

**MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING
HELD AT 10:00AM, ON
TUESDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2022
BOURGES/MIERSEN ROOM, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Cabinet Members Present: Councillor Fitzgerald (Chair), Councillor Steve Allen (Vice-Chair), Councillor Ayres, Councillor Coles, Councillor Howard, Councillor Simons

Cabinet Advisor Present: Councillor Jackie Allen, Councillor Bisby, Councillor Hussain, Councillor Moyo, Councillor Gul Nawaz, Councillor Sainsbury

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence received from Councillor Cereste.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Ayres declared an interest in item 7 Asset Disposal and Review Plan by virtue of having an interest in one of the properties that acted as a charity and sat on the board that made financial decisions.

25. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETINGS HELD ON 11 JULY 2022

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 11 July 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

STRATEGIC DECISIONS

26. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND – EXTENSION – ROUND 3

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the Household Support Fund – Extension – Round 3.

The purpose of this report was to provide brief information about the present organisation and performance of Household Support Fund (HSF) 2, and information on the proposed allocation of the next round of HSF (round 3). Cabinet was asked to provide views on the proposed plan for spend and the focus of the fund, and to endorse the continued development of the delivery model of household support fund.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and the University stated that the support given by the Government had helped a number of residents and it was pleasing to see that this support was continuing. The report outlined the main proposals and included information on where the money was due to be spent. A holiday voucher scheme was to continue along with support for pensioners, which had been difficult to disseminate. A vulnerable household scheme was also available and residents were encouraged to apply for this scheme. Assistance was to be provided by officers from Cambridgeshire County Council to ensure as much support as possible was provided in the winter months.

The Head of Think Communities and Service Director Education outlined the key points included within the report. It was expected that the fund would be administered in a similar vein to the previous schemes. There was to be additional guidance produced which would also focus on those not eligible for the schemes and how they could get help. One key difference was the removal on the mandatory ring fence to allow the funding to be used in a more flexible way. The holiday voucher scheme had grown since it was first introduced. It was essential that the Council continued to provide assistance to families especially with the Christmas period approaching.

Cabinet Members debated the report and in summary responses to questions raised included:

- With regards to the pensioner element of funding this had seen a rapid uptake since letters had been sent out to those most in need. Age UK had been instrumental in assisting the Council and providing support to a wider group of pensioners. The overall impact of the scheme had been positive.
- Elements had been added to the scheme to ensure that it was being delivered accurately. The Government had circulated information on what local authorities were able to use the funding for. Local management data was always audited to ensure that processes and procedures were followed correctly.
- Members were informed that the ring-fenced amount was no longer mandated by Government. The funds were able to be used in a more flexible way. The Council was therefore able to more realistic in terms of delivering the funding to those who most needed it.
- The governance of the scheme had been run past the Safer Peterborough Partnership. There had been a local summit on the cost of living crisis, which had different elements to those when the Covid fund was in place.
- There were several local trusted community groups who needed to work with local communities to help get support and food packages to those who most needed it. The Safer Peterborough Partnership was being used as an escalation support group if issues within communities had been identified.
- Members were informed that there had been a 30% increase in the update of free school meals. New information was being sent out to try and capture the reality of the situation and to try and support as many families as possible. There had been nearly 20,000 emails received from families over the challenges they faced with the cost of living crisis.
- Families could contact the Council if they needed support. For example, there were organisations that re-fitted school uniforms so that they could be used by children who needed school uniforms.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:

1. Approve the overall approach to the delivery of the Household Support Fund extension including the spend proportions and areas of focus.
2. Delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place and Economy, in consultation with the Cabinet Members listed above, to finalise the detailed arrangements for all aspects of the scheme, upon receipt of the final grant allocation from Government

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The grant was flexible, and we have targeted it at the areas that we consider to be the greatest need.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

A number of options for delivery were explored:

Maintain the existing delivery and ring-fencing of amounts focusing on pensioners and families with children. As stated in the report the guidance asks us to focus on a wider range of households as well as those not eligible for other support and therefore this option was discounted.

Change our arrangements with Age UK and Citizens Advice Peterborough and bring all the operations of the Household Support Fund in-house. Significant work has been undertaken to set up and start to make an impact through Citizens Advice Peterborough and Age UK. The value which is added through these working relationships has meant that claimants have been able to receive wider support from those agencies which have expertise in dealing with those cohorts. The option to deliver all support in-house has therefore been discounted.

