

MINUTES OF CABINET MEETING HELD 20 JULY 2015

PRESENT:

Cabinet Members: Councillor Holdich (Chairman), Councillor Fitzgerald, Councillor Hiller, Councillor Lamb, Councillor North, Councillor Seaton and Councillor Serluca.

Cabinet Advisors: Councillor Casey and Councillor Maqbool.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Elsey and Councillor Scott.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 15 JUNE 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2015 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. PETITIONS PRESENTED TO CABINET

There were no petitions presented to Cabinet.

STRATEGIC DECISIONS

5. PETERBOROUGH FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Cabinet received a report which had been prepared in order to meet a statutory requirement for the Council to adopt a local flood risk management strategy. This followed public consultation on a draft strategy during 2014.

The purpose of the report was to consult and seek agreement from Cabinet that the Peterborough Flood Risk Management Strategy be recommended for adoption by Full Council.

Councillor Hiller, Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development, introduced the report and highlighted the main issues contained within.

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA 2010) made Peterborough City Council a Lead Local Flood Authority, with responsibility for co-ordinating the management of surface water flood risk (flooding from surface runoff, groundwater and ordinary watercourses). Lead Local Flood Authorities had a duty to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a 'local flood risk management strategy'. The Strategy had been developed as a partnership plan with all of the flood and water management organisations and would be reviewed every five to six years.

Following additional comments from the Council's Flood and Water Management Officer, Cabinet debated the report and key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Changes had been made to the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Town and Country Planning Act which meant that local planning authorities had a requirement to ensure sustainable drainage systems were incorporated into major developments in order to manage surface water run off;
- The Strategy related to all aspects of flood risk and was a coordinated plan with partners. There were no extra financial implications to the Council;
- Government funding could not be accessed unless there was a clear demonstration of partnership working, this would increase the likelihood of obtaining funding;
- Peterborough City Council was part of the Local Resilience Forum alongside Cambridge; and
- Ultimate responsibility for protecting property lay with the land and property owner. Maintenance of water courses also lay with the land owner;

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that the Peterborough Flood Risk Management Strategy be adopted.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Flood Management Strategy would:

- Meet statutory requirements;
- Make Peterborough more resilient to flooding;
- Help to co-ordinate and attract investment into Peterborough for both flood risk management and wider environmental and amenity improvements;
- Aid the delivery of sustainable growth;
- Assist with the city's aspiration to create the UK's Environment Capital; and
- Be a reference guide for Council officers, Flood Warden, Parish Council and communities who want to more know more about flood and water management.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The Council was required to produce a 'local flood risk management strategy' in accordance with its duties as a Lead Local Flood Authority. It was therefore not an option to not produce a strategy. The only available alternative was to produce a document that covered only the sources of flooding that Peterborough City Council was responsible for.

This option was rejected in favour of preparing a plan in partnership with all other flood risk management authorities, covering all sources of flood risk. The chosen option was believed to be more useful for the reader, more efficient to implement and more likely to enable Peterborough to attract partnership funding.

6. STRATEGY FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE FARMS ESTATE

Cabinet received a report which followed the completion of a task and finish group instigated by the Sustainable Growth and Environmental Capital Scrutiny Committee. The Group's objective was to review the future management of the Council's Farms Estate with a view to help inform and develop a long term strategy for the development of the estate.

The Group was established by the Committee at its meeting on 20 January 2014 and at its meeting on the 17 March 2015, the Committee endorsed the Strategy for the Management of the Farms Estate and recommended it to Cabinet for approval.

The purpose of the report was to seek Cabinet's endorsement of the Strategy.

Councillor Seaton, Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the report and highlighted the main issues contained within.

The members of the Task and Finish Group, which included Councillors, Tennant Farmers and Officers, who had assisted with the development of the Strategy were thanked for their work. There had been difficult relationships with the tenant farmers in recent years, however the situation was improving and recent meetings had been held with the Tenant Farmers Association. Arising out of one of the meetings was an amendment to the recommendations proposed to Cabinet, these recommendations had been circulated a supplementary paper and in summary requested that a working group be set up comprising the Cabinet Member for Resources, opposition Group members and members of the Tennant's Association, in order to bring forward an action plan arising from the Strategy, which was then to be presented to Cabinet within six months for implementation.

