

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL LIAISON MEETING

WEDNESDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2017

6.30PM

Bourges Viersen Room, Town Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillor Irene Walsh (Chairman)

Parish Councillor Jane Hill, Deeping Gate Parish Council
Parish Councillor Philip Thompson, Deeping Gate Parish Council
Parish Councillor Richard Perkins, Ailsworth Parish Council
Parish Councillor Paul Froggitt, Community Volunteer
Parish Councillor Vince Moon, Werrington Parish Council
Parish Councillor Marian Sharp, Hampton Parish Council
Parish Councillor Peter Lee, Sutton Parish Council
Parish Councillor Keith Yerbury, Sutton Parish Council
Parish Councillor Ann Sylvester, Peterborough City Council
Parish Councillor Anthony Hovell, Thorney, Newborough and Borough Fen Parish Council
Parish Councillor Jason Merrill, Bretton Parish Council
Parish Councillor James Hayes, Bretton Parish Council
Catherine Franks, Clerk to Bainton & Ashton
John Haste, Clerk to Glinton Parish Council
Parish Councillor Sarah Rodger, Castor Parish Council
Parish Councillor Neil Boyce, Castor Parish Council
Parish Councillor Keith Lievesley, Ufford Parish Council
Parish Councillor Henry Clark, Peakirk Parish Council
Ian Dewar, County Executive Officer Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils CAPALC
Parish Councillor Dawn Magnus, Eye Parish Council
Parish Councillor Ian Allin, Orton Longueville Parish Council
Parish Councillor Jean Mead, Helpston Parish Council

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Steven Pilsworth, Service Director Financial Services
Sylvia Radaouni, Community Capacity Assistant
Joanna Morley, Democratic Services Officer
Pippa Turvey, Democratic and Constitutional Services Manager

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

Parish Councillor Joe Dobson
Parish Councillor Susie Lucas
Parish Councillor Margaret Palmer
Parish Councillor Geoff Smith
Parish Councillor Richard Clarke

2. Budget Phase 2 Consultation including Scrutiny Co-opted Members Feedback

a) Feedback from Co-opted Members

The Co-opted Members who attended the scrutiny of the Budget meeting on Wednesday 08 February 2017, presented this item.

The key points raised included:

- All felt that, despite reading the budget material provided, that they had limited knowledge of the figures and that some areas seemed extraordinarily complex. Some Members felt that it was essential that they had an understanding of the topic area in order to effectively scrutinise it and therefore requested some specialist training.
- It was very difficult to understand the implications for Parishes from the aggregate budget figures.

Following their appointments and attendance at their first meetings for Health, Growth and Environment, and Peoples and Communities Scrutiny Committees the following feedback was given:

- Co-opted Members needed to have an enquiring mind, a degree of scepticism and an ability to understand the consequences of what was being proposed and how it impacted on the Parish.
- Those Councillors who had received Scrutiny training commented on its usefulness and expressed a wish for all Parish Councillors to receive training.
- Co-opted members hoped that other Parish Councillors would help steer and inform discussion so that the co-opted member would be able to effectively contribute to scrutiny committees.
- Health was a highly complex area where effective scrutiny would pay enormous dividends.
- The Director of Public Health gave her annual report at the Health Scrutiny Committee meeting, which looked at the health of Peterborough and its citizens compared to the health of citizens in other authorities.
- The Health Scrutiny Committee received a report on the issues surrounding the Uniting Care contract which highlighted that the lack of attention to detail meant that the contract had been put into place before it was ready.
- The Growth and Environment Scrutiny Committee, alone out of the four scrutiny committees, voted for 2 co-opted members because of the breadth of its remit.
- The Growth and Environment Scrutiny Committee received a report on the Local Transport Plan which had a budget of £4.5 million. £3.1 million of this budget was capital maintenance, a large proportion of which was being spent on the roll out of LED street lighting.
- The Great Fen, Nene Washes and the Castor Hanglands nature reserves were omitted from the report on the City's Bio-diversity Strategy as they were not directly managed by the Council.
- The People & Communities Strategy report outlined how parishes could help their own communities by giving feedback through the digital 'front door'; effectively one point of access.. Placing leaflets in doctor's surgeries and other frequented locations was the

current way of spreading this information but the co-opted member asked whether it could be more effectively disseminated through Parish Councils.

- The Council's Empty Homes Strategy looked at ways of bringing empty homes back in to use and bringing up standards by way of offering grants to private landlords.

