

## **MINUTES OF CABINET MEETING HELD 30 MARCH 2009**

### **PRESENT**

Councillor Peach - Leader of the Council, Councillor Collins, Councillor M Dalton, Councillor Fitzgerald, Councillor Goldspink, Councillor Lamb, Councillor Lee, Councillor Murphy, Councillor Sanders and Councillor Scott.

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations.

### **3. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held 2 February 2009 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Leader.

### **4. CABINET MEMBER UPDATES**

Cabinet Members provided the following updates relating to activities within their individual portfolios:

- Ofsted had recognised more schools performing at a good or outstanding level.
- The Phoenix School had been rated outstanding in every category in which it was judged.
- Tough new guidelines to ensure all houses in multiple occupation (HMO) were maintained to an acceptable standard were being pioneered by the Council.
- The council's Customer Service Centre was the first council-run centre in the eastern region to be able to display the government's Customer Service Excellence hallmark.
- Peterborough Crematorium was in the running for a prestigious Green Flag award, and if successful it would be the third site in Peterborough to secure Green Flag status.
- A team of city council staff who had given up their own time to raise money for the Papworth Trust charity by organising a talent contest had won The Grand Challenge Award for their efforts. Members of the team were present and received their award from Councillor Lamb.
- The number of people killed or seriously injured on Peterborough roads had reached a record low in 2008.
- A faster broadband service, which would allow children to learn more online was being introduced in all of Peterborough City Council's schools.

- Staff from the city council's strategic resources department had been sharing their expertise with Thurrock Council in a recent visit to Peterborough. The transformation of the city council's finance service had already been recognised by auditors from Price Waterhouse Coopers and nationally by the Audit Commission.

## **5. ITEMS FROM SCRUTINY PANELS**

### **5.1 Peterborough's Children and Young People Plan 2009**

Cabinet received a report on the Peterborough Children and Young People Plan (CYPP). The first Plan had been published in April 2006 and, in line with statutory requirements, had been reviewed annually with revised plans published in 2007 and 2008.

The CYPP had been reviewed through the Children's Trust, for whom the CYPP was their primary strategic document, setting out their vision and priorities for children and young people in the city. Legislation was being tabled in Parliament to switch the statutory ownership of the plan from the local authority to the statutory Children's Trust Partnership Board. A new style CYPP would be required from 2011 to reflect these changes and, as such, the Children's Trust Partnership Board had agreed to a light-touch review for 2009 ahead of the revised arrangements expected in 2010/11.

Members sought assurance that, in the light of recent high profile child protection cases the council was doing all it could to review its processes to ensure the safety of children who may be in danger of neglect. The Executive Director, Children's Services informed Cabinet that his department had responded to published guidelines and was constantly checking the quality of its child protection plans. A separate report on safeguarding issues would be brought to a future Cabinet meeting.

#### **CABINET RESOLVED TO:**

Endorse the Peterborough Children and Young People Plan and to recommend that Full Council give it consideration at its meeting on 8 April 2009.

#### **REASONS**

To ensure that Cabinet had an opportunity to consider the reviewed Children and Young People Plan and make recommendations to Full Council.

#### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

The preparation and annual review of a Children and Young People Plan was a statutory duty.

### **5.2 Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan**

A report on the Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan was submitted to Cabinet following consideration by the Safer Peterborough Partnership and the Community Development Scrutiny Panel. It was a statutory responsibility that the Partnership adopt a Partnership Plan which was updated on an annual basis.

The priorities within the Partnership Plan had been agreed following a Strategic Assessment which considered the performance in the previous twelve months and took into account the concerns of the public.

The priorities set out in the Plan were:

- *Serious acquisitive crime*
- *Anti social behaviour*
- *Domestic abuse*
- *Violent crime*

- *Sexual offences*
- *Road safety*

The Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan covered all the priorities of the Partnership for the coming three years. Indicators, both national and local, had been selected to reflect effectively the improvement that was planned. Some of these indicators had also been included with the Local Area Agreement.

Members raised comments about the possible rise of petty crime as a result of the current economic situation and about how domestic abuse was being tackled. There was also some concern at the reduction in the number of police officers and PCSOs and some members felt that this could compromise the delivery of the priorities of the Plan. However the point was made that the partnership pulled together limited resources from within the partnership and that performance could only be measured through the pooled resources of the partnership.

Cabinet asked that the Plan be amended to include more reference to substance misuse and also requested that the list of vulnerable neighbourhoods be put into alphabetical order. Subject to these amendments,

**CABINET RESOLVED TO:**

Approve the Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan for submission to Full Council.

**REASONS**

A Partnership Plan was a statutory requirement of the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. The Plan had undergone extensive consultation and had been agreed by the Safer Peterborough Partnership.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

Publishing a Plan was a statutory requirement and continuing with the plan approved in the previous year was not an option.

**6. STRATEGIC DECISIONS**

**6.1 Approval of the 2009/2012 Opportunity Peterborough Draft Business Plan**

Cabinet received the Opportunity Peterborough draft business plan for endorsement. As a major funder, supporter and member of the Board of Opportunity Peterborough, it was important that the Council was satisfied that the draft Business Plan would deliver the objectives agreed and use the funding provided in an effective way.

