

MINUTES OF CABINET MEETING HELD 8 NOVEMBER 2010

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 agenda item 5, Site Allocations Development Plan Document as he owned land affected by some of the sites in the document and would leave for the debate on this item.

Councillor Holdich declared an interest in agenda item 5, Site Allocations Development Plan Document as he owned land affected by some of the sites in the document and would leave for the debate on this item.

3. Minutes of Cabinet Meeting – 29 September 2010

The minutes of the meeting held 29 September 2010 were agreed and signed as an accurate record.

STRATEGIC DECISIONS

4. Future of Westcombe Engineering

Cabinet received a report following a referral from Councillor Cereste, Leader of the Council, and John Harrison, Executive Director of Strategic Resources. The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the report that requested Westcombe Engineering be taken back into the council, overturning a decision taken by Cabinet in September 2007 to close the business; that decision was put in abeyance until further negotiations had taken place for the potential transfer of the business to a social enterprise delivery vehicle. However, despite protracted negotiations, Westcombe Engineering came back under the control of the Council in February 2009.

Since then improvements had been made to the management and running of the business with it gaining recognition and awards from its customers and the council. Westcombe Engineering was now considered a viable business and Cabinet was requested to overturn

the decision in September 2007 and to agree that the business would not be closed and would be retained as part of the council.

Councillor Scott declared her support for this report but emphasised her desire for the business to move away from council support in the future to enable more financial independence and financial opportunity that could be realised as an independent company.

CABINET RESOLVED TO:

Overturn its previous decision in 2007 to close Westcombe Engineering and to retain it as part of the Council.

REASONS

The current position needed to be regularised, as there was still an existing executive decision to close Westcombe Engineering, which needed to be overturned if the business was to remain open.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

1. Close Westcombe Engineering: this was not now considered to be appropriate. It was a viable business, and an important link in the supply chain of Perkins, a significant local business.
2. Transfer Westcome Engineering to another owner: attempts to do this have failed.
3. Retain status quo: this decision was effectively retaining the status quo, but needed to be formalised as the current Cabinet Member Decision Notice of 14 November 2007 only placed in abeyance the earlier decision to close Westcombe Engineering.

5. Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy

Cabinet received a report as part of the council's agreed process for integrated finance and business planning. The report updated Cabinet on the financial position within the current financial year and presented budget proposals for 2011/12 through to 2015/16 to enable scrutiny, stakeholder and public consultation.

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the report highlighting that Peterborough City Council was one of the first councils to publish a detailed draft budget, a month earlier than normal, to allow more time for consultation. The report included the action taken in this financial year to address the needs for immediate spending cuts.

Cabinet Members spoke of their support for the draft budget highlighting items including:

- Need to save millions of pounds with this budget;
- Good education provision for the city over the coming years;
- New school places to be created;
- Most in need and at risk children would continue to be supported;
- Ensured protection for the most vulnerable people;
- Continued work and investment towards the Home of Environment Capital;
- Continued investment in the 'green' agenda to see savings through its work;
- Increased re-ablement services to assist in savings for Adult Social Care;
- Seek to develop more sustainable treatment and care;
- No cuts to the growth agenda for the city to allow increase in jobs and investment.

CABINET RESOLVED TO:

1. Note the impact of the state of national public finances on the Council's grant settlements, as outlined in the emergency budget in June and Spending Review in October including the grant reductions notified for the current and the estimated impact for future financial years;
2. Note the position in the current financial year to the end of September and approve the actions to manage budgetary pressures in the current financial year that will ensure that the Council delivers a balanced budget position;
3. Note the future financial position for the Council and approve the approach to delivering a financially sustainable budget for the next two years, with significant progress to delivering a balanced budget in the third year;
4. Approve the budget proposals as the basis to consult with Scrutiny, Staff, Unions, Stakeholders and the public, and to approve this consultation starting one month earlier than previous years, reflecting Cabinets desire to be open, transparent and inclusive and give people a chance to put forward their suggestions and ideas;
5. Approve that a further report is presented to the December Cabinet meeting on the impact of the provisional grant settlement, due in early December.

