

**MINUTES OF THE GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT 7PM ON
WEDNESDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2017
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Councillors Aitken, Brown, Cereste, Ellis, Goodwin, King, Lane, Nawaz, Peach (Chairman), Sandford, Parish Councillor Co-opted Members Lievesley and R Clarke

Officers Present: Simon Machen, Corporate Director, Growth and Regeneration
Richard Kay, Head of Sustainable Growth Strategy
Vicki Palazon, Head of Finance (Business Operations and Development)
Peter Carpenter, Director of Financial Services
Damian Roberts, Digital Front Door, Project Manager
Katherine Hlalat, Digital Front Door, Programme Manager
Karen S Dunleavy, Democratic Services Officer

14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Judy Fox, Harper and Barkham. Councillors Lane and Goodwin were in attendance as substitutes.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of interest or whipping declarations.

16. MINUTES OF THE GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 28 JUNE 2017

The minutes of the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 28 June 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

17. CALL IN OF ANY CABINET, CABINET MEMBER OR KEY OFFICER DECISIONS

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

18. PAYMENTS STRATEGY 2017 - 2021

The Head of Finance (Business Operations and Development) introduced the Payment Strategy 2017 – 2021 report, which provided the Committee with detail in regards to the Payments Strategy 2017 - 2021 which included the proposed closure of the cash office and making available online the administration and payments process for parking permits and taxi licensing.

The purpose of the report was to consider the consultation on the Council's Payment Strategy 2017 - 2021 including the proposed closure of the cash office and making available online the administration and payments process for parking permits and taxi licensing.

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- A full report on went to Cabinet on 10 July 2017, which was also that appended to the agenda for this meeting that outlined the full consultation process. In the main, responses received were not about the cash office closure. The customers to the cash office between June and July 2017 were made aware of the Payment Strategy consultation including the proposed cash office closure.
- Some Members raised concerns about the closure of the cash office and commented that a similar function could be introduced to provide support for other Council services.
- Predicted savings from the closure of the cash office would not be directed towards a loan for the proposed hotel in Fletton Quays. The Fletton Quays loan would be sought through the Local Authority's borrowing processes.
- Consultation comments had been noted by the team about some customers not wishing to use a digital payment system, however there would be alternative methods provided to the vulnerable, elderly and non-digitally enabled customers.
- There were over 100 establishments within the Peterborough area where Council customers could make payments for Council services, however the ultimate aim would be provide a digital service.
- A second consultation paper, the draft Customer Engagement Strategy was due to be discussed at Cabinet on 25 September 2017 and organisations such as volunteer establishments, Peterborough Community Assistance Scheme and the Disability Forum were consulted to help capture the needs of the vulnerable and disabled in regards to payment service requirements. In addition an action plan would be undertaken following any decision made by Cabinet to progress the requirements.
- Some Members commented that whilst it had been difficult for Officers to save money it was important not to remove facilities from people when there was a demand for them.
- A queue busting exercise was conducted over a four month period to ask visitors to the cash office why that was their preferred option. The main response was that it had been something the visitors had always done.
- Should a decision be made to close the Council's cash office there would be further queue busting exercises conducted over the next few months to encourage visitors to use the digital payment service and alternative methods such as Banks.
- There had been a recent Government announcement regarding credit card payment surcharges and these were to be abolished in 2018. The credit card surcharge changes would be reflected in the Payment Strategy to be adopted by the Council.
- The Council was exploring a further payment method of Paypoint which was available in many community stores and other local organisations.
- Members commented that rural areas should be given consideration over payment methods available in buildings.
- There would be a face to face service verification process for those applying for Taxi Licensing applications with an online payment system.
- It as projected that a £100k saving would be made as a result of the cash office closure and alternative payment methods.
- The Council would not offer training to establishments such as the Post Office as they had the appropriate transaction processes and documentation in place to make the various payments.
- Should there be an issue with payments made through establishments, the Council would expect this to come through the usual channels of communication with the Council such as the contact centre.

- The Council's reception staff and Contact Centre would be able to direct any payment concerns that Peterborough residents had by contacting Financial Services.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note and comment on the report.

