

## **MINUTES OF CABINET MEETING HELD 29 SEPTEMBER 2010**

### **PRESENT**

#### **Cabinet Members:**

Councillors Cereste (Chairman), Dalton, Elsey, Hiller, Holdich, Lee, Seaton, Scott, and Walsh.

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Benton and Lamb.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **3. Minutes of Cabinet Meeting – 14 June 2010**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2010 were approved and signed as an accurate record.

#### **4. Youth Council / Youth MP**

Cabinet received a presentation from the current Chairman of the Youth Council Tom Trevarthan, and the Youth MP for Peterborough, Lorna Cartledge. Members were advised that schools would shortly be invited to elect representatives to the Youth Council and that it was hoped there would be two representatives from each of the schools across the city.

It was emphasised that the Youth Council was keen to develop links with elected Members in order to promote understanding amongst young people of the role and responsibilities associated with being a Councillor and to promote Peterborough. All elected Members were welcome to attend Youth Council meetings in order to help promote and encourage interest in local democracy amongst young people.

The Cabinet Member for Resources confirmed that the views of the Youth Council would be sought in respect of the Council's draft budget proposals, which were due to be considered by Cabinet in November 2010.

Cabinet noted the valuable work being undertaken by the Youth Council and emphasised that all Cabinet Members would welcome discussions with its representatives and were happy to be approached to provide advice and support where necessary.

## **ITEMS FROM SCUTINY COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS**

### **5. Revised Biodiversity Strategy**

Cabinet received the City Council's revised Biodiversity Strategy. Members were advised that the updated Strategy had been developed by a working group of officers and Councillors and had been considered by the Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee.

Members' attention was drawn to the Vision Statement developed by the Working Group and the associated Action Plan, which outlined specific actions and possible methods of delivery. The incorporation of biodiversity into many of the Council's functions and services would continue to be achieved within existing resources (providing that these were maintained), however Members' attention was drawn to Appendix C of the Strategy, which identified the additional resources that would be required in order to ensure compliance with the legal duty the City Council now had with respect to Biodiversity.

During debate, a query was raised with regard to the creation of new woodland. The Cabinet Member for Environment Capital advised that the focus would initially be on existing woodland in order to ensure that any restorative work required on ancient woodland was undertaken and that existing woodland was well managed.

#### **CABINET RESOLVED TO:**

- (i) endorse the Biodiversity Strategy prior to its consideration by Council on 13 October 2010 as part of the Major Policy Framework; and
- (ii) consider the requirement for additional resources during the development of the Council Budgets alongside other budget pressures.

#### **REASONS**

To update the City Council's Biodiversity Strategy to take account of the Biodiversity Duty introduced by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act S40 and Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs Guidance to Local Authorities with respect to this Duty.

#### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

To retain the City Council's 2004 Biodiversity Strategy. This was rejected as it would not adequately reflect legislative requirements that have come into force since its adoption.

### **6. Progress on Delivery of the Environment Capital Portfolio**

Cabinet was asked to consider the proposed 'Home of Environment Capital Policy 2010' and comment upon the communication and marketing approach for its implementation. Members noted that the Council's current Environment Policy (2000) was now out of date and did not adequately take into account Peterborough's growth targets or global environmental challenges. In addition, it did not reflect the wide range of policies, plans and strategies which had been developed since 2000.

Cabinet noted that the Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee had considered the draft policy at its meeting of 9 September 2010 and recommendations from the Committee had been incorporated. The Cabinet Member for Environment Capital emphasised that the 'Home of the Environment Capital' Policy was strongly linked to other Council strategies and its adoption would ensure that environmental considerations were placed at the heart of all

Council policies, strategies and services and embedded throughout the organisation. An internal launch campaign was planned for the autumn and local stakeholders, residents and business would be engaged via planned marketing activities.

**CABINET RESOLVED TO:**

- (i) recommend that the draft Home of Environment Capital Policy 2010 policy be submitted to Council on 13 October 2010 for adoption as part of the Major Policy Framework; and
- (ii) support the Home of Environment Capital communication and marketing approach for implementation subject to the adoption of the Major Policy by Council.

**REASONS**

The Council's current Environment Policy (2000) was now out of date and did not adequately take into account Peterborough's growth targets or the global environmental challenges now faced. Nor did it take into account the wide range of policies, plans and strategies, developed since 2000, which contribute to environmental improvement. The adoption of the Home of Environmental Capital Policy ensured that environmental considerations were placed at the heart of all Council policies, strategies and services ensuring that Peterborough grew both substantially and sustainably. The communication and marketing approach would ensure local, national and international recognition for the emphasis it placed on environmental quality and performance.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

Peterborough's environmental reputation and, most recently, its ambition to create the UK's Environment Capital was already widely known both locally and nationally. It was therefore considered appropriate to build on this reputation to move forward. The Council could decide to maintain Peterborough's existing Environment City focus but it was considered that the agenda, both in terms of the environmental challenge and the future growth target, had changed substantially since the designation was awarded in the early 1990s. Home of Environment Capital substantially updated the approach in line with these considerations.

**STRATEGIC DECISIONS**

**7. Health White Paper – Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS**

Cabinet was asked to agree the City Council's response to the Government's White Paper: 'Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS' and its associated consultation documents. Denise Radley, Director of Adult Social Services presented this report on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care. Members were advised that as well as setting out proposed changes to the NHS, the White Paper contained significant implications for local authorities, including increased responsibilities.

A comment was raised emphasising the need for clear division between the role of health scrutiny and that of the Wellbeing Board and it was suggested that the Council's response should be strengthened in order to ensure this view was made clear.

