

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Wednesday, 17 July 2013

PRESENT: Councillor Mackintosh (Chair); Councillor Markham (Deputy Chair);
Councillors Bottwood, Hallam, Eldred and Hadland

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 12th June 2013 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. INTENTION TO HOLD PART OF THE MEETING IN PRIVATE

There were no items to be held in private.

4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

6. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

6.A RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - SERIOUS ACQUISITIVE CRIME, VIOLENT CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Councillor Stone addressed Cabinet and commented that as the Chair of the panel it had become apparent that partnership working had been a key theme in addressing crime and community safety.

Councillor Lane, as the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, submitted a report.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and a response be given at a future Cabinet meeting.

6.B RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS AND SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS

Councillor Lane, as the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, submitted a report.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and a response be given at a future Cabinet meeting.

6.C RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - RETAIL EXPERIENCE

Councillor Stone addressed Cabinet and commented that having been a member of the panel it had become apparent to her that low paid employment had knock on effects for the

Town Centre as people did not have surplus money to spend. She commented there was a need to develop a town that was attractive and considerate varying demographics.

Councillor Lane, as the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, submitted a report.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet noted the report, the responses of which were incorporated into Item 8 - Northampton Town Centre - The Next Steps

7. NORTHAMPTON TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB AND NORTHAMPTON SAINTS RUGBY CLUB - EXPANSION PLANS.

Councillor Beardsworth addressed Cabinet and questioned who had been present when negotiations had been discussed and suggested that it was a report that needed to be examined by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Glynane addressed Cabinet and expressed concerns about the uncertainty of the relocation of the athletics track next to the Sixfields stadium. He stated the facilities need to be put in place for the Northampton Athletics Club as part of the Olympic legacy and urged Cabinet to pass their recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Palethorpe addressed Cabinet and commented that he was happy to see progress being made but expressed concerns that both the football club and the rugby club were incorporated in the same report to provide a finance loan and requested that it be further scrutinised to ensure there would be no legal challenges.

Councillor Mackintosh, as Leader of the Council submitted a report and commented that he was pleased with the long awaited report and noted that it had been a Manifesto pledge to support both clubs. In response to questions from Councillor Beardsworth, it was explained that there had been numerous people involved in negotiations, including himself, Cabinet Members, the Chief Executive of Northampton Borough Council and the Section 151 officer. He further commented that he was happy that the decision was transparent and had been scrutinised by officers but emphasised that there was a need to make progress as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:

1. That the principle of providing loan finance to Northampton Saints plc ("Saints") and Northampton Town Football Club Limited ("NTFC") to support stadium expansion and associated development on land presently within their control be approved
2. That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Leader of the Council, and approved the amounts and terms of any loan finance arrangements on a basis that takes into full account the matters set out at 3.2.1 of this report.
3. That the principle - pursuant to a previous Cabinet authority given to enter into a collaboration agreement with Homes & Communities Agency ("HCA") - of this Council entering into a Joint Venture ("JV") Agreement with a private company, HCA (as necessary) and NTFC for the development of that land forming part of Sixfields Stadium (shown edged red upon the attached plan at Appendix 1), together with other adjoining HCA land, on the basis that an agreement relating to a disposal at

nominal initial value of the freehold interest (in the land edged red) to the private party concerned may be required to be completed prior to the commencement of physical development be supported.

4. That authority be delegated to the Director of Regeneration Enterprise and Planning, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to agree the terms of transfer of the land referred to at 2.3 and to contract generally with JV partners, on the basis that:
 - (i) this Council is first satisfied that the proposed comprehensive development scheme will be viable and generate a positive value for the land owners
 - (ii) that this Council is not exposed to any risk of financial loss or liability from its participation within the JV Agreement
 - (iii) that adequate arrangements are made to re-provide suitable athletics facilities at an appropriate location as part of an overall approach to development.
5. That in principle, subject to the legal considerations set out in clause 4.3.3. of this report, that the net value generated for this Council from any Joint Venture Agreement that may be entered into (consistent with 2.4 above), may be used in whole or part to reduce any the levels of debt owed by NTFC to this Council (pursuant to 2.1 and 2.2 above), in support of the promotion of the wider economic and social benefits that would be generated for the Town, be supported.
6. That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, acting in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Leader of the Council, to agree the basis of any reduction of debt owed to this Council by NTFC in the potential circumstances envisaged at 2.5 above.
7. That the principle of varying the existing lease of Sixfields Stadium to NTFC to permit the sharing of the facility by NTFC with another professional sports club and delegates to the Director of Regeneration Enterprise and Planning the authority, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Enterprise and Planning, to agree the terms of any lease variation be supported.
8. That subject to the final loan agreements, delegated to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, authority to incorporate the loans into the Council's Capital Programme and noted the potential impact of the loans on the Council's Affordable Borrowing Limit.
9. That the proposed partnership between the Saints and Northampton Borough Council to promote the town to visitors, in order to enhance the economic well-being of the Borough and delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council the completion of this agreement be welcomed.