Following additional comments from the Council's Service Director for Education, People, Resources and Corporate Property, Cabinet debated the report and key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Communities would be kept informed of the delivery of the Strategy, and the Action Plan would be specific and informative;
- The Strategy would be published formally for transparency;
- All bordering authorities had chosen to retain their farm estates, with Cambridgeshire being the largest land owner of farm land in the country. Peterborough City Council had looked at bordering authorities' proposals and taken the Strategy forward in-line with them;
- There were no provisions for rural studies in the city at the current time, however the Strategy contained an education element and Peterborough Regional College was keen to take on the tenancy of one of the farms in order to provide skill base education;
- Peterborough Arena were always very keen to be involved and work would be undertaken alongside the 'Kids in the Country' event; and
- The purchasing of farms estates may form part of the future Action Plan and would be considered for inclusion within the Plan.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED:**

1. To adopt the proposed Strategy for the Management of Peterborough City Council's Farm Estate;
2. That the Strategy be delivered within existing approved resource allocations and if necessary a report be brought forward to a future meeting if extra resources were required or submitted as part of the medium term financial planning process; and
3. That Cabinet delegates to the Cabinet Member for Resources:
 - i. That a working group be set up comprising of the Cabinet Member for Resources, three opposition councillors and three members of the Peterborough City Farm Tenants Association to bring forward an action plan arising out of the Strategy for the Management of the Farms Estate, such action plan to be presented to Cabinet within six months for approval and implementation; and
 - ii. Approve the lettings procedure including associated guidelines on criteria to be utilised on evaluation of offers received as outlined in the Strategy.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Effective ownership of an agricultural estate required a long-term view to ensure sustainable management. Decisions made could affect the estate for many years and

decades. Without a clear understanding of the aims of the Council with regard to the estate, effective management was handicapped. On occasion quick decisions were required to take advantage of events. In recent years there had not been an agreed strategy for the estate to enable such decisions to be made, resulting in lost opportunities. A clear strategy also would act as a means of informing the Council so that it had an understanding of the asset and the reasons for its ownership. The Council's Farm Estate was a long term positive asset held by the Council for the benefit of the rural community. It produced a steady stream of income and employment for the wider city of Peterborough. The Farm Strategy had been produced in conjunction with the Council's tenant farmers

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

There were no alternative options considered in this instance. There was no recorded publically held strategy for the management of the farms estate and the implementation of a Strategy provided a transparent framework for the farms' future operation and ownership.

7. REVIEW OF THE PETERBOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

Cabinet received a report, the purpose of which was to enable it to consider the proposal to commence preparation of a Local Plan for Peterborough and, if it this was agreed, for a new Local Plan to be produced.

Councillor Hiller, Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development, introduced the report and highlighted the main issues contained within.

The current Local Plan was four years old and recent evidence indicated that more land was required for homes and to allow for businesses to grow. Preparing a Plan was a statutory process and would take approximately three years from start to finish. A new Plan was therefore required for preparation and the first part of the process was for a Local Development Scheme to be adopted, which set out the timetable for the development of a plan. Cabinet's approval was therefore sought for this Scheme.

Following additional comments from the Council's Corporate Director Growth and Regeneration, Cabinet debated the report and key points raised and responses to questions included:

- An updated Plan was required in order to ensure the Council remained in control of where new development was to take place;
- All strategies of the Council needed to show clear outcomes associated with health and there would be policies running throughout the new Plan highlighting how better health outcomes would be achieved;
- Peterborough has always historically been 'ahead of the pack' with such document and this needed to continue;
- The culture and recreation side needed to be taken into account also;
- Affordable housing would be an integral consideration of the Plan; and
- Peterborough was the second fastest growing city and the re-writing of the Plan would assist with the needs of the city going forward.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED:**

1. To authorise officers to commence a review of the Local Plan; and
2. To approve the Local Development Scheme (LDS), which set out a timetable for the production of a new Local Plan, and brought it into effect from 31 July 2015.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

A review of the Local Plan would:

- Ensure that new development continued to take place in planned locations and help demonstration of a '5 year housing land supply' (a Government requirement), reducing the risk of challenge from speculative, unplanned development;
- Be an opportunity to identify new locations for growth in Peterborough, which in turn would meet our longer term housing and employment needs;
- Maintain the Council's strong reputation for high quality strategic planning by keeping the Local Plan as up to date as possible;
- Provide certainty about future housing delivery;
- Align preparation of a new Local Plan with the review of other corporate strategies, including the Local Transport Plan, Housing Strategy and Green Infrastructure Plan;
- Identify additional employment sites to accommodate increasing commercial demand;
- Ensure continued and potentially additional income via New Homes Bonus, business rate growth and council tax income; and
- Ensure an overall, an up-to-date Local Plan, covering a longer timeframe, means more certainty for everyone (the public, developers and public service providers) about where growth will take place.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The only alternative option considered was to do nothing and review the situation again in 12 months. This option was rejected because it would fail to take advantage of the benefits of commencing a new Local Plan.

Chairman
10.00am – 10.42am

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