**CABINET RESOLVED TO:**

- Submit the response to the government's White Paper: 'Equity & Excellence: Liberating the NHS' and its associated consultation documents.

## **CABINET FURTHER RESOLVED TO:**

Strengthen the wording in the Council's response to emphasise the need for health scrutiny to remain separate from Well Being boards.

## **REASONS**

It was important that the City Council made its views on the proposed changes known as part of the consultation process.

## **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

The City Council could choose not to submit a response to the consultation. However, due to the significance of the proposals, the Council's views should be contributed.

## **8. New Executive Arrangements under Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007**

This report was presented to Cabinet following consideration of the new Executive Arrangements by Full Council at its meeting of 26 July 2010. Council had resolved to undertake a public consultation exercise in respect of this matter, which was due to close on 30 September 2010.

The Solicitor to the Council raised the following points:

- To date, 22 respondents had expressed a preference for the Strong Leader and Cabinet model and 36 for the Elected Mayor model;
- There would be a cost implication associated with the Elected Mayor option due to the need to hold an election;
- The Strong Leader and Cabinet Member would provide maximum flexibility to utilise changes the Government may introduce at a later date.

## **CABINET RESOLVED TO:**

Recommend to Council that it adopts the Strong Leader and Cabinet style of Executive Arrangements - to take effect from May 2011.

## **REASONS**

The Council had a legal obligation to change to one of the two models currently permissible by December 2010.

## **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

Adopt the Elected Mayor and Cabinet model: this was not recommended as the Council would need to incur the cost of holding an election for the position of elected mayor. Also, a mayor would be elected for a period of 4 years and this may limit the Council's ability to take advantage of additional changes to executive arrangements which are anticipated in the Government's Localism Bill in the autumn.

Retain the status quo: this option was rejected because the Council's current executive arrangements of the old style leader and cabinet model would not be valid after December 2010. If the Council did not select one of the two models available, the Secretary of State would impose one of the two models.

## **9. Proposal to Change the Name of Fletton Ward to Fletton and Woodston Ward**

Cabinet considered a request to change the name of Fletton Ward to Fletton & Woodston Ward to reflect the fact that Fletton ward is made up of the Fletton and Woodston areas.

**CABINET RESOLVED TO:**

Recommend to Council that it agrees to consult all appropriate persons on the proposed change of name for Fletton Ward to Fletton & Woodston Ward.

### **REASONS**

The Council had a legal obligation to consult with appropriate persons about proposed changes to the names of electoral areas.

### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

There were no alternative options in order to change the name of an electoral area.

## **10. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The Council's agreed Annual Budget Framework required Cabinet to consider the Council's budget and financial strategy and to set provisional cash limits for the forthcoming year.

The Cabinet Member for Resources presented this item. The report provided an update on the likely financial situation of the Council for the next five years and illustrated the possible impact on the Council of the national finance position. It further outlined a range of grant scenarios in order to enable each department to work towards preparing the budget options for each of the years 2011/12 to 2015/16.

The Cabinet Member for Resources advised Members that following the change in Government in May 2010, a series of meetings had been held with officers to develop proposals to address the forthcoming reduction in local government funding. On release of these proposals, all elected Members would be given an opportunity to provide input, along with the other relevant stakeholders.

**CABINET RESOLVED TO:**

- (i) note the potential impact of the state of national public finances on the Council's future grant settlements and its implications for the medium term financial strategy;
- (ii) approve plans to consult with Scrutiny and Stakeholders on the medium term financial strategy earlier (one month) than previous years, reflecting the scale of the challenge facing the Council;
- (iii) approve the approach that is proposed for the budget process incorporating the medium term financial strategy (MTFS);
- (iv) approve the grant scenarios for departments to enable them to finalise options for financial years 2011/12 through to and including 2015/16 for further consideration; and
- (v) note that proposals will need to be considered for implementation during the current financial year to address the grant reductions announced for 2010/11.

## **REASONS**

The Constitution required Cabinet to outline its approach to developing the MTFS. The challenges facing the Council mean it is sensible to publish these proposals earlier than usual to allow extra time for consultation and discussion on these proposals. These steps would help to ensure that the Council achieves a balanced budget, aligned to corporate priorities.

## **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

Some Councils were waiting until the Local government settlement is known before releasing proposals. Whilst this would mean greater certainty over funding levels for the council, it would reduce the time available for consultation and discussion, so proposals had been developed to meet the resource scenarios outlined.

## **MONITORING ITEMS**

### **11. BUDGET MONITORING - FINAL OUTTURN 2009/2010**

Cabinet was asked to note the final financial performance for revenue and capital at 31 March 2010 and the performance information on treasury management activities, the payment of creditors in services and collection performance for debtors, local taxation and benefit overpayments.

#### **CABINET RESOLVED TO:**

- (i) Note the final outturn position (based on expenditure at the end of March 2010) on the Council's revenue and capital budget;
- (ii) Note the performance against the prudential indicators;
- (iii) Note the performance on treasury management activities, payment of creditors in services and collection performance for debtors, local taxation and benefit overpayments; and
- (iv) Note the financial uncertainty of local government financing in future years and how this could impact the Council.

## **REASONS**

The monitoring report for 2009/10 financial year formed part of the process for producing the Statement of Accounts.

## **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

None required at this stage.

### **12. OUTCOME OF PETITIONS**

Cabinet noted the progress being made in response to petitions in accordance with Standing Order 13 of the Council's Rules of Procedure.

#### **CABINET RESOLVED TO:**

Note the actions taken in respect of petitions presented to Full Council.

## **REASONS**

Standing Orders require that Council receive a report about the action taken on petitions. As the petition presented in this report has 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 CONSIDERED**

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

Meeting closed at 10.13 a.m.