

**MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING
HELD AT 10:00AM, ON
MONDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2018
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Cabinet Members Present: Councillor Holdich (Chair), Councillor Ayres, Councillor Cereste, Councillor Fitzgerald, Councillor Hiller, Councillor Lamb, Councillor Smith, Councillor Walsh and Councillor Seaton.

Cabinet Advisors Present: Councillor Allen and Councillor Fuller.

27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

29. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETINGS HELD ON:

(a) 16 JULY 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2018 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

(b) 23 JULY 2018 - EXTRAORDINARY

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 23 July 2018 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

30. PETITIONS PRESENTED TO CABINET

There were no petitions presented to Cabinet.

STRATEGIC DECISIONS

With the consent of the meeting, the Leader agreed to reorder the agenda to consider Agenda Item No. 7 'Outcome of the Ofsted Inspection of Peterborough's Children's Services' first.

31. OUTCOME OF THE OFSTED INSPECTION OF PETERBOROUGH'S CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Cabinet received a report detailing the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of Peterborough Children's Services, at the request of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services.

The purpose of this report was for Cabinet to gain an overview of the inspection findings about the impact of Children's Services and the broader partnership of agencies working with children and young people in Peterborough on improving

outcomes.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services introduced the report and advised that it was the first time the authority had received a good grading across the board. Congratulations was passed onto the officers within the Children's Services teams. A great amount of work had been put in to implementing sustainable change with little budget. Leadership positions were now mostly held by permanent staff, which had been a problem for teams in the past. It was advised that the service would not be complacent and would continue to work to understand the lived in experience of children in the area and to make sure children could influence policy.

Cabinet debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Innovative work had been carried out within the Early Help Services to build capacity and ongoing resilience. This included training people in schools to be able to deliver training courses.
- It was advised that the Family Safeguarding Model had received a significant grant from the Government of £2.5 million. This, however, had been invested mainly in ICT upgrades and costs that would not be ongoing. As such, work was ongoing with partners to identify possible areas for contribution. It was hoped with careful management that the Model would continue to be sustainable.
- Children's Services teams were experiencing their lowest ever vacancy rates.
- It was noted that part of Children's Services included the Education Team, who had completed vital work in relation to virtual schools and children missing in education.
- It was considered that the increased levels of recruitment and retention of social workers had resulted from the extension of support provided and the manageable caseload level.
- Congratulations was passed on to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services on her oversight of the successful service.

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

1. Note the positive outcome of the Ofsted inspection of Children's Services under the new inspection framework: The Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services [ILACS];
2. Acknowledge the commitment and dedication of staff within Peterborough in children's and allied services and the support provided by partner agencies in improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people in Peterborough;
3. Note the areas for development noted in the inspection report and agrees in principle to support officers in delivering continuing improvement, continuing the strong tradition of corporate and Member support for Children's Services identified by inspectors.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

While the outcome of the inspection was a positive one, there was always further learning to do. Services needed to continue to improve just to remain at the same judgement. This was because Ofsted's expectations about service quality continued to become more demanding.

It was important therefore that Cabinet had the opportunity to review the progress made since the last inspection and to re-confirm the Council's commitment to the ongoing development of children's services in Peterborough.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

There were no applicable alternative options considered.

32. TO RETAIN THE FOOTBRIDGES ON JUNCTION 18*

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the footbridge at Junction 18, known as Rhubarb Bridge.

The purpose of this report was for Cabinet to review the recommendations made by the Junction 18 (Rhubarb Bridge) Cross Party Working Group. The Working Group was established to consider the whether it was feasible to reassign the proportion of the overall budget allocated to demolish the footbridges to instead make significant repairs to the bridge and to examine the long term solutions for a replacement bridge.

The Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development introduced the report and thanked the members of the Working Group for their work in taking into consideration the public's concerns and properly considering all options in a cross party approach. It was noted that following the initial repairs proposed the group would investigate the structural issues presented by the bridge and the long term solutions to these.

