

# NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET

Wednesday, 8 February 2017

**PRESENT:** Councillor Nunn (Chair); Councillor Larratt (Deputy Chair); Councillors Eldred, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert and King

### 1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

### 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2017 were agreed and signed by the Leader following the correction of a typographical error on page 6 to omit the number 4 from the word 'thanked'.

### 3. INTENTION TO HOLD PART OF THE MEETING IN PRIVATE

There were no items to be heard in public.

### 4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

Mr Birch addressed Cabinet in respect of Item 10 – Delapre Abbey Restoration Project and commented that some of the additional sum of £650,000 could have been diverted into Community Centre funding and commented that the Abbey would be used for 'high end' purposes. He reported that there were numerous inherited problems with windows, boilers and heating systems in many of the community centres run as part of 'Community Spaces Northampton' (CSN) and questioned why there was little funding available to them, when so much money was being spent on the Abbey restoration.

The Leader commented that he valued the work of Community Spaces Northampton and the relevant Cabinet Member reported that she had continued to work alongside Mr Birch and noted that they had met every fortnight to resolve issues.

The Cabinet Member for Finance commented that there was a lot of work being undertaken to assist Community Centres and noted that some of them had self-financed various projects and thanked the relevant Cabinet Member for the hard work that she had and would continue to contribute to.

County Councillor Glynane addressed Cabinet also in respect of Item 10 – Delapre Abbey Restoration Project and noted that he would welcome the approval of the additional sum for the completion of the works and commented that the contractors had done a splendid job of restoring the building. He questioned whether funding could be secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund, whether Lord Northampton could make a contribution, following his promise to re-invest money in Northampton following the sale of Sekhemka and asked what the cost of repairing the vandalism had been.

### 5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hadland declared a personal non pecuniary interest in Item 10 – as a Trustee of Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust.

## **6. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

None.

## **7. CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY PANEL - IMPACT OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ON THE TOWN**

Councillor Birch commented that she welcomed the initiatives outlined in the report and questioned how these could be done in conjunction with protecting and improving the night time economy. She further commented that women needed to be protected and that the onus should be on bar and club owners to provide a safe and secure environment for lone women and vulnerable people.

Councillor King, as the relevant Cabinet Member commented that they were working with multi-agency groups and had extensive involvement with several initiatives to approach and respond to anti-social behaviour.

### **RESOLVED:**

- 2.1 That the recommendations included in the Overview and Scrutiny report for Serious Acquisitive Crime, Violent Crime and Community Safety are accepted.
- 2.2 That the task and finish group be congratulated on a high quality and comprehensive report and thanked them for the time and effort given to produce it.

## **8. CABINET RESPONSE TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENFORCEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY IN RESPECT OF TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE**

Councillor Birch commented that she welcomed the recommendations and expressed concerns that there was no age limit to taxis or private hire vehicles and asked that consideration be given to capping the number of taxi and private hires coming in to Northampton. She questioned if a hardship fund could be established to assist struggling tax drivers to purchase newer, lower emission vehicles.

Councillor King, as the relevant Cabinet Member commented that she had been working with Private Hire and Hackney drivers and noted progress was being made with the creation of a grant system. She further explained that there had been numerous drop in sessions with drivers who had engaged with Officers.

Councillor Larratt commented that previously, when he had been the Chair of Licensing, a report had been commissioned to assess the various needs of the drivers and the potential to introduce a cap and noted that age of vehicles was a concern due to emissions. He further commented the provision of cover outside the railway station for taxis was being explored.

### **RESOLVED:**

- 2.1 That the recommendations included in the Overview and Scrutiny report on the Effectiveness of Enforcement of Licensing Policy in respect of Taxis and Private Hire be accepted.
- 2.2 That the task and finish group be congratulated on a high quality and comprehensive report and thanked them for the time and effort given to produce it.

## **9. INSTALLATION OF PHOTO VOLTAIC PANELS TO REDUCE THE ENERGY BILLS TO COUNCIL TENANTS**

Councillor Ashraf reported that she very much welcomed the recommendations within the report and supported the initiative which would assist in getting more people out of fuel poverty and urged all Councillors to back the report.

Councillor Russell echoed the comments made by Councillor Ashraf and questioned if there was a similar initiative for private landlords and further asked how the money saving would be measured.

Councillor Hibbert, as the relevant Cabinet Member, explained that the costs of providing, installing and maintaining the panels would be met by the contractor and after 20 years the ownership would transfer to the Council. He noted that the savings to the tenants could be in the region of £10 m and that the council could get a return of £2m and noted that for each successful PV installation, the contractor would pay £10 a year to the Council and the same per year to invest in a Local Community Fund. He further reported that due diligence had been carried out and that he would endeavour to find out if the initiative would be rolled out to private landlords.

