

**MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING
HELD AT 4:00PM, ON
MONDAY 19 JUNE 2023
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Cabinet Members Present: Councillor Fitzgerald (Chair), Councillor Steve Allen (Vice-Chair), Councillor Coles, Councillor Simons

Cabinet Advisor Present: Councillor Jackie Allen, Councillor Hussain, Councillor Moyo, Councillor Nawaz, Councillor Sainsbury

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ayres and Councillor Cereste.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations interest received.

3. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETINGS HELD ON 13 MARCH 2023, 23 MARCH 2023, AND 18 APRIL 2023

The minutes of the following Cabinet meetings were agreed as a true and accurate record:

- 13 March 2023
- 23 March 2023 (Extraordinary)
- 18 April 2023 (Extraordinary)

4. PETITIONS PRESENTED TO CABINET

There were no petitions presented to Cabinet.

STRATEGIC DECISIONS

5. HOUSING LICENSING SCHEME – AWARD OF CONTRACT

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the award of contract for the Housing Licensing Scheme.

The purpose of this report was to update Cabinet on the progress towards implementation of licensing schemes in the city to regulate private sector housing, and to seek approval to award a contract to a third-party to administer a Selective Licensing Scheme

The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Climate Change introduced the report and provided an overview of the key points.

Cabinet Members debated the report and in summary responses to questions raised included:

- Members noted that the June implementation date was that provisionally provided by the Secretary of State. Recent communication indicated that this, or early July, was still likely.
- It was considered that future plans should be made now in order to avoid another hiatus between schemes, however, it was noted that delivery would be dependent on need and the approval of the Secretary of State.
- Comment was made around the view that the scheme penalised 'good' landlords, and it was noted that the intention of the scheme was to ensure that all landlords were operating at a good standard.
- The scheme would also provide support for landlords who had been funding improvements themselves.
- It was advised that the scheme was not about raising funds but ensuring quality accommodation throughout the city.

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

Authorise the award of a services concession contract to The Home Safe Scheme Ltd for the administration of a Selective Licencing Scheme for private sector housing covering the area approved by Council on the 25 January 2023 and included at Appendix 1, subject to approval for the Scheme being granted by the Secretary of State.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Council had a statutory responsibility with regards to regulating housing standards in the private rented sector. The introduction of a Selective Licensing Scheme was one of several measures designed to improve housing standards in the sector.

A previous Selective Licensing Scheme ended in October 2021 after its 5-year period, and consequently there had been a gap in the regulatory controls in the locality. Housing standard complaints and officer inspections confirmed there remained properties providing poor housing condition standards.

Awarding a contract for the administration of the Selective Licensing Scheme to the third-party provided the infrastructure and associated resources necessary to implement the Scheme, the service provider working collaboratively with the Council to ensure an effective and efficient service was provided.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Option One (Status Quo) – Continuation of the current delivery arrangement would not provide the resources nor the operational framework necessary to materially improve housing standards across the breadth of our rental sector. The arrangement was, in addition, not sustainable financially as much of the current staffing was funded out of the previous Selective Licensing Scheme, therefore without additional revenue the size of the team would have to be reduced to reflect cash limits. The status quo position would rely on the Mandatory Licensing Scheme alone in conjunction with the enforcement sanctions available to officers.

6. 2023 COUNCIL CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the Council's Climate Change Action Plan for 2023.

The purpose of this report was to share the Council Climate Change Action Plan. Should the plan be supported by Cabinet, it would be considered for adoption by Council.

The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Climate Change introduced the report and provided an overview of the key points.

Cabinet Members debated the report and in summary responses to questions raised included:

- It was noted that the challenges for the Council around Climate Change would be comprehensively laid out in a road map, to include proposed schemes and costs.
- There was currently a heat decarbonisation plan in place for Council buildings, including the Town Hall and Sand Martin House, but also the Council's leisure centres and swimming pools, which consumed a lot of energy.
- It was recognised that there would be difficult decisions to make in the future around the Council's stock of buildings, including community assets, to ensure that they were benefiting the community, sustainable and supporting the net zero ambition.
- Comment was made in relation to constraints around listed buildings and it was noted that work was being done with an aim to secure funding for renewable infrastructure.

Councillor Ray joined the meeting at this point.

- Members noted that the Action Plan was in its fourth iteration and that it was to be reviewed annually by officers. Additional measures would be brought in in-year if possible.

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

1. Endorses the 2023 Council Climate Change Action Plan; and
2. Recommend that Full Council adopts the 2023 Council Climate Change Action Plan.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Council had previously committed to the action of preparing an updated Council Climate Change Action Plan.

The 2023 Council Climate Change Action Plan was supported by the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee in February 2023.