Consider delivering all the funding through the School Holiday Voucher Scheme, recognising the efficiency of disseminating through the allocation of vouchers to those eligible for free school meals. This option would not meet either the guidance or the ethos of reaching out to a wider section of our population. Therefore, this option was discounted.

27. PETERBOROUGH YOUTH ZONE

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the Peterborough Youth Zone.

The purpose of this report was to set out the opportunity to bid for the Department of Culture Media and Sport, Youth Investment Fund Phase 2, partnering with "OnSide" (a national charity) to build and run a Youth Zone in Peterborough. Cabinet decision is required to support the proposed Youth Zone in principle, the submission of a bid and to agree to the proposed next steps as set out in the recommendations which will allow officers to undertake additional work necessary in this respect.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communications, Culture and Communities explained that the Council was to explore in principle a Peterborough Youth Zone. Further work would then set out an opportunity to bid for funding in phase two to build and run a youth zone. The submission of the bid allowed officers to undertake the necessary work and feasibility of the scheme. It was important to reassure Councillors of the value of a youth zone and the wide range of benefits it would have for both the city and for young people. There were examples of the scheme working across the country and some of the benefits at other sites included hot meals for £1, which many young people would find useful.

Cabinet Members debated the report and in summary responses to questions raised included:

- It was important that any youth zone was a benefit for all young people with the Peterborough City Council boundaries. It was hoped that the youth zone would bring more external funding into the city.
- Each youth zone operated in its own right and was free to choose when they opened and for how long. It would depend on the activities and need of the young people that would determine its opening times.

- There was an element of risk involved with investing £250k at this stage, however it was vital in order to look at moving the project forward. In terms of modelling the investment, it was sustainable in terms of revenue. This was a great opportunity to leverage transformation across the city and bring in funding for the city.
- This was a relatively small investment to be made at the current time, some of the funds were earmarked to be taken out of the prosperity funds pot. This would make a difference to young people across the city and lead to more investment opportunities for the Council.
- The next round of bidding started in November, it would be at this stage that potential sites would be identified. Officers would look at the potential of any sites and how they could be generated to include a youth zone.
- Work had already been undertaken to talk to companies and organisations across the Country to review how they ran youth zones. Peterborough was a growing city and businesses would want to align themselves to local youth groups which was what Peterborough needed in these times.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:

1. Support the principle of developing a Youth Zone for Peterborough.
2. Support a bid to Youth Investment Fund (phase 2) in partnership with OnSide Charity.
3. Delegate the final wording and sign off of a letter of intent, draft Heads of Terms for a lease and contract and any conditions required by the Council to the Director of Resources and Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Property and Resources.
4. Note that a further report will be required should the project proceed to agree to the selected site and its disposal under a lease.
5. Agree that in order to meet the project delivery and spend timescale required by DCMS the initial project development work including site investigations continues at risk to RIBA 2 at a cost of up to £250k pending the outcome of the bid submission likely to be mid-December 2022.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The reasons for the recommendations in this report are to allow for continued work to be undertaken to work toward the submission of a Youth Investment Fund Phase 2 bid, in partnership with OnSide charity.

To consider the opportunity options and allow for delegated authority to Director of Resources and Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Cabinet member for property and resources to manage the risk and optimise the success of any bid made.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The alternative options were outlined in section 4.6 of the report.

28. ASSET DISPOSAL AND REVIEW PLAN

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the asset disposal and review plan.

The purpose of this report was to recommend the Asset Disposal and review Plan to support the Council's Budget Strategy and Capital Strategy. The report identifies assets which the Council can release for sale over the period 2022-2025.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Governance outlined that the Council had started to make progress in formulating an asset disposal and review plan. The budget from 2023 onwards would include the assets plan.

Cabinet Members debated the report and in summary responses to questions raised included:

- Each asset would need to be reviewed before being sold. This was to ensure that all options were looked at and maximised before a decision was made.
- It was confirmed that Ward Councillors would be consulted before any assets in their ward were sold.
- The NHS had put the lease on the City Clinic on the market and were looking at what the next options were. There needed to be a sense of realism over what assets needed to be sold.
- Officers were looking at all solutions for the Chauffers Cottage. The asset disposal plan and review would assist officers at looking at potential solutions.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** (5 for, 1 abstention (Cllr Ayres)) to:

1. Agree to the disposal plan included in this report including the series of reviews aims at rationalising Council assets over time.
2. Agree to that a new Asset Management Plan will be prepared for inclusion in the Council's Budget Strategy in February 2023, along with a Disposals and Acquisitions Policy.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Council needs to identify assets for disposal to support its budget position.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The Council would always need to review and dispose of assets as its financial or operational needs change. It is not possible in the current circumstances to do nothing and so that as an option has not been considered. The alternative of releasing assets very quickly to achieve the highest level of receipts early has not proved necessary. The phased approach to achieving the level of receipts required to balance the Council's budget is considered the optimum route for the Council at this stage. The Asset Management Plan which will be published with the budget in February 2023 will identify a longer-term approach to the Council's asset planning.

