

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Wednesday, 12 November 2014

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

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 8th October 2014 were agreed and signed by the Leader.

3. INTENTION TO HOLD PART OF THE MEETING IN PRIVATE

There were no items to be heard in private.

4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

Mr Dave Lewis addressed Cabinet in respect of Item 12 – ‘Disposal of Land at Westbridge Depot’ and commented that as a resident of St James he was concerned about the proposed location of the ‘waste to energy’ installation as it would be in the middle of a pollution sensitive area. Furthermore, he commented that there would be increased heavy traffic close to the site and stated that having an incinerator next to stored fuel would be dangerous and inevitably lead to breathing problems for nearby residents. He perceived a solution to the location problem by suggesting that the incinerator would be better placed at the Billing Recycling Centre and asked that the Cabinet consider an alternative location.

Ms Jill Hope addressed Cabinet in respect of Item 11 – ‘Strategic Acquisition of Town Centre Property’ and Item 12 – ‘Disposal of Land at Westbridge Depot’. In respect of Item 11, she stated that she was attending on behalf of a resident of Albion Place who had not been made aware of the proposal and asked whether she would be reimbursed for any expenses incurred as a result of the proposed acquisition. In respect of Item 12, Ms Hope commented that she could see that value of having an incinerator as it would increase the number of jobs in the area whilst at the same time decreasing the amount of landfill. She commented that much more detail was needed and stated that she considered it to be in the wrong place.

Mr Simon Tickle addressed Cabinet in respect of Item 11 - ‘Strategic Acquisition of Town Centre Property’ and commented that he had lived in Albion Place for a number of years and stated that it was a unique area that needed to be nurtured. He commented that St John’s car park was already big but that an increase to its size would make it more aesthetically displeasing. He reasoned that there were a number of derelict sites close to the Town centre which could be considered as potential sites for a new car park and asked for consideration be given to having a park and ride system. He noted that he was not adverse to the development of the Cultural Quarter but argued that there was a need for balance between bringing people into the Town centre and the provision of parking, especially on the edge of the Cultural Quarter.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bottwood declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in Items, 7, 8 and 9 as a Board Member of Northampton Partnership Homes.

6. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

6.A RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - IMPACT OF THE WELFARE REFORM ACT

Councillor Lane as the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee submitted a report and elaborated thereon. He thanked the panel Members involved in the work undertaken and explained that the report contained 18 recommendations.

Councillor Mason addressed Cabinet, as Chair of the Scrutiny Panel and commented that evidence had been taken from numerous organisations and noted that there was a need to champion Credit Union and expressed her shock at the increase in the number of people who had been using food banks in the last year, which had increased fourfold.

The Leader thanked the panel Members.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

7. HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Councillor Mason addressed Cabinet and commented that she supported the report fully and noted that it was part of necessary work and that many members had completed training.

Councillor Markham as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report and noted that it was a key document between the Borough Council and Northampton Partnership Homes. Both she and the Leader thanked the officers involved.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 That the Housing Asset Management Strategy and associated appendices (at Appendix 1 of the report) be approved.
- 2.2 That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Housing to make such amends as necessary to finalise all documentation in anticipation of the Section 27 application, as part of the creation of Northampton Partnership Homes.
- 2.3 That thanks be given to all those involved in the process, for their commitment and contribution to the completion of the Strategy.

8. NORTHAMPTON PARTNERSHIP HOMES

Councillor Markham as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report and noted that it was to agree various aspects of the implementation of the setup of the ALMO and to agree governance arrangements.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 That the Management Agreement and associated schedules, attached as appendix 1 of the report, be approved and authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, to make such amendments as necessary and appropriate to finalise and complete the Agreement.
- 2.2 That the Chief Executive be authorised to submit an application for approval for the arrangement with NPH for the management of Council homes under section 27 of the Housing Act 1985.
- 2.3 That delegation be given to the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, to agree and amend the indicative Total Fee following further work before the ALMO go live date on January 5th 2015.
- 2.4 That it be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet member for Housing the authority to finalise the Delivery Plan and Service Level Agreements (SLA's), which are annexed to the Management Agreement.
- 2.5 That those involved, at NBC and NPH be thanked for the constructive way in which negotiations leading up to the setting up of the ALMO and agreeing the Management Agreement had been conducted.

9. ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION OF NORTHAMPTON PARTNERSHIP HOMES LIMITED

Councillor Markham as the relevant Cabinet Members submitted a report That sought the approval of Cabinet to approve the revised Articles of Association of Northampton Partnership Homes Limited.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Articles of Association of Northampton Partnership Homes Limited (appendix 1 of the report) be approved.

10. THE NORTHAMPTON ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Councillor Eldred as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report and commented that this was the second annual report to Cabinet and noted that since the launch, several actions had been completed including the single point of contact for service personnel with housing enquiries. It was also noted that the Government had recently allowed those widows/widowers receiving a military pension who remarry, cohabit or form a civil partnership to be entitled to the pension for life.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet affirm its continued support for the Northampton Armed Forces Community Covenant and noted progress to date and proposed future actions.

11. STRATEGIC ACQUISITION OF TOWN CENTRE PROPERTY

Councillor Stone addressed Cabinet and commented that St Albion House, fronting on to Victoria Promenade was a gateway site into the Town centre and thought that a more considered and imaginative approach would have been more suitable on such a site. She

commented that for the past 3 years, people had been told that there were surplus parking spaces in the Town centre hence the sale of the St Johns surface car park. She further commented that most other towns were adopting a greener approach, but that the Council would effectively be encouraging more cars into the Town centre.

