

MINUTES OF CABINET MEETING HELD 20 MARCH 2017

PRESENT:

Cabinet Members: Councillor Holdich (Chair), Councillor Elsey, Councillor Goodwin, Councillor Hiller, Councillor Seaton, Councillor Smith, and Councillor Walsh

Cabinet Advisors: Councillor Casey and Councillor Stokes

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lamb, and Councillor Fitzgerald.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETINGS HELD ON 27 FEBRUARY 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. PETITIONS PRESENTED TO CABINET

There were no petitions presented to Cabinet.

STRATEGIC DECISIONS

Cabinet agreed to amend the order of the agenda,

5. REVIEW OF EMERGENCY STOPPING PROVISION FOR GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS WITHIN PETERBOROUGH

Cabinet received a report in relation to a review of emergency stopping provision for gypsies and travellers within Peterborough.

The purpose of the report was to consider the recommendations made by the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee following a cross party task and finish group review regarding provision of emergency stopping places for Gypsies and Travellers.

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment Capital introduced the report and invited the representatives from the task and finish group to address the Cabinet. The task and finish group representatives advised that there was a recognised problem with unauthorised encampments. Business had spent significant money protecting their properties. The group had considered the options in depth, however the level of land required to provide emergency stopping provision was not available. It was therefore suggested that this land be sought from within the Peterborough area.

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

- There was strict criteria in place for land to be used as an Emergency Stopping Place, part of which was to consider the impact of the use of the land on the surrounding area;
- The Council could draft their own criteria, for example, in relation to land in the vicinity of a school;
- Work has recently been undertaken with the police with the commencement of the Prevention and Enforcement Service (PES). A draft protocol had been agreed in relation to the use of Section 51 and 52 notices. These would not always be used, but would be when appropriate;
- In the time the PES had been running, the notices had been used six times and officers were confident the new protocol would work well;
- Questions were raised in relation to the management of ESPs and ensuring they did not become permanent sites. The Cabinet were advised that a Section 77 notice would be issued to ensure that groups were moved on. This process would also be undertaken if groups were inhabiting community land;
- The Local Plan identified that there was no need to increase ESP or Gypsy and Traveller provision, however the Working Group considered that four ESP sites would be appropriate;
- It was suggested that the situation would be managed to ensure that groups were not attracted to the ESP's. Payment would be required, and the sites would need to be left in decent condition;
- Alongside the recommendations, officers would look to work more closely with local businesses;
- It was commented that the situation needed to be carefully managed to ensure that any ESP sites did not become permanent sites in the eyes of residents;
- It was noted that no sites had been identified and, as such, no comprehensive answer was available.

Cabinet considered the report and recommendations to try to alleviate any future issues caused by, and increases in, unauthorised encampments, and **RESOLVED** as follows:

- 1) That the Council converts the existing emergency stopping place in Dogsthorpe to a temporary stopping place by seeking full planning consent to enable the site to be used more than the current 28 days per year. The site will require some capital investment to bring it up to a reasonable standard.

That the site, with its extended usage, be trialled for a least 12 months before any other locations are identified to determine its effectiveness, to make particular reference to the use of the site by 2 or more families.

That this site is effectively managed and controlled to prevent abuse, including capturing occupant details, charging a nightly rate, and ensuring relevant legal processes to move occupants on after a pre-agreed period are followed.

- 2) To distribute a flow chart to all Councillors which details the process of dealing with unauthorised encampments from assessment to removal, and that the flow chart describes the new approach to Gypsy and Traveller management being finalised with the Prevention and Enforcement Service between the Council and the police.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

To assist with the moving on of authorised encampments limiting the impact unauthorised encampments have on local communities.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

A range of alternative options were considered by the task and finish group, although the conclusion of that was that Temporary Stopping Places provided the best arrangements for Peterborough.

Doing nothing was not considered an option, due to the ongoing costs and impact unauthorised encampments could have on local communities in Peterborough.

6. MANAGEMENT OF ROUGH SLEEPERS REVIEW

Cabinet received a report in relation to a management of rough sleepers review.

The purpose of the report was to consider the recommendations approved by the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee from a cross party review of the management of rough sleepers.

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment Capital introduced the report and invited the representatives from the task and finish group to address the Cabinet. The task and finish group representatives advised that the current housing needs team was effective, however demand on the service remained high, as it did with the rest of the country. It was considered that the team required additional help to meet this demand.