It was stated that the declining economic situation associated with a lack of developer participation and significant reductions in public funding would not help in maintaining the momentum of delivery and growth; however there were alternative methods of delivery through the use of special purpose vehicles and direct engagement with private financiers, such as pension and investment funds, which were being actively explored to overcome this situation.

Accordingly the plan had looked closely at the key strategic priorities needed to drive forward the growth agenda and those which could be realistically delivered given the likely availability of resources whilst retaining the long term vision for the city of delivering 25,000 new homes and 20,000 new jobs by 2021.

Opportunity Peterborough's purpose was to facilitate the successful regeneration of Peterborough through enabling sustainable growth. To achieve this OP would focus on 3 key objectives:

- To create a vibrant and attractive city centre at the heart of a bigger and better Peterborough
- The sustainable and integrated growth of Peterborough including the infrastructure to deliver this
- A vibrant and diverse business community, supported by an improved skills and knowledge base, fit for the global economy

Opportunity Peterborough had worked with senior officers and members within Peterborough City Council to develop a close partnership to deliver the growth agenda within the city and in particular a "Strategic Growth Framework" which provided a structured and focussed approach to the delivery of the growth agenda.

The Cabinet member for Housing, Regeneration and Economic Development addressed Cabinet and said that he was reassured by the Council's Growth programme under the Deputy Chief Executive and his team, and that he had an ever increasing confidence in the Council's approach to growth. He was keen to ensure that Opportunity Peterborough fulfilled the role the Council wanted it to and which was supported by the East of England Development Agency and Homes and Communities Agency; that is to deliver on key strategic projects in the way the council was committed to and which it was required to if it was to meet its obligations under the Regional Economic Strategy, the Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Area Agreement targets. This would obviously mean a shift in focus from that in the Opportunity Peterborough business plan and the way in which the resources that Opportunity Peterborough managed on the Council's behalf were used. He therefore looked to the Chief Executive of Opportunity Peterborough for assurances that they would be working with the council to deliver, with the emphasis very firmly on actual delivery on the ground.

Therefore, subject to the Opportunity Peterborough business plan being kept closely under regular review and subject to Opportunity Peterborough working more closely with the Council to facilitate and implement the Council's vision for the city,

**CABINET RESOLVED TO:**

1. Endorse the 2009-12 draft Business Plan of Opportunity Peterborough
2. Note that agreement of funding of specific projects from that plan, if required, will be subject to the Council's normal decision-making process

**REASONS**

It was required that the City Council and the other two founding partners consider and agree to the draft Business Plan. Inevitably, the specific schemes for implementation would evolve during the course of the 3 year plan period and it was therefore appropriate that funding of these was approved by the Council through its normal decision-making processes.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- (a) Suggest modifications to the Plan - the draft Business Plan had been the subject of discussions and modifications by the Partners.
- (b) Not approve the draft Business Plan - this would have limited the operation of the Urban Regeneration Company.

## **6.2 East of England Regional Spatial Strategy Review: Call for Section 4(4) Advice and 5(5) Advice**

Cabinet had been asked to approve the City Council's advice to the East of England Regional Assembly on the forthcoming review of the Regional Spatial Strategy, and in compliance with sections 4(4) and 5(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The review had been initiated by the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA), who were required by section 4 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to seek advice from strategic planning authorities (including Peterborough City Council) at the outset. The main requirement of the call for advice was to test a range of housing growth scenarios as required by Government, and to test the employment range provided through EERA and East of England Development Agency (EEDA). Section 4(4) authorities were required to assess the implications of achieving the growth implied by four scenarios.

Peterborough had continued to aspire to grow to address housing need and affordability and to realise the potential of its strategic location. It was clear that the economic downturn was leading to a decline in housing delivery rates both regionally and nationally. There was uncertainty regarding the duration of the economic downturn and the implications on Peterborough, but it was understood that there would be a decline in local delivery rates in the short to medium term.

Peterborough therefore proposed a scenario of approximately 30,000 dwellings 2007-2031. This allowed for an initial decline in house building targets for approximately four years, followed by a gradual increase. As policy intervention and strategic mechanisms became effective, the RSS Residual annual average delivery figure of 1440 would be reached.

Under section 5(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, PCC was required as a strategic planning authority to provide advice to EERA on whether Peterborough should be considered as a sub-region with sub-regional policies in the RSS (East of England Plan).

Studies had identified a coherent and functional sub-region around Peterborough and a boundary had been identified. A study by Fordham Research (2008) on the Housing Market had also confirmed a sub-region based around Peterborough. Specific policies were required to tackle issues in the sub-region. However effective implementation was hampered by the sub-region spanning across the regional boundary, and there being no functioning arrangement to manage delivery. In order to tackle these issues it was proposed that a sub-regional body should be pursued as a mechanism to encourage effective cross boundary working.