Councillor Beardsworth commented that she had recently attended a Resident's Association meeting and there had been much discussion about the problem of traffic and having looked at other cities, she thought there was a lack of joined up thinking; whilst trying to get people out of using their cars, they are progressing towards building another car park. She asked that Cabinet work with the County Council to encourage a modal shift.

Councillor Hadland as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report noting that there had been an increase in developments in the Cultural Quarter with Vulcan Works having been approved by Cabinet previously, and the provision of quality parking encouraged people to visit the Town. He noted that the acquisition would give the opportunity to extend the car park which was considered to be a strategic necessity. In response to the public speakers, Councillor Hadland confirmed the Council would work with all affected residents of Albion Place and noted that the extension to the Vulcan Works would increase the parking needs of visitors. It was noted that it would still be subject to the planning process.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 That the principle of the acquisition by this Council of the freehold interest in the property, known as "Albion House" shown edged red upon the plan at Appendix 1 of the report be approved.
- 2.2 That power delegated to the Director of Regeneration Enterprise and Planning to approve the terms of the acquisition in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning.
- 2.3 That the inclusion in the Council's Capital Programme for 2014/15 of funding of up to £0.5 million to support this acquisition and drawdown from the Invest to Save earmarked reserve to fund the expenditure be approved.

12. DISPOSAL OF LAND AT WESTBRIDGE DEPOT

Councillor Glynane addressed Cabinet and commented that the report offered a lack of consultation and noted that the Cabinet had been previously held to account for not consulting residents adequately. He stated that not only had the businesses at Westbridge not been consulted but nor had residents in the area and therefore no decision on the matter should be made at present. He further noted that the Council had a consultation guide which had not been followed and commented that he had communicated with one of the affected businesses who stated that they had been contacted by the Council to be told about a press release relating to the proposed disposal of land and that was as far as the consultation process had been exercised.

Councillor Ashraf commented that as the Ward Councillor, she would like to see much more detailed information put out to residents about the 'waste to energy' proposal as there was a lot of concern about pollution and foul smells. She also questioned whether consideration had been given to the increase in pollution from the higher numbers of HGV's traffic.

Councillor Mennell commented that she was worried about health aspects of having a chimney and stated that an incinerator would be advantageous but would not be ideally suited to being at the Westbridge Depot site.

Councillor Beardsworth commented she had visited a similar plant to the proposed Westbridge Depot and commented that it had been in a very rural location by the sea, which had been done so, to eliminate the smell from the area. She noted that the smell was

overwhelming and that no one would want that one on their doorstep and noted that most other authorities had put them in isolated areas. She further questioned the logic of the proposed decision and suggested that too much consideration was given to the financial aspects of the disposal of land and asked that Cabinet reconsider.

Councillor Hadland as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report and commented that the Council had been approached by a highly technical and advanced company, in partnership with the County Council and Enterprise, looking to develop on the site. He further stated that the report acknowledged that any proposal involve a lot of detail and studies and therefore an 'in principle' decision ensures the interested company that the Council would not renege on an agreement. He further commented that there had been much reference to incinerators which the 'waste to energy' was not, as no waste was being burned and reported that further consultation would take place with businesses and residents.

The Leader commented that there had been much said about incinerators, but confirmed that there would not be an incinerator as there would be no burning of waste. He thanked Councillor Ashraf for her work with residents and stated that there was a duty of care to residents and that their needs would be fully considered prior to any applications made to the planning process.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 Cabinet approved (subject to 2.2 below) the principle of this Council entering into agreements that could lead to the disposal of parts of Westbridge Depot, situated within the total area identified edged red upon the plan at Appendix 1 of the report.
- 2.2 Cabinet directed the Director of Regeneration Enterprise and Planning, working with other relevant professional officers, to prepare a report for the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Enterprise and Planning detailing the benefits, risks, costs & savings and other associated issues connected with a 'waste to energy' installation being located at Westbridge Depot.
- 2.3 Cabinet agreed subject to the approval of the Cabinet Member (detailed at 2.2) of the general principle of supporting a waste to energy operation at Westbridge. Cabinet delegated to the Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning the authority to agree the terms of any contractual arrangements for the grant of a land option (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning).

13. HIMO INTERIM PLANNING STATEMENT

Councillor Hadland as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report and commented that for the past 3-4 years the Council had suffered the consequences of unregulated HIMO's and noted that throughout the consultation, the Council had only received 6 responses.

Councillor Markham noted that as the Cabinet Member for Housing, she welcomed the developments in respect of HIMO's and noted the progress that had been made over the past 4 years.

RESOLVED:

1. That considered be given to the representations made to the public consultation exercise held between the 7th August and the 2nd October Houses in Multiple Occupation Draft Interim Planning Policy Statement and Officer responses as shown in the Consultation Statement (Appendix 1 of the report).

2. That the proposed changes to the Houses in Multiple Occupation Draft Interim Planning Policy Statement as set out in the Consultation Statement be agreed.
3. That approval be given to the adoption of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Interim Planning Policy Statement (IPPS) as set out in Appendix 2 (at the link below)

<http://www.northampton.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/7529/himo-draft-ipps>

14. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2014

Councillor Bottwood as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report which monitored the delivery of the Corporate Plan within the agreed capital and revenue budgets for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account. He commented that despite facing challenges, the current position was favourable.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
2. That the changes to the 2014-15 General Fund Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report be noted.
3. That the realignment of the HRA Capital Programme, as detailed in Appendix 4 be approved.
4. That the Land Charges supplementary estimate amount to settle the claim, £216,152.34, to be funded out of General Fund working balances be approved.
5. That the Supplementary Estimate £20k to develop plans for Abington Museum be noted.

The meeting concluded at 6.43pm