overarching growth aims of the Council, to ensure Peterborough continue to grow in the correct manner. It was expected that the strategies and supplementary planning documents could be adopted by the end of 2018.

The supporting documents to the Local Plan provided a framework for growth, protection, and developer involvement. Each of the documents were already in existence, as such the proposal before Cabinet had resulted from a review of the strategies and supporting documents currently in place.

All the documents before Cabinet had been endorsed by the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee. It was noted that where references to wards were out of date, because of recent ward boundary changes, updated text would be included where data using the new ward boundaries was available.

Cabinet debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- It was clarified that the new Local Plan currently subject to public consultation had been strengthened to ensure that the appropriate level of tree coverage would be provided where needed.
- Following queries in relation to the Council's expenditure on tree provision officers acknowledge that the Council's stock was large. This stock, however, was not yet mature and required extensive management not only for the benefit of the trees, but in terms of repairing damages to paths and buildings. This was required in order for the Council to, amongst other matters, fulfil its duties under health and safety legislation.
- Budgeting around trees was carefully monitored. The new strategy set out clear priority and areas that the Council would not be addressing.
- In comparison to other Local Authorities, Peterborough was in a favourable position in terms of expenditure.
- It was noted that the Council's tree stock provided air quality benefits as well as wider environmental and landscape benefits to the locality.
- Queries were raised in relation to how trees were selected for particular areas. Officers confirmed that this was managed on a case by case basis and that these would be located where suitable for the surroundings, as well as having regard for the future growth of the tree.
- The possibility of selling felled wood was suggested. Officers has considered this, however, concluded that such a scheme was not viable. The option would continue to reviewed for the future, however.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** (unanimous) to approve the Tree and Woodland Strategy for public consultation.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The strategy would help deliver the city's Environment Capital priority by providing clear strategic direction for the management of the council's tree resource and setting targets with which the progress of the strategy would be measured.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The alternative option of not producing an updated strategy would mean that there would be no clear vision and targets associated with the management of the Council's Trees and Woodland, making progress difficult to monitor and the effective allocation of resources challenging. Therefore the alternative option of not updating the strategy was rejected.

55. DRAFT PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY FOR CONSULTATION

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the Biodiversity Strategy.

The purpose of the report was to present the draft Biodiversity Strategy to Cabinet, with a recommendation to approve it so that it could proceed to public consultation.

Cabinet debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- A greater emphasis had been placed on habitat creation and managing wildlife environment to connect them together.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** (unanimous) to approve the draft Biodiversity Strategy for public consultation.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

In exercising its functions, the Council had a duty under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to have regard, so far as was consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. It was important therefore that the Council set out a clear strategy to ensure biodiversity was considered in all Council strategies, plans, programmes and practices. The Council's constitution determined that the Strategy was a 'major policy item', and therefore could only be adopted in due course by Full Council. Prior to that, Cabinet was able to approve a draft for consultation.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Do not update the 2010 Biodiversity Strategy. This would represent a missed opportunity to: refresh the now outdated list of actions; present information in a clearer format; and reflect current Government advice. As such, this was not the preferred option.

56. PETERBOROUGH FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the Peterborough Flood and Water Management Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which was adopted by the Council as part of the Peterborough Planning Policy Framework on 10 December 2012.

The purpose of the report was to approve the draft Flood and Water Management SPD for the purpose of public consultation. The SPD would provide guidance to developers on flood and water management in Peterborough. It would expand on overarching headline policy contained in the council's emerging Local Plan.

Cabinet debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- The document was drafted at a technical level as it was aimed at developers, agents and planners to assist them in their work.
- Surface water drainage was being address in a variety of ways depending on the area in question and the type of ground present.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** (unanimous) to approve the draft Flood and Water Management Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

There was no statutory duty to prepare this SPD. However, without it, developers could be confused or misinformed as to how they can deliver fit-for-purpose development schemes in Peterborough that meet flood and water management requirements. This could have an impact on development coming forward as additional time would need to be spent on applications where flood or water management issues occur.