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

- No correlation between levels of rough sleeping and affordable housing was immediately apparent;
- It was suggested that the loss of short-term tenancies had a major impact on the levels of homelessness in the area;
- Attention was drawn to recent suggestion that the Government would be expanding the 'housing first' model;
- It was noted that Peterborough did have a number of entrenched rough sleepers, which an open model would assist with;
- Comment was made that clarity was required that the services provided were only for individuals with a local connection. Other individuals would be offered support to reconnect with services in their home area;
- Questions were raised over the emergency provisions in place, and it was confirmed that the recommendation in the report expanding upon the provisions already in place. The additional actions would ensure that officers engaged with hard to reach rough sleepers;
- Officers worked closely with volunteer groups, some of which provided shelter in winter, food, or taxi services. Referrals often come from these groups, so partnership work was considered important;
- It was noted that day centres had been in place in the past and had created issues of anti-social behaviour.
- The Cabinet was advised that the recommendations did not refer to a day centre, but an outreach service centre, which would be focused on progressing the journey of its users;
- The current outreach service worked closely with MIND and others to ensure that chronically excluded adults were catered for within the system;
- It was acknowledged that gaps were present in the service, mainly around drug and alcohol service provision;
- Referrals to the service were accepted in any form, however an online tool was running specifically for such referrals. Work was also being done to expand the use of the 'My Peterborough' app to include referrals to this service; and
- It was noted that rough sleeping and homelessness were two very different things and often there were specific reason for people sleeping rough.

Cabinet considered the report and recommendations from the cross party task and finish group formed to review the management of rough sleepers, and **RESOLVED** as follows:

- 1) That a strategic group be set up which meets regularly in order to identify duplication and gaps in current provision for rough sleepers and which includes representation from partner agencies including from the faith and voluntary sector. This group will develop a Rough Sleeper Strategy to be developed and approved by Council to support the work of officers and the wider partnership arrangements, and will monitor and respond to fluctuations in the delivery of the council's homelessness policy.
- 2) The creation of a multi-agency task and targeting group to work on a long-term plan to ensure that individual rough sleepers are supported to move away from a street-based lifestyle.
- 3) That the staff resource dedicated to supporting rough sleepers is increased beyond the current single officer by one full time additional officer to provide greater resilience and capacity, including provision for weekend outreach work in addition to the existing Monday to Friday service, subject to the availability of funding.
- 4) That, with a growing rough sleeping population, the availability of suitable all year round night shelter accommodation is maintained, or increased if demand increases, to ensure that those most vulnerable are able to get some shelter especially during severe weather conditions.
- 5) That night shelter accommodation is identified for rough sleepers with dogs where the rough sleeper would not be willing to allow the council to place the dog into kennels as is current practice, subject to the availability of funding

Additionally, work with organisations in the voluntary sector to develop pet-sitting or other similar projects to enable a rough sleeper with a dog to access services.

- 6) That consideration be given to establishing formal daytime drop-in advice and advocacy services for rough sleepers, in partnership with the voluntary and faith sectors, focussed on offering advice and guidance as well as case management for service users, with the caveat that this is not a daytime shelter.
- 7) That consideration be given to a flexible approach to activating severe weather emergency provision (SWEPE), taking into account the good practice guidelines provided by Homeless Link.
- 8) That an urgent solution is found to the deficit of on-street drugs and alcohol support through renegotiating the existing contract the council holds with the provider.
- 9) That a focussed and ongoing communications campaign is undertaken to encourage the public to report rough sleeping to the council so that the most appropriate support can be provided.
- 10) To design and print business card sized information cards for rough sleepers with contact details for rough sleeper touch points and durable conveniently sized hand-outs, which can be personalised with key advice and action plans for rough sleepers to support them to leave the streets.
- 11) That, following a recent announcement from Government about potential support to roll out the Housing First model, further work is carried out to understand the

detail behind this announcement with a view to extending local provision by at least two further beds.

12) That the current Chronically Excluded Adults (CEA) project which provides personalised support to rough sleepers and others with the most complex needs be mainstreamed into normal council business from 1 August 2017, the point at which existing grant funding ceases, subject to the availability of funding.

