

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY GROWTH, RESOURCES AND
COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT 6.00PM, ON
MONDAY 23 OCTOBER 2023
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH

Committee Members Present: Councillors Iqbal (Chair), Jamil (Vice Chair), M Farooq, J R Fox, Knight, Sabir, Sandford, Sainsbury, Sharp and Warren and Independent Co-opted Member Parish Councillor Ormston

Officers Present: Charlotte Cameron, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Adesuwa Omoregie, Interim Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Simon Lewis, Service Director Commercial, Property and Asset Management
Felicity Paddick, Head of Estates
Jill Evans, Service Director Corporate Finance

Others Present: Councillor Hogg, Group Leader Liberal Democrats
Councillor Fitzgerald, Leader of the Council
Councillor S Allen, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Wiggin and Councillor Sandford was in attendance as substitute.

Councillors Thulbourn and Councillor Sabir was in attendance as substitute.
Councillor Fenner and Councillor Sainsbury was in attendance as substitute.

Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor Asif, Councillor Coles Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services and Rob Hill, Service Director Housing and Communities

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

Councillors Sandford, Fenner and Jamil raised non-pecuniary interests as they had personal connections with items contained within the exempt appendix.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the interests would be noted formally if the Committee entered exempt session to discuss Appendix 2.

27. LOCALITY ASSET REVIEW – UPDATE

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee received a report in relation to the principles and findings of the localities review of council property including community buildings, leisure facilities and libraries. It also included a proposed draft Community Asset Transfer Policy which would support the implementation of the Locality Asset Review.

Appendix 2 of this report was exempt as it involved the disclosure of information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The Service Director Commercial, Property and Asset Management accompanied by the Head of Estates introduced the report and key points raised included:

The report proposed how the asset review would run and gave a rationale behind the early stages of the process.

The information contained within the exempt appendix was up for discussion and Officers reiterated that no decisions had been made.

A programme of consultation, with key stakeholders, would be followed.

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members referred to section 10 and the absence of the climate change targets how the assets will be maintained. and asked that tackling climate change be addressed within the policy.
- Members were advised that all transfers would be reviewed on a case by case basis and there were opportunities for sustainability.
- The consultation would be delivered within 6-8 weeks depending on the level of feedback received.
- Members queried when the list of assets would be made public and were advised that operators and key stakeholders would be consulted with first.
- Members were concerned that some buildings would be left empty, and Officers assured Members that most buildings would be used or repurposed.

Members raised concerns around the exclusion of the press and public as they believed the public interest outweighed the need to retain the list of assets in the exempt information. Members were also concerned that the process had not been open and transparent.

Members queried the recommendation made at a previous meeting and referred to the agreement that the deferred report should have allowed Officers the time to engage with stakeholders so the report could be public at this meeting.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the recommendation agreed had been for Officers to review what was included within the exempt appendix and that they had made as much of the information public as was reasonable.

Officers advised that no decisions had been made and that this was an opportunity for the Committee to comment on the initial stages of the review.

Members were assured that Officers had and would continue to liaise with community

groups.

Members took a vote on recommendation 1 to resolve that the press and public be excluded from the meeting when discussing Appendix 2 on the grounds that the item contains exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Part 1 the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and that it would not be in the public interest for this information to be disclosed as it relates to the financial or business affairs (past or present) of the Council.

Councillor Sandford requested that his vote be recorded.

A vote was taken on the recommendation (9 voting in favour, 0 voting against, Councillor Sandford abstaining from voting.) The recommendation was **CARRIED**.

The Committee entered exempt session.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to

1. Resolve that the press and public be excluded from the meeting when discussing Appendix 2 on the grounds that the item contains exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Part 1 the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and that it would not be in the public interest for this information to be disclosed as it relates to the financial or business affairs (past or present) of the Council.
2. Notes the Locality Asset Review Overview, Recommendations and Financial and Benefits Case and makes any comments prior to submission to Cabinet in November.
3. Notes that Directors will revert back to Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee in January, subject to Cabinet Approval of the Locality Asset Review, and after a wider consultation exercise with operators of the sites and the wider public, with further details of the proposed Locality Asset Review recommendations.
4. Notes the Draft Community Asset Transfer Policy contained in Appendix 1 and make any comments prior to submission to Cabinet for approval in November.

CHAIR

Public Meeting began at 6:00pm and ended at 6:22pm