Cabinet debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- It was noted that the bridge would have to be closed for a period while the repairs were ongoing.
- The current gradient of the bridge meant that it was not suitable for wheelchair users. Therefore the at-grade crossing would be required to ensure all were able to cross the road.
- The report of the Working Group had been accepted by the lead petitioner and the Cycle Forum.
- It was noted that there had been no response to the online report, however, this was not unexpected as the report was technical in nature. The Cycle Forum and other individuals and groups spoken with had been positive about the proposals.
- Following a query it was confirmed that the Department of Transport had been kept informed of the changes to the proposals and were fully supportive. There would be no issue the provision of funding.
- It was advised that current building standards were much higher than they had been when the bridge had first been built. Therefore, officers were confident in the quality of the build and would be able to get assurance through the contract with Skanska.
- No long term option had yet been investigated, as the options available for this would change drastically over the course of the 10 year period that the repairs were expected to last.
- It was noted that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority had provided funding of £250,000 in order to complete the initial survey.
- Following a question raised it was advised that although the bridge barriers were of a standard height, though individuals could climb over this barriers if they were so minded.

- It was noted that the Working Group were unanimous in their support of the recommendation.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to reassign the proportion of the overall budget allocated to demolish the footbridges to instead make significant repairs to the bridge structures at junction 18, rather than removing or replacing them as previously intended.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Cross Party Working Group had investigated the task set and had determined, on the basis of information considered, that it was technically and financially feasible to reassign the proportion of the overall budget allocated to demolish the footbridges to instead make significant repairs to the bridge at Junction 18 (Rhubarb Bridge).

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Do not repair the bridges: The Council had funding to repair the bridge as part of the National Productivity Investment Fund. The Scheme and budget was included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. If the bridge was not repaired now then further funding will be needed in the near future in order to keep the bridge operational. In addition, if the Council did not spend the c.£1m on the repairs then it was likely there would be an underspend on the National Productivity Investment Fund which would have implications as the Council had a signed agreement with Department for Transport to spend £5.5m on the entire scheme.

Demolish the footbridge: Following public consultation, the majority of people wanted to keep or replace the footbridge so repairing it was the preferred option because it was technically and financially feasible.

Replace it with a new bridge: This would be far more expensive and following the review it was more cost effective to repair the existing structure.

33. PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL'S TREE AND WOODLAND STRATEGY

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the Council's Tree and Woodland Strategy.

The purpose of this report was for the Cabinet to consider the updated Tree and Woodland Strategy and if appropriate to refer it to Full Council as part of the Major Policy Framework.

The Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development introduced the report and advised that the last incarnation of the Strategy had been approved six years ago. The Strategy set out the statutory function of the public services and the development of the growing city. Also covered were the health and safety requirements, financial constraints, and impact on way of life. The Strategy had been considered by the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee and sought to ensure that trees and woodland were an asset to the city and not a liability.

Cabinet debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- It was advised that considerable progress had been made in the five years since the previous strategy was approved, with a greater knowledge and understanding of resources available.

- Following a question it was confirmed that the most common nuisance report was tree encroachment on property, particularly where a large tree crown covered a small garden. The Strategy introduced scope to address these issues, particularly along the shelter belt.
- In relation to Ash Dieback, it was noted that Ash was present in Peterborough's tree population, comprising 8% and 18% of the shelter belt. It was considered that cases of Dieback would peak over the next few years. The Ash trees in the area were constantly monitored and there would be no planting of Ash at the current time.
- The service was currently operating within existing budgets, at approximately £700,000. Officers were aiming to minimise costs wherever possible, including the introduction of mechanical tree shears that could perform the work of 10 manual workers. It was also intended to limit tree planting to smaller transplants and wicks, which were less expensive to buy and plant.
- The approach to tree management would be to selectively remove trees and appropriate, rather than a whole scale approach. This would be carried out over a phased period with new planting to introduce diversity of age.
- The biggest change to the Strategy was the introduction of an 'i-tree' evaluation process that considered the ecological benefits of tree stock. It was considered that Peterborough's tree stock generated a £1.2 million of ecosystem benefits.
- It was advised that good tree stock could neutralise 70 % of emissions.
- The advice from the Forestry Commission was not to remove Ash trees too early on if they were infected with Dieback, as many trees could take up to five years to die. As such, permission would not be granted to fell such trees pre-emptively.
- In response to a question it was confirmed that Sweet Chestnut trees were included in the tree population and would continue to be planted, though would not be dominant.
- Planting had an invaluable roll to play in improving air quality and the Council's tree stock was currently being used to improve water service run off.
- It was noted that more trees were being planted than were being felled.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to recommend the Tree and Woodland Strategy to Full Council for approval.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The strategy would help deliver the city's Environment Capital priority by providing clear strategic direction for the management of the council's tree resource and set targets with which the progress of the strategy would be measured.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The alternative option of not producing an updated strategy would mean that there would be no clear vision and targets associated with the management of the Council's Trees and Woodland, making progress difficult to monitor and the effective allocation of resources challenging. Therefore the alternative option of not updating the strategy was rejected.

34. PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL AND CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL SHARED SERVICES JOINT WORKING AGREEMENT AND PROTOCOLS

The Cabinet received a report in relation to joint working with between Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.

The purpose of this report was to provide Cabinet with an overview of the Joint Working Agreement and Protocols and to seek approval.

The Director of Business Improvement and Development, Cambridgeshire County Council introduced the report and advised that the agreement had arisen from the increased level of joint working between the two councils, including a number of shared director positions. It was considered that creating an agreement such as the proposed would create more opportunities to work jointly, rather than waiting for them. Business cases would still be developed for each individual proposal for joint working, but the Agreement would provide a framework for these.

Cabinet debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Officers were congratulated in embracing the joint way of working.
- It was advised that the approach of the two councils was innovative, where other authorities were working jointly on an ad hoc basis, without a strategic outcomes based approach.
- It was noted that while officers would be working jointly, Members would only be taking decisions for their own authority.
- Joint working had not only been undertaken for back office processes, but also for front line staff, including the majority of the People and Communities Directorate. It was advised that the next phase, however, would be focussing once more of back office operations with commissioning services and the commercial agenda.
- The Agreement and Protocols has already be agreed by Members at Cambridgeshire Council at its General Purposes Committee, and would be submitted to their meeting of Full Council in October 2018.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to approve the principles set out in the Joint Working Agreement and Protocols.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The JWA and Protocols set out the principles which would govern the way in which CCC and PCC would identify and integrate their services to include a Sovereignty Guarantee designed to protect the separate legal and political identities of each Council.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

As new opportunities are identified for possible joint working / sharing or integration across the two Councils, individual business cases would be developed to determine the viability and would explore alternative options as appropriate. Both councils were signed up to the Shared Services agenda. If shared options were not pursued then the status quo would be maintained by working together on a piecemeal basis, which did not provide the same level of opportunity for cohesion in service delivery and/or maximising the opportunities for building resilience and maximising resource potential. This JWA provided an opportunity to create a set of shared principles through which joint working arrangements could be explored and formalised in a systematic way also enabling effective management and oversight across representatives from both organisations.

MONITORING ITEMS

35. BUDGET CONTROL REPORT JULY 2018

The Cabinet received a Budget Control Report for July 2018.

The purpose of this report was to provide Cabinet with an update of the July 2018 Budgetary Control position.

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the report and advised that the Council's budgetary position had worsened by a small percentage, though this reflected a significant cost. An increased demand had been seen in the Child Protection Legal Services team and the Coroner's office. Additional expenditure had also been made in relation to the Amy contract, to extend this until February 2019. This, however, had been offset by a lower contribution to the Amey pension fund. It was further noted that a number of savings target had not been met and strengthened project management was being investigated. Plans were in place to mitigate any overspend.

Cabinet debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- The current budget position was being considered in the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy Tranche 2 due to be published for consultation in October 2018.
- It was noted that agreeing the budget in several tranches provided greater opportunity for savings to be made in year.
- The majority of the recorded overspend had arising from commissioning and permanency services. These issues were nationwide and the Council were already aware of the pressures faced.
- It was acknowledged that the Council did not have control of the number of children that entered the care process, however it could impact the number of children leaving the process.
- The budget position was reviewed on a monthly basis.

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

1. The Revenue Budgetary Control position for 2018/19 at July 2018 includes a £5.982m overspend position on the revenue budget.
2. The key variance analysis and explanations are contained in Appendix A to the report.
3. The estimated reserves position for 2018/19 is outlined in Appendix B to the report.
4. In year budget risks are highlighted in Appendix C to the report.
5. The Asset Investment and Treasury Budget Report is contained in Appendix D to the report.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The report updated Cabinet on the July 2018 budgetary control position.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

There had been no alternative options considered.

36. OUTCOME OF PETITIONS

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the outcome of petitions received by the Council.

The purpose of this report was to update the Cabinet on the progress being made in response to petitions submitted to the Council.

The Democratic and Constitutional Services Manager introduced the report and advised that a petition in relation to the Herlington Post Office had been received and, having archived over 50 signatures, would be submitted to Cabinet for debate at its next normal meeting.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the actions taken in respect of petitions.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

As the petitions presented in the report had been dealt with by Cabinet Members or officers, it was appropriate that the action taken was reported to Cabinet.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

There had been no alternative options considered.

Chairman
10:00am – 11:25pm
24 September 2018