

**MINUTES OF THE SHAREHOLDER CABINET COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT 10:00PM ON  
MONDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2022  
ENGINE SHED, SAND MARTIN HOUSE**

**Members Present:** Councillors Allen (Chair), Councillor Coles, Councillor Ayres, Councillor Cereste, Councillor Walsh

**19. Apologies for Absence**

No apologies for absence were received.

**20. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received

**21. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 15 December 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2021 were noted as a true and accurate record.

**22. Opportunity Peterborough**

The Shareholder Cabinet Committee received a report in relation to Opportunity Peterborough.

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on the activities and achievements of Opportunity Peterborough, as well as on the company's plans for the financial year 2022/23.

Mr Tom Hennessey, Opportunity Peterborough Chief Executive, addressed the Shareholder Cabinet Committee and outlined the contents of the report.

Councillor Cereste joined the meeting during Mr Hennessey's address.

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

- The skills service had been wholly funding by Local Enterprise Partnership and then the Combined Authority. In 2020 the CA ran a competition for a wider delivery of services contract, which included the skills services. Opportunity Peterborough were unsuccessful in their bid.
- The proportion of staff that had stayed with Opportunity Peterborough in relation to secondary school work had been made redundant following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the service.
- Members were advised that there was still a strand of school engagement within Opportunity Peterborough's growth work, which also included supporting companies to understand their skills development strategies.
- Members noted the opportunities arising in the city around tourism and hotel provision, and were advised that further investors were engaging with

- Opportunity Peterborough in relation to the Station Quarter and North Westgate.
- Some business, it was acknowledged, would be impacted by anticipated increases in the cost of living, particularly around energy and supply chains.
- Opportunity Peterborough would not be leading on work in relation to Adult Social Care, but would be working with the East Anglian Productivity Forum. The details of this were not finalised yet, and Members would be kept up to date of developments.
- Members considered that it would be opportune for Peterborough to establish a destination venue in order to bring a higher footfall to the city.
- Further discussion was had in relation to developing the Flag Fen offer and it was suggested that Opportunity Peterborough could approach nationwide developers such as Merlin Entertainment to pursue this.
- Members noted that popularity of the Bond Holder Network dinners prior to the pandemic and encouraged work to bring this back, including that of liking this to Visit Peterborough and the Smart Manufacturing Network members.
- It was considered that a city of Peterborough's scale needed its own economic development function and that Opportunity Peterborough was in place for the long term.
- Members suggested that it would be beneficial, in light of Opportunity Peterborough taking on responsibility for the Visit Peterborough website, that this link in with the visitor desk in the Town Hall in some form.
- It was further noted that Peterborough was preparing a bid to host the headquarters of Great British Railways.

The Shareholder Cabinet Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the achievements and impact of Opportunity Peterborough with regards to support for the local economy and jobs creation, as well as plans for the financial year 2022/23.

## **REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

It was believed that, with the continued support of the Council, Opportunity Peterborough could make Peterborough a better place to work, to invest and do business, to visit and enjoy, and above all, to call home.

Opportunity Peterborough's work programme had been mapped against Peterborough City Council priorities to ensure that what it was providing aligned with what mattered most to the Council and the communities it serves.

By supporting the delivery of these priorities it was believed that Opportunity Peterborough could also reduce demand on the Council's services thereby having a positive budgetary impact, as well as increasing the Council's income via increased business rates receipts.

## **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

This report was predominantly for information. The alternative to supporting Opportunity Peterborough's plans was to not support Opportunity Peterborough's work and progress to date.

This was been rejected on the basis that Opportunity Peterborough's work programme closely aligned with, and added value to, the Council's own priorities and provided excellent value for money as a means of meeting these priorities.

## **23. Medesham Homes Annual Review**

The Shareholder Cabinet Committee received a report in relation to the annual review of Medesham Homes.

The purpose of this report was to provide a brief annual review of Medesham Homes' activities over the last year and set the scene for the year ahead. This would be shaped by the review of the Council's housing service in conjunction with CIPFA, the parallel but linked review of the companies with which the Council had a relationship, and the potential development of a new Housing Strategy for the city. These workstreams formed part of the Council's financial sustainability programme, and were in response to the recent Government publication of its external assurance review.

Michael Kelleher, Service Director for Place and Economy, addressed the Shareholder Cabinet Committee and advised that Medesham Homes had progress steadily with its work over the past year, including completion on Schemes in Belle Vue, Midland Road, and Crowland Road. Two further schemes were in the pipeline, to provide up to 160 to 180 additional units for 2022/23. This included schemes in Bretton Court and London Road. It was advised that the Council was currently reviewing its housing services and companies alongside CIPFA, and was developing a new housing strategy. Therefore, it felt appropriate to review arrangements with Medesham Homes at the same time.

Claire Higgins and Gary Clarke, Medesham Homes, addressed the Shareholder Cabinet Committee and advised that it was felt an opportunity was being missed with Medesham Homes, which could provide a much greater service, extending the work of the partnership. The review of the Housing Service was greatly anticipated so that progress could be made on delivering housing in the city.

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

- It was noted that there had been a number of delays with the Bretton Court scheme, particularly in relation to input from highways services.
- It was confirmed that the London Road scheme related to the gravel car park site, next to the football ground. Members were advised of an ongoing issue at this site in relation to the non-adopted road.
- Members further noted frustrations within Medesham Homes regarding the delay around the London Road scheme.
- Members raised concerns about the viability of the retail units included within the Bretton Court scheme in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, however officers reassured that at least three retail tenants were keen to stay on at the location.
- The Committee noted comments of those from Medesham Homes, who considered that the long delay in developments was hindering the work of the organisation.
- Members were advised by Council officers that the addressing the concerns raised was a key priority in order to enable development in the city.

The Shareholder Cabinet Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the contents of this report.
2. Specifically note the review of companies that the Council was involved with, as part of the overall financial sustainability programme.
3. Reinforce the Council's commitment to Medesham Homes and work with renewed vigour to provide outcomes.

## **REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

Medesham Homes was a unique partnership between the Council and the largest residential social landlord in the area, Cross Keys Homes. It had delivered a significant number of purely affordable rental homes already and had a potential pipeline that could continue this work well over the coming period. These new homes would be a substantial help in addressing the city's need for housing of this type.

#### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

There were no alternative options considered.

#### **24. Shareholder Cabinet Committee Work Programme**

The Shareholder Cabinet Committee received the Shareholder Cabinet Committee work programme for the 2021/2022 municipal year.

The Shareholder Cabinet Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the latest version of the work programme.

Chairman  
10:00am – 11:19am  
28 February 2022