The deputy Leader commented that it was very positive to see action being taken to address fuel poverty and welcomed the recommendations.

The Leader commented that not only would it financially assist some residents and noted that it was a green initiative that was very much welcomed.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. That support be given 'in principle', to the proposed installation of PV panels via a Roof Access Agreement and the fixing of third party equipment to the roofs of suitable council homes until ownership of the equipment switches to the Council after 20 years, subject to the Roof Access Agreement being amended to reflect the undertakings described in Paragraphs 3.2.16 and 4.2.5 of this Report and Northampton Partnership Homes monitoring the work undertaken on council homes to ensure that it is completed to a high standard; and
2. That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing & Wellbeing) to determine that the requirements set out in Paragraph 4.3.2 of the report have been met and approved the Roof Access Agreement, the fixing of third party equipment to the roofs of the Council's homes for a period of 20 years and, subject to the conditions in paragraph 2.1 of the report, authorised Northampton Partnership Homes to appoint Saliis Renewables Limited to carry out the PV installation work.

#### **10. DELAPRE ABBEY FINANCIAL POSITION**

Councillor Beardsworth commented that she recognised the additional sum was no doubt hard to find in the current economic climate but stated that the importance of the Abbey to the Town and noted the importance of retaining heritage.

Councillor Stone commented that she recognised the importance of the Abbey as an asset to the Town, she was concerned about the overspend and overall management of the project and questioned how such an overspend could be avoided in future.

Councillor Hadland, submitted his report and elaborated by answering questions raised. He explained that Delapre Abbey was not just for high end functions but for all residents of the Town to enjoy. He further commented that he had conversed with the HLF and they had not been very forthcoming with additional money. He also commented that the cost of vandalism had been met through insurance and clarified that the overspend was against the original budget. Councillor Hadland commented

that the Abbey would be opening up to the public imminently.

The Leader thanked the work that had been undertaken and carried out by the Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust and stated that the Abbey was a fantastic historical building, restored to its former glory that would add value to the Town and would be for all residents.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That an additional sum up to £650,000 to complete the construction works at Delapre Abbey to be funded from underspends identified elsewhere in the capital programme as part of the overall monitoring for 2016/17 be approved.
2. That assistance be offered to the Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust (DAPT) to ensure a successful opening and ongoing viability of the restored Abbey.

**11. KINGSTHORPE & KINGSTHORPE HIGH STREET AND MANOR ROAD CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLANS.**

Councillor Beardsworth commented that she welcomed the report and noted that within her Ward of Kingsthorpe the majority of resident were delighted with the Management Plan and thanked the officer for his comprehensive report.

Councillor Hadland submitted his report and noted that the consultation process had been exhaustive and thanked the officers for their hard work in producing the comprehensive plan appended to the report.

The Leader stated that his was another step towards preserving the heritage of Northampton and welcomed the report.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans for Kingsthorpe Conservation Area and Kingsthorpe High Street & Manor Road Conservation Areas (Appendices B & C of the report) be approved.
2. That an extension to the Kingsthorpe Conservation Area boundary to include the Old Institute building on Kingswell Road and associated land within the Conservation Area designation be agreed.

**12. NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME - UPDATE**

Councillor Stone questioned it was no longer considered necessary to prepare a specific Local Plan to allocate sites to gypsies, travellers and travelling show people and noted that she considered the facilities at Ecton Brook Travellers Site to be sub-standard and consideration should be given to modernising the site.

Councillor Hadland, as the relevant Cabinet, responded to Councillor Stone, explaining that the Government had published a revised definition of the term 'traveller' for planning persons and subsequently there was no need for any additional pitches and noted that there would be widespread public consultation on the draft Plan.

**RESOLVED:**

Cabinet approved the revised Northampton Borough Local Development Scheme as attached to the report.

### **13. FINANCE REPORT TO 31ST DECEMBER 2016**

Councillor Eldred, as the relevant Cabinet Member commented that the report showed an underspend of £546K in the General Fund Budget and noted that whilst there had been an overspend on the restoration project for Delapre Abbey there was an underspend on St Giles Street Improvements. He noted that he was presenting another balanced budget to Cabinet.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the contents of the report and appendices be reviewed.
2. That the supplementary estimates funded by reserves transfers for the 2016-17 General Fund Revenue Budget as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report be noted
3. That the approved amendments to the Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report be noted.

The meeting concluded 7.02pm