The existence of policy and guidance that all of Peterborough's water management partners support would improve current and future service delivery through the more efficient processing of planning applications and future drainage application approvals

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Do not update the document, policies remain outdated, links broken and missed opportunity to simplify the process for those involved in managing flood risk through development, as such this was not the preferred option.

Remove the SPD from circulation. This would result in a loss of a valuable resource for both planners and developers and carried the risk of flood risk not being consistently managed, as such this was not the preferred option.

Full rewrite. There was little likelihood of a significantly changed document being produced and the associated demand on resources made this an ineffective option.

57. DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT UPDATE

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This was an update to the existing SPD which was adopted in April 2015, which itself was prepared to coincide with the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy in Peterborough.

The purpose of the report was to approve the draft Developer Contributions SPD for the purpose of public consultation. The SPD expanded on overarching headline policy contained in the council's emerging Local Plan.

Cabinet debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- It was clarified that the introduction of the SPD did not bring in any contributions, that contributions were received through planning applications. The document simply made clear to developers what was expected of them.
- It was confirmed that the Council could only ask from contributions to support the impact of the proposed development. No contribution could be asked for to mitigate against existing issues.
- The Council worked closely with parish councils to adapt this requirement to be as beneficial as possible. For example, improving an existing play area rather than providing an entirely new one.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** (unanimous) to approve the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

There was no statutory duty to prepare this SPD. However, without it, there would be a lack of clarity for developers about what contributions to infrastructure would be sought by the council. Without the SPD there could be a detrimental impact on development coming forward and the ability of the council to deliver new and improved infrastructure to support growth.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Remove the SPD from circulation. This would result in a loss of a valuable resource for both planners and developers and carries the risk of infrastructure not being delivered in support of new development, as such this was not the preferred option.

58. PETERBOROUGH GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND BIODIVERSITY SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The purpose of the report was to present the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity SPD in order for Cabinet to approve it for public consultation.

The Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development advised that the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee had endorsed the SPD, subject to the amendment of the supporting map to reference urban areas. This had been actioned and included in the supplementary report before Cabinet.

Cabinet debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Work was undertaken with Frog Life and Bug Life, amongst others, prior to the drafting of the document. They were also able to respond to the consultation.
- Resources were available to manage open spaces. Officers were mindful that where wildlife habitats were proposed, these would need to be achievable. Such spaces would not necessarily cost more and could be managed in an efficient manner.
- It was advised that future open spaces were not expected to be managed by the Council, but maintained by the developers. Most developers were willing to take this responsibility on.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** (unanimous) to approve the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document for the purpose of

public consultation, subject to the amended map appropriately referencing urban areas.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

There was no statutory duty to prepare this SPD. However, without this “one stop shop”, developers could be confused or misinformed in relation to appropriate consideration and implementation of biodiversity and green infrastructure requirements in Peterborough. This could have an impact on development coming forward as additional time would need to be spent on applications where biodiversity and green infrastructure issues occur.

In addition, this SPD provided a focus for identifying and driving forward delivery of priority green infrastructure projects in partnership with a wide range of environmental organisations and community groups within Peterborough.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Do not update the 2006 Green Grid Strategy and various biodiversity guidance notes available on the Council's website. This would represent a missed opportunity to simplify the process for those requiring advice in relation to both biodiversity and green infrastructure, as such this was not the preferred option.

MONITORING ITEMS

59. OUTCOME OF PETITIONS

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the outcome of an E-petition submitted to the Council and a petition presented to Council officers.

The purpose of the report was to update Cabinet on the progress being made in response to petitions submitted to the Council.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** (unanimous) to note the actions taken in respect of petitions.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

As the petitions presented in this report had been dealt with by Cabinet Members or officers, it was appropriate that the action taken was reported to Cabinet.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

There had been no alternative options considered.

Chairman
10:00am – 11:04am
15 January 2018