The Action Plan had been developed by officers and had taken account of reasonable and viable options for the Council to cut its carbon emissions.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The option of not preparing a Council Climate Change Action Plan was dismissed, because the Council had already committed in principle to its preparation. Alternative content within the Action Plan could have been prepared and recommended, which could have committed additional, fewer, or different projects to reduce the council's carbon emissions. However, in order to start to reduce the Council's emissions to net-zero by 2030, yet take account of the resources available, the content of the action plan was deemed a reasonable and practical set of actions for the next 12 months.

7. PETERBOROUGH STATION QUARTER REDEVELOPMENT SCHEME – CONTRACT FOR APPOINTMENT OF MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM RELATING TO THE DESIGN AND ASSURANCE PROCESS

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the award of contract to appoint a multi-disciplinary team for the design and assurance process of the Peterborough Station Quarter Redevelopment Scheme.

The purpose of this report was to provide information to Cabinet to request a contract award to be made to Bloom Procurement Services Limited. Bloom Procurement Services Ltd would manage the activities of the awarded supplier, Ove Arup Limited, to deliver the required Specialist Professional Services to deliver the successful Station Quarter Bid and secure LUF2 Funds.

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and provided an overview of the key points.

Cabinet Members debated the report and in summary responses to questions raised included:

- It was advised that Arup, as the proposed company to deliver design and assurance process, had a lot of experience. The commission would include stakeholders working together to develop agreement on a design and concept.
- Officers were confident in delivery, particularly in light of further scrutiny coming from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- It was noted that funding had been received from DLUHC, and contributions were also anticipated from other partners to the value of approximately £15 million.
- Members thanked the team at the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, as well as Paul Bristow MP for his contribution.
- The Leader advised that the recommendation needed amending to change the first sentence from 'to authorise the award of a contract to Bloom Procurement Services Limited, for £924,000,' to, 'to authorise the award of a contract to Ove Arup Limited, for £924,000'.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to authorise the award of a contract to Ove Arup Limited, for £924,000, relating to the period 23 June 2023 to 1 November 2024, for a multi-disciplinary team to undertake design and assessments as part of the assurance process for accessing LUF2 funds. Bloom Procurement Services Limited propose to award Ove Arup Limited to deliver the multi-disciplinary team services.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The decision was put forward to progress with the development of the Peterborough Station Quarter (PSQ) Redevelopment Scheme, following the approval of funding through LUF2. There were 5 key areas identified to progress, as part of a Phase 1:

Station West
Station East Main Footbridge
Station Facilities
Car Park Provision
Onward Connectivity
Timeline

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

To do nothing – This option was discounted on the basis that the LUF2 funding would be a missed opportunity for Peterborough.

Use internal resources – Specialist knowledge was required for this work, and this was not available internally at the Council or the Combined Authority.

By commissioning an external specialist consultant to deliver this work Value for Money would be achieved through the specialist knowledge in order to achieve the project outcomes.

8. ADDITIONAL EQUITY INVESTMENT INTO PETERBOROUGH HE PROPERTY COMPANY LTD FOR PHASE 3 OF THE UNIVERSITY

The Cabinet received a report in relation to equity investment into Peterborough HE Property Company for the third phase of the university.

The purpose of this report was to seek approval from Cabinet, subject to approval of the recommendation at Shareholder Cabinet Committee on 12 June, to invest an additional £1.3m equity into the Peterborough HE Property Company Ltd (known as PropCo1) to contribute towards additional construction costs on the University of Peterborough Phase 3 Living Lab project.

The Cabinet Advisor for Children's Services introduced the report and provided an overview of the key points.

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

1. Review recommendation 2 which had been considered at Shareholder Cabinet Committee, on 12 June 2023 and approved;
2. Approve an additional investment of 1,300,000 Ordinary Shares (to the value of £1 per share) into Peterborough HE Property Company Ltd, to enable phase 3 of the University development to proceed, as Shareholder Cabinet Committee, at its meeting on 12 June 2023, had made the appropriate recommendation to Cabinet;
3. Delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place and Economy, in consultation with the Executive Director for Resources, to agree final versions of the subscription letter and the funding profile to be included in the shareholder's agreement with Peterborough HE Property Company Ltd.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The decision was designed to ensure that phase 3 of the new university programme could continue as planned and on schedule.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

These were described in section 4 of the report.

9. FINANCIAL SYSTEM PROCUREMENT 2023

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the procurement of a financial system for 2023.

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the award of the contract of the current IT solution used for Financial Management to Unit 4 Business Software Limited

The Cabinet Member for Legal, Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report and provided an overview of the key points.

