

MINUTES OF CABINET MEETING HELD 7 NOVEMBER 2011

PRESENT

Cabinet Members: Councillor Cereste (chair), Councillor M Dalton, Councillor S Dalton, Councillor Fitzgerald, Councillor Hiller, Councillor Holdich, Councillor Lee, Councillor Scott, Councillor Seaton and Councillor Walsh.

Cabinet Adviser: Councillor Goodwin.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Solicitor to the Council confirmed that no declarations of interest were necessary regarding property ownership (items 5 and 6 on the agenda) unless the affect was significant compared to other residents.

Cllr S Dalton declared a personal interest in item 6, Peterborough Local Development Framework – Planning Policies DPD, as a member of the Nene Park Trust Board.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held 26 September 2011 were agreed and signed as an accurate record.

STRATEGIC DECISIONS

4. SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

Cabinet received a report following the implementation of the Equality Act 2010, setting out how the council would meet its statutory obligations and included an action plan setting out the timetable for doing so. Councillor Walsh acknowledged the work of the Cohesion Board in developing the Scheme and suggested the work be reviewed in a year's time.

Cabinet Members debated the scheme indicating their support for the principles of it. However, Members were concerned that some of the data used to compile the report was not up to date and therefore could not fully approve the report as it stood without it being updated.

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

Request the Single Equality Scheme be submitted to the next meeting of Cabinet for approval following the inclusion of updated statistical data.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Although supportive of the principles of the Single Equality Scheme, Cabinet agreed that it was necessary to have fully updated statistical information prior to approving the document.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Approve the scheme with the current data and receive updated data for approval at a later date – this was not considered to be the best course of action as Cabinet would be approving an incomplete document and that would have to be reapproved at a later stage.

5. PETERBOROUGH HOUSING STRATEGY 2011-2015 (INCORPORATING THE PETERBOROUGH STRATEGIC TENANCY POLICY) (DRAFT VERSION FOR CONSULTATION)

Cabinet received a report following recent and forthcoming changes to Government's policy and procedures towards housing and following the end of the current Peterborough Housing Strategy 2008-2011. Councillor Hiller advised Cabinet that a growing city needed to ensure the provision of high quality housing that was energy efficient and sustainable.

Richard Kay, the Council's Group Manager Strategic Planning & Enabling, advised Cabinet that the Sustainable Growth Scrutiny Committee had recommended changes to the document relating to the section 'Ensuring a varied housing offer that supports mixed communities' including policy HS34. Cabinet debated the changes and agreed to incorporate them into the strategy document.

Cabinet considered the report and accompanying strategy document and **RESOLVED** to:

Approve the Peterborough Housing Strategy 2011-15 (incorporating the Peterborough Strategic Tenancy Policy) for the purposes of public consultation.

Cabinet further **RESOLVED** to:

1. Include information in the document on where renewable energy planning policy information would be available from as recommended by Sustainable Growth Scrutiny Committee; and
2. Amend the wording of the final paragraph of the 'Ensuring a varied housing offer that supports mixed communities' section in Objective Four on page 25 of the document and Policy HS34, as recommended by Sustainable Growth Scrutiny Committee, to read as follows:

"Furthermore, to promote social cohesion Council encourages an integrated approach to affordable housing provision on new development rather than social segregation. This involves the Council working with developers and housing association partners to create a mix of affordable housing dwellings and private dwellings throughout the development in an attempt to minimise social exclusion and encourage mixed communities.

Policy HS34

In its role as housing enabler, the Council will work with developers and housing associations to ensure affordable housing provision is effectively integrated into new development.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

It is a statutory duty to prepare a Housing Strategy, albeit there is very limited statutory guidance as to what it must contain. The Council's current Housing Strategy (2008-11) is coming to the end of its intended period, and thus a revised strategy is necessary. Officers have purposely delayed bringing this Strategy to Cabinet due to the high number of national housing policy changes which were taking place during the winter / spring 2011 period. The major anticipated announcements have now been made by Government, so the timing to publish our own local housing strategy is very timely.

The Housing Strategy has also been prepared bearing in mind the financial constraints under which the council will operate during the 2011-15 period.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The council could decide to delay preparation of a revised Housing Strategy. However, not only is the existing Strategy coming to the end of its life but it was prepared under a very different national economic and policy situation – it is considered essential, therefore, that our local housing strategy is updated to reflect both of these matters.

Alternative policy options are, of course, possible for inclusion within the strategy. However, the ones presented today are considered by officers as fit for purpose, tackle the key issues that Peterborough faces, yet are realistic and take account of financial constraints. The consultation period may highlight alternative approaches, and these will be fully appraised before Cabinet receives a final recommended version in February 2012.

6. PETERBOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: PETERBOROUGH PLANNING POLICIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (DPD) (PROPOSED SUBMISSION VERSION)

Cabinet considered a report following approval of the Consultation Draft version of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD for the purposes of public participation at the meeting of Cabinet on 13 December 2010 and following the ensuing public participation and further evidence gathering since that date. Councillor Hiller advised that he recommended Members agree for this document to be submitted to full Council for approval.

Richard Kay, the Council's Group Manager Strategic Planning & Enabling, advised Cabinet that changes to the document had been recommended by the Sustainable Growth Scrutiny Committee concerning wording used in the Open Space Standards section of the document and also to the wording of Planning Policy 17 – Ancient, Semi-Natural Woodland and Ancient and Veteran Trees. Cabinet considered the proposed changes and considered how the value of trees and woodland compared to the public interest could be measured.

Councillor S Dalton suggested that a catalogue of all trees of local importance, whether listed as ancient or not (as already provided for buildings), be compiled by officers, which could then be used when considering planning applications.

Cabinet agreed not to include the changes recommended by the Sustainable Growth Scrutiny Committee.

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

Recommend the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (Proposed Submission Version) to Council for approval for the purposes of public consultation and submission to the Secretary of State.

REASONS

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

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The alternative options of not producing a Planning Policies 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.

10.45 a.m.