

MINUTES OF CABINET MEETING HELD 23 SEPTEMBER 2013

PRESENT

Cabinet Members: Councillor Cereste (chair), Councillor Elsey, Councillor Fitzgerald, Councillor Holdich, Councillor North, Councillor Scott, Councillor Seaton and Councillor Walsh.

Cabinet Advisers: Councillor Casey, Councillor Goodwin and Councillor Todd.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Dalton.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Cereste declared an interest in item 5 on the agenda, Selective Licensing of Private Rented Property, as he owned property in the area concerned.

Councillor Holdich declared an interest in item 5 on the agenda, Selective Licensing of Private Rented Property, as he owned property but this was outside the area concerned.

Councillor Todd declared that her ward covered the Eastfield area that was mentioned in item five on the agenda.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD 1 JULY 2013 AND 23 JULY 2013

The minutes of the meetings held on 1 July 2013 and 23 July 2013 were agreed as an accurate record.

Councillor Cereste advised that item 6 on the agenda would be considered before item 5.

STRATEGIC DECISIONS

4. COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER STRATEGY

Cabinet received a report to consider approving a proposed Community Asset Transfer Strategy. Councillors Holdich and Seaton introduced the report.

Cabinet debated the strategy and report and comments included:

- Need to ensure the assets are secure if the community group fails;
- Need to ensure extremist groups do not occupy assets;
- Should ensure clauses are put into constitutions of groups concerning appropriate use of buildings and assets.

The Council's Assistant Director Education & Resources advised Cabinet that there would be requirements in any lease agreement for the assets concerning the

appropriate use of the buildings and also that each group and agreement must be financially sustainable and viable first.

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

Approve and adopt the Community Asset Transfer Strategy.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

A policy framework was a necessity to support the live asset transfer procedures that are currently being explored by PCC. These cases involve the Gladstone Park Community Centre, which is anticipated to be part of a dual management agreement with the new Gladstone Primary School currently being constructed on this site. In addition it would support the on-going assessment for the asset transfer of the eight play centres that were identified for closure as a result of budget cuts effective April 2013. The strategy would then further support future transfer considerations.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Procurement procedures were considered but rejected as too unnecessarily complex for community led groups. Procedures needed to be accessible and achievable for local groups and explain clearly how applications would be assessed. This was a significant requirement if there were competing groups who expressed an interest in managing a community asset.

6. SCHOOL ORGNISATION PLAN 2013-2018 – DELIVERING LOCAL PLACES FOR LOCAL CHILDREN

Cabinet received a report outlining the proposal around meeting the statutory requirement for school places in Peterborough. The school organisation plan draws together the latest demographic data, the capital programme and identifies the need for further school places. It also acts as a supplementary planning document to the core strategy document. Councillor Holdich introduced the report.

Cabinet debated the report and comments included:

- Use this plan to demonstrate the need for and to attract more government funding;
- Shows investment is working for schools;
- Work to develop schools was one of the most important success stories for the council;
- Good value for money already delivered in new builds and extensions;
- All secondary school now modernised.

The Council's Assistant Director Education & Resources further advised Cabinet that GCSE results had improved across the city and good relationships between the Council and Head Teachers had helped the building programme.

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

Approve the School Organisation Plan in light of the pressures on school places and in terms of planning growth in the city.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The School Organisation Plan (SOP) used to be a statutory requirement for Local Authorities to produce to outline how they meet their statutory requirement to provide school places. Given the high profile nature of meeting this requirement in Peterborough, this document has been revived to support the planning and transparency of school places in Peterborough.

The School Organisation Plan sets out the City Council's strategy for managing the school estate and delivering school places for the next five years. It will be a Supplementary Planning Document to the adopted Core Strategy and will support the process of developer contributions and the Council's medium term financial strategy.

Supplementary Planning Documents are statutory documents that provide a greater level of detail, guidance or good practice to supplement a policy (or policies) in a Development Plan Document (DPD).

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The alternative option was not to adopt this strategy, however the impact would be a lack of co-ordination around new housing development and a lack of clarity for the public around the council's intentions around school place planning.

5. SELECTIVE LICENSING OF PRIVATE RENTED PROPERTY

The Head of Legal Services advised Councillor Cereste that further to his declaration of interest in this item, he had been given dispensation to speak on the matter but should not vote. Councillor Holdich was advised that he could speak and vote on the matter at his discretion.

Cabinet received a report to consider approving public consultation be carried out on the proposed introduction of Selective Licensing in the Gladstone, Millfield, New England and Eastfield areas of the city. Councillor Cereste introduced the report.

Cabinet debated the report and comments included:

- Must protect residents from bad landlords;
- Concern that landlords may move to unlicensed areas;
- Enforcement must be properly resourced;
- Cost of licences should be reviewed regularly;
- The scheme must pay for itself.

The council's Head of Neighbourhood Services further advised Cabinet that it could take two years for the initial roll out of the scheme and then other areas of the city would begin to be included; rent could be monitored to ensure costs were not being passed on to tenants and training for landlords would be offered in line with a national accreditation scheme.

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

Approve public consultation be carried out with a view of introducing Selective Licensing within the Gladstone, Millfield, New England and Eastfield areas of the city.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Section 80 (9) of Housing Act 2004 requires that before making a designation, it must take reasonable steps to consult persons likely to be affected by the designation and consider any representations made in accordance with the consultation. The

consultation must be for a minimum 10 week period. The consultation must be carried out in the proposed area and the wider surrounding area and must include landlords, tenants, owner occupiers, local communities, tenant and resident associations, landlord associations, businesses, registered social landlords, other PCC teams, i.e. Children's Services, Adult Social Care, SPP, Councillors, National Bodies.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

If consultation was not undertaken then the Council would not be complying with the requirements set out in Housing Act 2004, Section 80(9).

MONITORING ITEMS

7. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Cabinet received a report as part of the council's agreed process for integrated finance and business planning. It continued the multi-year approach to budgeting to help plan for the financial challenges ahead. The drivers continued to be meeting the council's priorities by creating a sustainable budget strategy whilst responding to changes arising from decisions made in the distribution of local government funding. Councillor Seaton introduced the report.

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

1. Note the financial pressures in the current financial year and approve the approach to bringing forward savings plans to help deliver a balanced budget
2. Note the current consultations affecting future local government funding arrangements and the implications on the Council's future settlements and medium term financial strategy (MTFS).
3. Approve the approach proposed for the budget process, including the suggested approach to consulting with Scrutiny and Stakeholders.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Constitution requires Cabinet to outline its approach to developing the MTFS. This process helps to ensure that the Council achieves a balanced budget, aligned to corporate priorities.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The alternative option was to do nothing. This was rejected because the constitution requires the council to outline the approach to next year's budget setting by the end of preceding month of September.

8. CHILDREN'S SERVICES UPDATE

Cabinet received a report on Children's Services improvement. Councillor Scott introduced the report.

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

Note the contents of this report and the following key points:

- Rise in contacts
- Continued decrease in re-referrals

- Initial/Core Assessments in timescales
- Number of CAFs increased
- Raising quality and new vision

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Council needs to secure continued improvements to safeguard children and in the longer term put in place a sustainable high quality Children's Services in Peterborough.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not applicable.

9. OUTCOME OF PETITIONS

Cabinet received a report updating it on the progress being made in response to petitions in accordance with Standing Order 13 of the Council's Rules of Procedure.

Councillor Cereste introduced the report.

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

Note the action taken in respect of petitions presented to full Council.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Standing Orders required that Council receive a report about the action taken on petitions. As the petitions presented in this report have 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

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

11.00 a.m.