8. NORTHAMPTON TOWN CENTRE - THE NEXT STEPS

Councillor Beardsworth commented that she had sat on the Scrutiny Panel concerned with the retail experience and stated that the recommendations made were excellent. She noted that if people did not have a positive retail experience the footfall would diminish further and suggested that more individual and independent shops be encouraged to the town.

Councillor Glynane asked why little action had been taken to tackle discarded chewing gum and questioned whether some of the recommendations were merely due to a lack of

enforcement, such as street drinking.

Councillor Mackintosh welcomed the Chair of the Town Centre BID, Sue Robert and BID Director, Richard Clinton, to the meeting submitted a report and thanked the members of the Scrutiny Panel for their hard work. He stated that work had already been undertaken to improve the town centre and noted that a High Street Czar had been appointed, which had been a manifesto pledge.

Councillor Hadland commented that there were a number of positive changes to car parking in the town centre, including a summer trial of free parking all day Saturday, the implementation of a 'pay on exit' facility at the Grosvenor Centre Car park and improved signage on main entrance roads. It was noted that free wifi was also being rolled out across the whole town centre.

Councillor Hallam addressed Councillor Glynane's comments and noted that with regards to enforcement there was going to be a Town Centre Ranger who would be dedicated the keeping the town in a pristine condition. With regards to the discarded chewing gum it was noted that the current machinery was ineffective but that the purchase of newer, more effective machinery was being considered. It was further explained that with regards to street drinkers, an on-going campaign had been effective in reducing the problem and noted that an action plan be developed to address the problem.

Councillor Eldred commented that there were a number of events being held to encourage more visitors to the town centre which would also include regular performances from a town centre bandstand and designated 'busker spots' to encourage live and quality performers.

RESOLVED:

1. That the town centre as a major strategic priority for the council and agreed to add it as an improvement project to **Northampton Alive** be reaffirmed
2. That a **Town Team** to lead the town centre improvement agenda, be established as per paragraphs 3.1.76/7 of the report, to provide the strategic vision and operational management for Northampton town centre and to oversee a detailed plan for implementing the actions arising from this report.
3. That in accordance with the Administration's manifesto commitment to appoint a **High Street Czar**, it be agreed to appoint local businessman Stephen Church for a period of four months, for the purpose of producing an independent report proposing a strategic and collaborative vision for the town centre and agreed that the position will be known as **Town Centre Summit Chairman**.
4. That a **Town Centre Summit** be hosted, on 20th September 2013, led by the Town Centre Summit Chairman, to allow partners and stakeholders to actively inform the town centre vision.
5. That a regular **town centre newsletter** be introduced from the council to town centre businesses to keep stakeholders well informed and up to date about what is going on.
6. That a summer trial of **free car parking** all day Saturday and for two hours on week days during the whole of August 2013 in the council's pay on exit car parks (St John's, Mayorhold and St Michaels), with Sundays continuing to be free all day, leading to a reduction in income that could be £180,000 be agreed.
7. That a review the impact of **car parking reductions** following the August 2013 trial

be agreed.