RECOMMENDATION

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee endorsed (nine members were in favour, one against) the three separate consultations and **RECOMMENDED** them for approval by Cabinet for the next phase of the Council's digital transformation programme on projects within the Front Door project impacted by the implementation of the Payments Strategy 2017 - 2021:

- I. The Payment Strategy 2017 - 2021 sets out the vision for how customers would make payments to the Council in future, with an emphasis on more digital channels. This could include the Council not providing a cash office in the future;
- II. A change to the Parking Permits administration and payment by making the process entirely available online. This consultation did not cover parking permit policy issues; and
- III. A change to the Taxi Licensing administration and payment by making the process entirely available online.

19. PETERBOROUGH LOCAL PLAN PROPOSED SUBMISSION

The Head of Sustainable Growth Strategy introduced the report which provided the Committee with a proposed submission version of the Local Plan (LP) for public consultation in November 2017.

The purpose of the report was to enable Committee to consider and recommend to Cabinet (and subsequently to Full Council) the approval of the Proposed Submission Local Plan for public consultation in November 2017 and then submission to the Secretary of State. The Committee were also advised of the recent Government announcement in relation to the new calculation requirement for housing allocations for Local Plans, which had been included in a consultation paper 'planning for the right homes in the right places'. In light of the new Government announcement the Committee were requested to consider an alternative recommendation to defer the LP consultation for a period of two to three months.

Martin Chillcott, speaking on behalf of the 'Protect Rural Peterborough' campaign group, addressed the Committee and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- A petition with 1000 signatures had been completed to oppose the 'Great Kyne' development site included in the draft LP.
- The Committee's deferment to recalculate the final figure for the allocation site for the LP would be welcomed.
- The Memorandum of Corporation (MoC) with Cambridgeshire and figure of 2500 should also be reviewed in line with national policy planning framework particularly for the allocation of areas such as Fenland.
- 'Great Kyne' should not be included in the LP as it contradicts seven of the LP own policies and negates a further three. The red, amber and green rating carried out on site assessments would impact on the environmental social impact of the area.

Robert Dalglish – Manager of Milton Peterborough Estate addressed the Committee and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Milton Peterborough Estates opposed the allocation of development situated north of the A47 near Castor & Ailsworth.
- Milton Estates supported the revised recommendation to the Committee to defer the LP consultation for a further three months.
- Consideration should be given to revising the development proposals in the LP as it was felt that some of the policies and sites were not sound.
- There were concerns over the transparency of the LP as evidence had not been published as soon as it was available particularly in relation to the Growth Study and the Sustainability Appraisal.
- Without the proper public consultation it was impossible for any interested parties to make informed comments about the LP.
- There had been a failure to review the Memorandum of Corporation as required under the National Planning Policy Framework, as demonstrated by a response to a Freedom of Information Request. The MoC would be five years old by the time the LP had been approved.
- There was felt that there had been a conflict of loyalties in respect of the MoC due to Officers preparing plans for other LAs and management of these Authorities by a joint Chief Executive.

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- The alternative recommendation to defer for three months was welcomed by Members.
- Some Members were concerned about housing need and provision of land with amenities.
- The Corporate Director, Growth and Regeneration confirmed that by applying the revised calculation there would be less affordable housing delivery, which would also balance the impact of infrastructure for extra school facilities and highways if adopted. In essence if the revised calculation was adopted there could be 2,000 less homes required for the plan period for the Peterborough area.
- There had been no error made with the planning process used, the new Government calculation figure had provided an alternative option to LAs to consider and adopt. Members could adopt either of the calculations to use in the planning process.
- There were some LAs that the alternative calculation would benefit and some that would be required to provide extra homes in their LPs.
- Some Members questioned whether the Committee could make comments regards to the alternative calculation when they did not know what had been included in the consultation from the Government including the documents referenced by the speakers.
- The Corporate Director, Growth and Regeneration confirmed that the alternative recommendation provided Members with a second opportunity to consider the draft LP. It was expected that Members would comment on the full LP not just the housing element.
- The LP report that would be presented to Council would ask for approval to go out to consultation.
- Responses in terms of the previous LP consultation were available on the Peterborough City Council website and a summary of representations was also available. All previous comments that were made in the first and second round of the public consultation were carefully reviewed by Council Officers and actioned appropriately.
- The Head of Sustainable Growth Strategy provided Members with an overview of the statutory process in consulting and approving a LP and the basis of why the Government had offered an alternative housing allocation calculation.