29. CLOSURE OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP AND THE CYCLING AND WALKING WORKING GROUP

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the closing of the Climate Change Working Group and the Cycling and Walking Working Group.

The purpose of this report was to outline that the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee had recently been established. This report sought support to close the Climate Change Working Group, to ensure duplication does not occur. The report also sought support to close the Cycling and Walking Working Group as the Climate

Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee agreed the formation of a time-limited cross-party Cycling and Walking Scrutiny Task and Finish Group. The Task and Finish Group would now aid the development of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan as well as a rural cycling strategy. Closure of the Cycling and Walking Working Group would ensure that duplication of work does not occur.

Cabinet Members debated the report and in summary responses to questions raised included:

- The Combined Authority had helped the Peterborough with the creation of some cycling and walking routes. There was also funding from central government that officers were looking at.
- There was a submission deadline in two weeks that looked at supporting local authorities. Officers were looking at this bid and how this would be part of the overall process in increasing routes.
- Grants were sent to the Combined Authority from central government. In turn the Combined Authority passed this funding through to the Council, this was to then be used to maintain the current routes in the city.
- The working group and task and finish group had been helpful in formulating the climate change action plan. It had also helped with the tree planting policy and the new local transport and connectivity plan.
- The work of the groups had now transferred over to the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee. The committee would look at developing a consultation plan along with reviewing the Councils energy plan.
- Cycling rates had reduced in the past few years, mainly as a result of the pandemic and people working from home. Officers were working on plans to try and increase cycling rates across the city, including changing behaviours to encourage more cycling.
- The Council was committed to active travel, this included redeveloping the station quarter and creating a further bridge. In addition, statistics had shown that there were 15,000 car movements a day over Crescent Bridge compared with 221 bike movements.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:

1. Agree to close the Climate Change Working Group
2. Agree to close the Cycling and Walking Working Group

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

It was recommended that the Climate Change Working Group close as the function would now be covered by the newly established Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee. It was recommended that the Cycling and Walking Working Group close, as the function would now be covered by the newly established Cycling and Walking Task and Finish Group.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The alternative option was to not cease the Climate Change Working Group, however this was rejected as this would lead to duplication between the working group and scrutiny committee.

The alternative option was not to cease the Cycling and Walking Working Group. The time-limited Task and Finish group was resolved to be the most appropriate

mechanism to discuss the LCWIP and rural cycling strategy by the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee. Beyond these projects, there are no future programme of projects that will require input from a working group and so it is proposed that Cabinet close the Cycling and Walking Working Group.

30. BUDGET CONTROL REPORT JUNE 2022

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the Budget Control Report June 2022.

The purpose of this report was to provide Cabinet with the forecast outturn for 2022/23 as at June 2022 budgetary control position.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Governance stated that at the current time there was a net overspend of around £0.2 million. There was good news however in terms of Council Tax and Business Rates collections.

Cabinet Members debated the report and in summary responses to questions raised included:

- Business support was provided by SERCO, there were plans in place to look at how this could be delivered differently.
- A number of Councils had challenged the Government in terms of trying to get grant money back, this was still something that needed to be looked at.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note:

1. The budgetary control position for 2022/23 at 30 June is a forecast overspend of £0.2m position.
2. The key variance analysis and explanations are contained in section 5 and Appendix A.
3. The Council's performance with respect to Business Rates (NNDR) and Council Tax Collection, as outlined within Appendix B
4. The Council's capital financial performance as outlined in Appendix C.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to approve:

5. Capital Budget virements as outlined in Appendix C, these include:
 - a. £0.105m – The Market
 - b. £0.750m- Green Wheel Project

31. OUTCOME OF PETITIONS

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the outcome of petitions.

The purpose of this report was to update Cabinet on the progress being made in response to petitions submitted to the Council.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the actions taken in respect of petitions.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

As the petitions presented in this report had been dealt with by Cabinet Members or officers, it was appropriate that the action taken was report to Cabinet.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

There had been no alternative options considered.

Chairman

10.00am to 11:05am
20 September 2022