8. That in partnership with Northamptonshire County Council (subject to agreement of the detailed business case), the utilisation of the £100,000 received by the council from the Town Centre Innovation Fund to implement **pay on exit at the Grosvenor Centre Car Park**, including the option to pay by credit and debit card be approved.
9. That pay on exit machines be procured from Metric Group Limited for the reasons set out in paragraphs 4.2.5/6 of the report be agreed.
10. That the proposals in the council's 2013/14 Capital Programme to install improved **car park signs** on the main entrance roads into the town centre to direct motorists to their most convenient car park and provide up to the minute information on where spaces are available be endorsed.
11. That the contribution that **Northampton Town Centre Limited** (the Town Centre BID), has made to improving the Town Centre be acknowledged.
12. That consultation with local businesses on the creation of a **business improvement district for Wellingborough Road** be agreed to commence.
13. That the challenge that **empty shops** and **negligent and/or absent landlords** present to the council's ambitions for a vibrant and thriving town centre and requested that an action plan be promptly developed to address the problem with a **public register of landlords** be acknowledged
14. That proposals for major improvements to the **public realm** in the **Cultural Quarter**, to be delivered in partnership with Northamptonshire County Council, set to be outlined later this year be approved.
15. That establishment of a **town centre ranger** post, dedicated to keeping the town centre in pristine condition be endorsed.
16. That a commitment to try to reduce the blight of **discarded chewing gum** on town centre streets be made.
17. That in partnership with Northamptonshire County Council, to launch a formal consultation process to determine whether to **re-open the middle section of Abington Street** to vehicles to allow easier access for shoppers and visitors to the town centre, be agreed.
18. That relocation to the **Francis Crick Memorial Statue** to a suitable location be agreed.
19. That a rollout of **free Wi-Fi** across the entire town centre be agreed.
20. That an exciting **programme of summer events** be developed to bring more visitors into the town centre, including regular performances provided from a town centre bandstand be agreed.
21. That dedicated **busker spots** are created around the town centre to encourage more and better quality buskers be agreed.
22. That a review of the town's **night time economy** be undertaken to make certain the council, local businesses, Northamptonshire Police and other partners work together effectively to ensure the town centre is safe, as well as vibrant, and has

something to attract a wide cross section of visitors be agreed.

23. That the problem of **street drinkers and beggars** in the town centre and requested that an action plan is promptly developed to address the problem be acknowledged.
24. That the work currently being undertaken, in partnership with Northamptonshire County Council, on a pioneering **urban bicycle-hire scheme**, to be implemented in the town centre during the summer be endorsed.
25. That a public consultation be undertaken on the future of the **Market Square fountain** during the summer of 2013 be agreed.
26. That all of the recommendations made in Overview and Scrutiny Committee's May 2013 **Retail Experience report** be accepted and thanked Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its valuable work.
27. That the allocation of £195,000 from the New Homes Bonus Reserve, in accordance with the delegations in the Constitution, to fund recommendations 2.6, 2.18 and 2.19 in 2013/14 and, for all of the remaining recommendations that have a financial impact, with the exception of recommendation 2.8, agreed that they will be funded from previously approved revenue and capital budgets be endorsed.

9. CORPORATE OUTTURN PERFORMANCE REPORT

Councillor Bottwood, as the relevant Cabinet Member, submitted a report and commented that that overall, both Corporate Plan priorities had met their targets with 82% of performance measures having been reached.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted and recommended actions to be taken, if any, to address the issues arising.

10. FINANCE AND MONITORING OUTTURN REPORT

Councillor Bottwood, as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report and noted that the General Fund was coming in on budget and that reserve levels had been maintained. It was noted that any underspend would be brought forward and noted that whilst experiencing financially austere times, finances had been managed prudently.

RESOLVED:

1. That the draft outturn for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account for the financial year 2012/13 as set out at Appendix 1 and Appendix 7 of the report be noted.
2. That the net contribution to General Fund Revenue Reserves of £863k, and the detailed movements in Earmarked Reserves shown in Appendix 4 of the report be noted.
3. That the net movement in Housing Revenue Account Reserves and working balances as set out at Appendix 8 of the report be noted.

4. That the draft outturn for the Council's Capital Programme for 2012/13 and how the expenditure was financed as set out at Appendix 9 of the report be noted.
5. That the carry forward of unfinished capital schemes from 2012/13 into the 2013/14 Capital Programme as set out at Appendix 9 of the report be approved.

The meeting concluded at 6.36pm