ACTIONS AGREED:

The Parish Council Liaison Members agreed the following actions:

1. That the Service Director, Financial Services and the Constitutional Services Manager would organise dedicated finance sessions for the co-opted Parish Councillors. This would be similar to the training received by new Members at the start of the Council year.
2. That the Finance department would review the presentation of material to see how they could signpost areas that would impact on Parishes.
3. That the Community Capacity Assistant would request a Scrutiny training presentation from the Senior Democratic Services Officer for Scrutiny.
4. That the Community Capacity Assistant and Councillor Walsh would explore ways of facilitating contributions of issues that could be raised from other Parish Councillors at Scrutiny Committee meetings.

b) Budget Phase 2 Consultation - Steven Pilsworth, Service Director Financial Services

A presentation on the Phase 2 Budget proposals for the 2017/18 financial year was delivered by the Service Director, Financial Services. Following on from the presentation, questions were asked by Parish Councillors. Comments and the responses given are noted below.

- The social care platform was a joint initiative with an IT company that would look at drawing out information from Adult and Children's Social Care and even Health. This system would be the first of its kind on the market and in future could be sold to other councils.
- Vivacity, was a completely separate organisation and relied heavily on the income they generated rather than the funding provided by the Council. PCC wanted to invest in facilities such as coffee shops that would increase this income. PCC would then look to take a share of this increased income.
- Kingdom Private Enforcement would be employed, in a pilot role initially, to curb anti-social behaviour, and would be able to issue notices for low level offences. Kingdom and the Council would share the income from this.
- When the contract with Amey finished, some services would be transferred to existing contractors so that time could be taken to fully review contract specifications before going out to tender. Savings could be made by increasing the recycling levels in the City and therefore reducing waste and landfill costs.
- Orton Waterville Parish had previously requested to take on the responsibility for the management of their open spaces but were told they wouldn't be able to because of the contract in place with Amey. They expressed a desire to take back the management, now that the contract had finished, rather than it be reallocated by the Council.
- Normally the assets that were sold were the ones that were no longer being used. However some properties that once generated income were now being sold because their income stream had dried up and further investment could not be justified.

- The Government set the business rates and also determined what relief there would be, if any. Businesses that ceased trading tended to be offset by new businesses coming through.
- The Combined Authority had a completely separate budget that came from Central Government. The considerable amount of officer time spent on setting up the Combined Authority was charged back to the Combined Authority and the City Council was reimbursed for it. In the future the Combined Authority would be able to raise a small amount of money from setting its own council tax.
- There were no proposals as part of this Budget to amend or reduce the grant for burial and recreation grounds. At least a year's notice had been given in the past if any grants had been withdrawn.
- Council Tax could be increased further by means of holding a simple majority referendum but this action was not recommended as these referendums were usually overwhelmingly rejected and the Council incurred the additional costs of holding them.
- The extra 3% Adult Social Care Precept had not solved the Adult Social Care funding problem and the Council had had to put in extra resources to maintain services. Community Support Intervention would be a great way of helping and potentially reducing costs. Castor Parish as a pathfinder parish, had investigated a street warden system to look at how people may need help.
- The £7.5m investment in the Gladstone, Millfield and New England neighbourhoods was a one off capital amount that would be invested in community projects (after consultation with residents.) The Council wanted to create a strong sense of 'place', as there was in rural areas, so that going forward, the Community would come forward and deliver the project themselves. These neighbourhoods were recognised as areas that had needed investment for some time due to their high need/low life expectancy and high degree of anti-social behaviour. The Council needed to invest directly in these already developed City Centre areas as unlike other outlying wards, they had not received any new development contributions.
- It was noted that Story Barrs Field had a severe problem with fly-tipping as well as burnt out cars and rubbish being brought over from neighbouring houses.
- Regeneration of the Whitworth Mill area was to finally go ahead, with the engine sheds, which had listed building status, becoming new offices for the Council. The council had applied for grants for the Mill itself (part of which is listed) so that it could be developed into an Arts Centre /Digital Hub that would become a landmark building.

ACTIONS AGREED:

The Parish Council Liaison Members noted the report and agreed that:

1. That the Service Director and Councillor Walsh would feed back to Cabinet that Orton Waterville Parish would like to take on the responsibility for the management of their open spaces now that the contract with Amey had ended.
2. That the Community Capacity Assistant would request a response from Adrian Chapman, Service Director, Adult Services and Communities for Eye Parish Council, regarding the fly-tipping on Story Barrs field.
3. That the Community Capacity Assistant would put Community Support Intervention as an agenda item for the next Parish Council Liaison Meeting on 29 March 2017.

Date of Next Meeting: 29 March 2017

Meeting finished: 8.05pm