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

1. Authorise the contract award of the Financial Management IT solution to Unit4 Business Software Limited for a sum not exceeding £2,700,000 for a three-year period commencing on 1st July 2023, with an option to extend for a further year.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

To ensure the stability of the organisation facing significant delivery challenges, and to ensure the continued value provided by the previous and current investment for a longer-term contract period.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Go out to market to seek a replacement solution via a competitive tender or mini-competition – However, given the investment to date, and the current requirement for significant development, the benefits of changing to a new system would disproportionately affect the management of the Councils finances.

10. AMENDMENT TO THE PETERBOROUGH LTD LOAN FACILITY

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the amendment of the loan facility for Peterborough Ltd.

The purpose of this report was to approve the extension of the Peterborough Ltd Loan Facility to 1 February 2029.

The Cabinet Member for Legal, Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report and provided an overview of the key points.

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

1. Approve the amendment to the expiry date of the £1.75m facility with Peterborough Ltd (originally approved by Cabinet in July 2018) from 1 February 2024 to 1 February 2029.
2. Authorise the Director for Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer) and Executive Director for Corporate Services and S151 Officer to exercise delegated authority to finalise and agree all necessary legal agreements with Peterborough Ltd for the purposes of facilitating this arrangement.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The decision would ensure Peterborough Ltd had certainty of funding from the Council once the original loan facility expired in 2024.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The Council could refuse to extend the loan facility; however, this would require Peterborough Ltd to seek funding from an external provider which was not efficient for either the Council or its subsidiary.

11. IRRECOVERABLE DEBTS IN EXCESS OF £10,000

The Cabinet received a report in relation to irrecoverable debts in excess of £10,000.

The purpose of this report was to approve the write-off of irrecoverable debt in excess of £10,000.

The Cabinet Member for Legal, Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report and provided an overview of the key points.

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

1. Authorise the write-off of the irrecoverable debt shown as outstanding in respect of Non-Domestic (Business) Rates, Council Tax, Housing Benefit Overpayments and Accounts Receivable (sundry debt) accounts included in the Appendices to this report (which detail the financial year and the category for the write-off request).

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The authorisation for write-off is provided due to the following scenarios:

- the individual/ company being made insolvent/ bankrupt;
- recovery action attempted but no longer enforceable under the Limitation Act 1980 (Statute Barred);
- the ratepayer was deceased with no further income due from the estate; and
- the result of legal processes/ negotiations/ disputes concluding.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The alternative option was to not write off this debt. This would result in irrecoverable debts continuing to be shown as outstanding, with a bad debt provision apportioned to these balances. It was noted that once a debt was no longer collectable it should be written off in the Council's accounts and the debt provision adjusted accordingly.

All other alternative options available to the Council to collect the debt had already been undertaken before making a decision to write-off debt.

MONITORING ITEMS

12. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FINAL OUTTURN

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the final budget outturn for 2022/2023.

The purpose of this report was to provide Cabinet with the 2022/23 outturn position for both the revenue budget and capital programme and performance information on payment of creditors, collection performance for debtors and local taxation. The final position was subject to any changes that may be needed as part of the finalisation of the Statement of Accounts and subsequent external audit.

The Cabinet Member for Legal, Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report and provided an overview of the key points.

Cabinet Members debated the report and in summary responses to questions raised included:

- Members noted that there was a £0.6 million, which was a remarkable achievement.
- It was felt that the Council was no longer in a “bad” position.
- Members thanked all those involved in the progress of the Council, including opposition members within the Financial Sustainability Working Group.

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

1. The final 2022/23 outturn position as an £0.6m underspend on the Council’s revenue budget (subject to finalisation of the statutory statement of accounts).
2. The reserves position outlined in section 7 and Appendix B which includes a contribution of the £0.6m underspend to the General Fund Reserve.
3. The 2022/23 Capital Programme outturn position of £43.5m outlined in section 8, with the details of schemes outlined in Appendix E.
4. Performance against the Prudential Indicators as outlined in Appendix C.
5. Performance on payment of creditors, debt collection performance, local taxation and benefit overpayments as outlined in Appendix D.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The monitoring report formed part of the 2022/23 closure of accounts and decision-making framework, and the production of the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts and informed Cabinet of the final position.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

None required.

13. END OF YEAR CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Cabinet received a report in relation corporate performance at year end.

The purpose of this report was to provide an update to Cabinet and to provide the direction of travel on the Council’s corporate performance in line with the Council’s priority outcomes as set out in the Sustainable Future City Council Strategy 2022-25.

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and provided an overview of the key points.

Cabinet Members debated the report and in summary responses to questions raised included:

- Members felt that the report was comprehensive and indicated that progress was still ongoing.
- Thanks was passed on to the Head of the Delivery Unit and his team, and all those who were working hard to improve the Council.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the End of Year Corporate Performance Report.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The corporate performance report would support members to monitor performance across the services and progress towards delivering against the Council's priority outcomes.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

Chairman
4.00pm to 4.45pm
19 June 2023