REASONS

The financial challenges facing the Council were especially acute in coming years. As such it was important that the Council developed proposals early to allow full consultation and engagement on those proposals. These steps would help to ensure that the Council achieved a balanced budget, aligned to corporate priorities.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The Council could have waited until after the Local Government Finance Settlement in December, when it would have had greater certainty over its grant position. This however would not have allowed additional time for consultation, and so was rejected.

6. Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD)

Councillor Cereste and Councillor Holdich left the meeting.

Councillor Lee, as Deputy Leader assumed the position of chairman.

Cabinet received a report following approval of the Preferred Options version of the Peterborough Site Allocations DPD for the purposes of public participation at the meeting of Cabinet on 8 February 2010, and following the ensuing public participation and further evidence gathering since then.

Cabinet considered the recommendations before referring to Council the document which formed part of the major policy framework – namely the Peterborough Site Allocations DPD (Proposed Submission version). If approved by Council, it would be published for public consultation and then submitted to the Secretary of State.

Officers updated Cabinet on new and amended sites contained in the document following over 4000 public comments on the proposed document including:

- No more Gypsy and Traveller pitches contained in the document;

- New housing proposed at Freemans warehouse site;
- Change of use to a site north of Perkins to included housing;
- Reduction in size of a Stanground site to keep Fletton separate from Stanground;
- Reduction in new dwellings in Eye and Eye Green from 350 to 85;
- New site at Sandpit Road in Thorney;
- Reduction to proposed housing site in Helpston;
- Inclusion of a proposed new cemetery site near Castor.

During debate Cabinet Members requested that neighbouring councils were properly consulted over developments near the authority boundaries; clarified that as Key Service Villages Eye and Thorney had been considered for growth in the first instance ahead of smaller, limited growth villages; confirmed that a Traveller transit site was safeguarded in the Norwood development if no other site became available; advocated that community facilities should be developed alongside housing; and confirmed the public could comment on the document when public consultation started next year.

(Councillor Dalton left the meeting).

The Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion, Safety and Women’s Enterprise requested an amendment to the second sentence of paragraph 4.12 of the document from:

“An opportunity for such a strategic rail freight interchange has arisen in Peterborough on a site to the south-east of the city, immediately north east of Stanground”;

to:

“A potential developer has shown interest in such a strategic rail freight interchange in Peterborough on a site to the south-east of the city, immediately north-east of Stanground.”

The Deputy Leader further advised that the second recommendation in the report should be amended to reflect that the Deputy Leader, not the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Growth and Economic Development be authorised to approve further changes to the document ahead of full Council.

CABINET RESOLVED TO:

1. Recommend that the Peterborough Site Allocations DPD (Proposed Submission Version) to Council for approval for the purposes of public consultation and submission to the Secretary of State;
2. Agree that the Deputy Leader be authorised to approve, by Cabinet Member Decision Notice, a list of amendments (if any) to be incorporated into the Site Allocations DPD arising from either (a) the outcome of the Core Strategy Examination (if available) or (b) any other relevant new information which arises after the date of the Cabinet meeting, with that list of amendments being presented to Council for approval together with the Site Allocations DPD.

CABINET FURTHER RESOLVED TO:

Request an amendment to paragraph 4.12 of the Site Allocations document so that the second sentence of that paragraph relating to Rail Freight Interchange reads:

“A potential developer has shown interest in such a strategic rail freight interchange in Peterborough on a site to the south-east of the city, immediately north-east of Stanground.”

REASONS

Cabinet was recommended to approve the Site Allocations DPD (Proposed Submission version) because it would help to progress the Sustainable Community Strategy vision for a bigger and better Peterborough that grows the right way; and because production of the Site Allocations DPD was a statutory requirement.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The alternative options of not producing a Site Allocations DPD or not taking into account comments made at the Preferred Options stage were rejected, as the Council would not be fulfilling its statutory requirement.

Meeting closed at 11.15 a.m.

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