- Some Members congratulated the team on their hard work in drafting the LP.
- Members felt that careful consideration should be given to what the Government suggest in regards to how the housing allocation figure for the city should be calculated, given Peterborough's projected growth rate.
- The existing planning arrangements approved in the LP such as Great Haddon, would remain unaffected as a result of the alternative calculation if adopted. The LP was a rolling document and was renewed every five years. The Government announcement hoped to provide the LA with clarification over how much housing the city would need to included in their future LP.
- The purpose of a LP was to ensure that there were enough housing sites allocated. A short term delay would not have a materialistic impact in delivering the city's housing needs.
- A delay of up to three months would ensure that the LP was accurate and had not posed a high risk to the LA, however it was expected that there may be a small amount of planning applications submitted by developers whilst the alternative calculation options were being considered.
- There had been minor guidance included in regards to the type of housing within the recent Government consultation paper 'planning for the right homes in the right places' in regards to the elderly provision. In addition the National Policy Framework was due to be published in the spring of 2018, which was expected to contain details of types of housing development requirements.
- It was unlikely that the Spatial Strategy for the city would be altered as a result of adoption of the revised housing allocation.
- The site location for most housing developments would not alter if the alternative housing calculation figure was adopted.
- Members were invited to explore the wider policies further should the preparation of the plan be deferred.
- Members commented that the policy relating to Trees and Woodlands had significantly been improved specifically in relation to the ancient woodland protection and the number of tree replacements recommended.
- Some Members raised concerns in relation to the wind energy statement in the Renewable and Low Carbon section, LP31 and the Neighbourhood Plan requirement for approvals. It was felt that the statement would restrict renewable energy development.
- LP13 had related to pedestrian and cyclists priority and not a highways priority, previously raised in a debate regarding the proposed Rhubarb Bridge maintenance contract.
- Improved transport links between rural and urban areas would be included in a transport statement which would detail what each development site needed. The full detail would not be included in the LP.
- Car parking standards contained at Appendix C of the LP and had not changed from the existing policy.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to endorse the alternative recommendation for approval by Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATION

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that the Proposed Submission ('Publication Draft') Local Plan be deferred for a period of 2-3 months, to enable Officers to:

1. Fully appraise the new method for calculating housing need; and

2. Bring back to Members including the Growth, Resources and Environment Scrutiny Committee a revised housing target and a subsequent revised set of proposed allocations.

20. MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which outlined the format that reported the outcome of any recommendations made at the previous meeting held thereby providing an opportunity for the Committee to request further monitoring of the recommendation should this be required

The purpose of the report was to enable the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee to monitor and track progress of recommendations made to the Executive or Officers at previous meetings.

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to approve the Monitoring Scrutiny Recommendations report format.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to approve responses from Cabinet Members and Officers to recommendations made at previous meetings as attached in Appendix 1 to the report and provided feedback including whether further monitoring of each recommendation was required.

21. FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Executive Decisions containing key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of the forthcoming month. Members were invited to comment on the Plan and, where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme.

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the latest version of the Forward Plan.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions and requested further information on the following Executive Decisions:

1. Approval of Sharing Officers between Peterborough City Council & Cambridgeshire County Council -KEY/10JUL17/01.
2. Financing approval for Fletton Quays Hotel – KEY/18SEP17/04.

22. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received the latest version of the Work Programme 2017/18, which outlined the Committee's work priority for Municipal year 2017/18.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the latest version of the Work Programme 2017/18 and requested to receive the:

1. Proposed Submission ('Publication Draft') Local Plan on 1 November 2017, subject to availability.

23. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 1 November 2017.

CHAIRMAN
7.00pm – 8:44pm

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