13) That the relationship between affordable housing and rough sleeping be further explored. If it is found that there is a direct correlation between volumes of rough sleeping and availability of affordable housing, that a full report is prepared for Cabinet that explains this connection to enable Cabinet to consider the consequences in the Local Plan.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The recommendations contained in the report were as a result of a cross party task and finish group.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

A wide range of options were considered as part of the work the task and finish group undertook, and the final recommendations represented the most appropriate for Peterborough.

7. ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND ACTION PLANS (EAPS)

Cabinet received a report in relation to the Environment Policy and Action Plans (EAPs) which had been prepared to outline how the city intended to deliver against the 'Creating the UK's Environment Capital' strategic priority.

The purpose of the report was to seek support for the EAPs by Cabinet and, if such support is forthcoming, for Cabinet to recommend the EAPs to Council for adoption.

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment Capital introduced the report and noted that further exploration was being made into the terminology used. It was believe to be important to demonstrate commitment to the reduction in the City's environmental impact. The plans had been reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee, whose comments were included within the report.

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

- The format of the plans and the themes included were similar to those previously in place;
- It was noted that schools had a particularly high percentage of non-recycled waste. Further work was in progress to properly understand this data;
- It was suggested that further joined up work could be undertaken between environment and education officers;
- Air quality was discussed, and it advised that Peterborough did not have any air quality exceedance zones. Work was to be undertaken, however, on working with taxi companies and in relation to idling engines outside of schools;
- The targets around healthy living had come from Vivacity's strategic vision, and were not new;
- The impact of waste ICT equipment was questioned, which was currently securely disposed of, reused, and provided from sustainable sources;
- Engagement was being undertaken with other Council buildings, including Serpentine Green;
- A query was raised in relation to local restaurants using local sourced produce;

- It was noted that while schools may have travel plans, it was difficult to enforce these plans.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to recommend the 'Environment Action Plan: City-Wide' and 'Environment Action Plan: Peterborough City Council' documents to Council for adoption.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Cabinet was recommended to approve the Environment Action Plans. This was because the plans would help deliver the city's Environment Capital priority by providing clear strategic direction for the priority whilst creating a set of targets with which the progress of this priority would be measured.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The alternative option of not producing a plan would mean that there would be no clear vision and targets associated with the Environment Capital priority making progress difficult to monitor and the effective allocation of resources difficult. Therefore the alternative option of not producing the Environment Action Plans was rejected.

8. THE DRAFT PETERBOROUGH HOUSING STRATEGY 2016 TO 2021

Cabinet received a report following recent changes to Government's policy and procedures towards housing, the end of the current Peterborough Housing Strategy 2011 to 2015, and the conclusion of the recent public consultation on the draft version of the Housing Strategy.

The purpose of the report was to seek support from Cabinet for the Peterborough Housing Strategy 2016 to 2021 and for Cabinet to recommend its adoption by Council.

The Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, and Housing Development introduced the report and advised that the Strategy was a major Council policy, which set out the Council's priorities for a range of matters. The draft Strategy was approved for consultation last year, and all stakeholders had had the opportunity to influence its contents. A number of minor amendments had been included with the supplementary report.

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

- It was not known yet how the Combined Authority would impact upon this Strategy;
- The Strategy would be submitted to Full Council for approval in its final completed form;
- Further work was needed in relation to the 'disabled homes' offer;
- A request was made for further options for the management and control of 'Houses of Multiple Occupancy'.
- It was advised that the work of the Selective Licensing programme would help the Council understand what housing stock was available in the area. The provision of 'disabled homes' was covered by the Local Plan, but was an important part of the Strategy.
- It was to be proposed in the new Local Plan that all properties be built to an adaptable standard for a 'Lifetime' home.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to support the Peterborough Housing Strategy as attached at Appendix A, incorporating the amendments set out in the supplementary report, and agreed to recommend it to Council for adoption.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The stated lifespan of the existing Peterborough Housing Strategy was from 2011 to 2015. Plans to renew the Strategy were delayed to await the outcome of the Housing and Planning Act 2016. The major anticipated announcements had now been made by Government, so the timing to publish our own local housing strategy was very timely.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

A 'do nothing' option (where no new Housing Strategy was developed and the existing Housing Strategy was not updated) was considered. However such an approach would mean that Peterborough would have an out of date Strategy which did not reflect the significant changes to national housing and welfare policy and how we as a Council plan to respond to them. A refresh of the Strategy was necessary to ensure that we had a fit for purpose Housing Strategy.

Chairman
10.00am – 11:58am

This page is intentionally left blank