### **CABINET RESOLVED TO:**

1. Approve the advice to the Regional Planning Body (set out in annexes 1 and 2 of the report) on the forthcoming review of the East of England Regional Spatial Strategy.
2. Agree to pursue discussions with other local authorities on the establishment of a sub-regional grouping or body to stimulate sub-regional growth and regeneration.
3. Agree to pursue discussions with specialist and local groups on the potential opportunities that arise from growth and regeneration.

### **REASONS**

The provision of advice was a statutory requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

The alternative option was not to provide EERA with advice. This was rejected because the Council would not be fulfilling its statutory requirement.

## **7. MONITORING ITEMS**

### **7.1 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2007/2008**

Cabinet received the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter for 2007/2008, prepared jointly by its external auditors PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and the Audit Commission Relationship Manager and reviewing the Council's arrangements and progress in relation to the Audit of the Accounts and the Use of Resources.

Members asked whether the Audit Commission had taken account of the enormous amount of project work being undertaken around the growth agenda compared to more "static" authorities. As an authority with a larger agenda it was therefore doing more with limited resources. Officers from the Audit Commission present at the meeting gave assurances that the council scored well in its Corporate Assessment and that the Commission recognised that the capacity of the authority was being used to best effect. The direction of travel had been looked at in comparison to other authorities, and also in relation to Peterborough's own priorities. Looking forward it was recognised that Peterborough recognised the challenges it faced and had plans and resources in place to deliver its agenda.

**CABINET RESOLVED TO:**

Approve the Audit and Inspection Letter 2007 / 2008.

#### **REASONS**

The Council was required to consider the statutory Audit and Inspection Letter and make appropriate arrangements in response to recommendations.

#### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

The External Auditor may have taken on board responses received prior to its formal publication, though he had a duty to produce and arrange for the publication of the Annual Audit Letter as soon as reasonably practical. No specific alternative options were submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

### **7.2 Performance Monitoring Report – Quarter 3 – 2008-2009**

The report provided information on the council's performance between 1 October 2008 and 31 December 2008 against the following three key areas:

- Corporate Plan
- Local Area Agreement (LAA)
- National Indicator Set

Good progress had been made within a number of key areas of delivery with 59 (49%) indicators on track to achieve targets. Monitoring and reporting of performance continued to be strengthened and challenged through monthly reporting to ensure services remained on track for delivery.

Nineteen indicators showed negative performance and where indicators had under-performed over a period, further investigation and detailed analysis had been undertaken to identify root and cause. Where required, action plans had been revised to ensure performance could be brought back on track.

Members welcomed the new format of the report which was felt to be more manageable. It was suggested that where indicators were showing amber status some text could be included to show what action was being taken to make improvements. The red status of growth was felt to be disappointing and it was recognised as important that discussion should take place to help to understand the reasons behind this.

## CABINET **RESOLVED** TO:

Note that:

- (i) the performance of Corporate Plan and Local Area Agreement priorities was improving against the targets set.
- (ii) where areas of concern has been identified, actions were in place or further review and analysis was being undertaken to put them in place to bring performance back on track.

## **REASONS**

Failure to monitor performance would mean that Cabinet would not be able to ensure that the council achieved its intended outcomes.

## **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

The report was presented for monitoring purposes.

### **7.3 Outcome of Petitions**

CABINET **RESOLVED** to note the action taken in respect of the following petition presented to full Council:

#### **PETITION – PROVISION OF A NEW RECREATIONAL AREA FOR EXTREME SPORTS**

This petition had been presented to Council by Councillor Benton and requested the City Council's support by investing in the building of a new recreational area for extreme sports.

The Council's Head of Culture had responded and advised as follows:

"Thank you for enclosing background information which I have read with interest. I am aware that the closure of **Y2SK8** by the owners has created a deficiency for extreme sports in the city. I am very sympathetic to your position.

The Council has identified the need for good quality indoor provision for both traditional and extreme sport, and consequently incorporated this into its Sports Strategy (2009-14). The strategy recognises the importance of sport and active recreation and the positive impact it has on people's lives which you have articulated in your background information. The Council is committed to improving its sports provision further and is currently investigating ways that this can be achieved.

The Council recognises that it needs to balance provision of facilities for traditional sports with others, such as extreme sports. As part of its plan, the Council is working closely with Opportunity Peterborough to explore the feasibility of a flagship city centre sports facility, which could bring together a number of sports, including an area for extreme sports. This however is likely to take a number of years to come to fruition.

With respect to outdoor skate parks, the Council has invested significant resources in recent years to improving localised provision. These are designed for universal use and I appreciate they do not provide enough challenge for competent and advanced skaters. I would be happy to facilitate a meeting with you and colleagues to explore ways in which these areas can be further enhanced."

## **REASONS**

Standing Orders required that Council receive a report about the action taken on petitions. As the petition presented in this report had been dealt with by Cabinet Members or officers it was appropriate for the action to be reported in this way so that it would be presented in the Executive's report to Council.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

The report was presented for monitoring purposes.

*Meeting closed at 11.40 p.m.*

*Chair.....*

*Date.....*