

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Wednesday, 18 July 2018

PRESENT: Councillor Nunn (Chair); Councillor Larratt (Deputy Chair); Councillors Eldred, Hadland, J Hill and Hibbert

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Hallam and King.

2. MINUTES

The private minutes of the meetings held on the 9th May and the 13th June 2018 were agreed and signed by the Leader. The public minutes of the meeting held on the 13th June 2018 were also agreed and signed by the Leader.

3. INTENTION TO HOLD PART OF THE MEETING IN PRIVATE

The Leader confirmed that there was an intention to hold part of the meeting in private as set out in the agenda.

4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

6. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were none.

7. CORPORATE DATA PROTECTION POLICY

Councillor Nunn elaborated upon the report that advised Cabinet about the General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018 that came into force in May 2018.

RESOLVED:

1. That the draft Corporate Data Protection Policy 2018 be approved
2. That authority be delegated to the Data Protection Officer in consultation with the Monitoring Officer to implement future minor version controlled amendments to the approved Corporate Data Protection Policy to ensure the policy remain current and reflects changes in guidance and best practice until such a time as the legislation is replaced and a new policy is required.

8. MARKETS ADVISORY GROUP

Councillor Larratt, as the relevant Cabinet Member, elaborated on a report that advised Cabinet on the outcome of a recent consultation on the composition and Terms of Reference of the Market Advisory Group. He explained that the Markets Advisory Group (MAG) had been poorly attended and a Market Health Check has been carried out by the National Market Traders Association, and noted it had been recognised that there was

limited support for the current structure.

Councillor Stone commented that she had been an appointed member of MAG and felt uncomfortable that Council staff were subjected to ongoing criticism in the MAG meetings and was pleased Councillors would be deflecting some of that. She questioned whether an independent Chair would be more beneficial to the MAG.

Councillor Larratt explained that there would still be representation from the Labour Group, based on proportionality. He commented that the MAG had previously had an independent Chair but that arrangement had not been suitable and noted that the proposed Terms of Reference had been drafted with the ability to make adjustments once in place.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 That the results of the recent consultation with Market Traders (shown as Appendix 1 of the report) be considered
- 2.2 That to reflect the outcome of the consultation, subject to approval by Full Council of relevant changes to the Council's constitution, it be agreed that the Market Advisory Group's composition is changed as follows:-
 - a) that the Chair be the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Market Liaison, (instead of an independent Chair nominated by the Leader of the Council);

and the Terms of Reference are further amended as follows:
 - b) that reference is made to the group meeting biannually (instead of monthly); and
 - c) that reference to the independent review of the market is removed as this has now been completedas set out in the draft revised Terms of Reference at Appendix 2.
- 2.3 That Full Council be recommended to amend the Responsibility for Functions section in part 3 of the Constitution to amend the composition of the Market Advisory Group as referred to in paragraph 2.2a) above.
- 2.4 That Full Council be recommended to amend the Scheme of Delegations to Officers in the Constitution to delegate the powers currently delegated to the Town Centre Manager in respect of market matters (Part 8, Part B, paragraph 5.1), to the Markets Manager, as set out in Appendix 3 of the report.

9. CREATING A HOUSING DEVELOPMENT COMPANY (DEVCO)

Councillor Hibbert elaborated on a report which sought Council's consideration and approval to set up a wholly Council-owned subsidiary to support the direct delivery of new homes. It was explained that this would complement the current work being undertaken by Northampton Partnership Homes and private sector partners and it was noted that Right to Buy would not apply to the tenants living in homes developed by the company, although Government would be at liberty to change the legislation at any time. He further noted that the business case would be presented to Cabinet in October 2018.

Councillor B Markham commented that he welcomed the report but questioned the length of time it had taken to come up with a solution to Northampton's housing crisis. He explained that he had a number of concerns about the aims of the company and urged

the Council to consider building sufficient amounts of affordable housing available for rent.

The Leader commented that he did share some of the aforementioned frustrations but reminded members that under the Conservative administration, 100 new homes had been built.

Councillor Stone commented that she welcomed the report and was pleased that progress was being made. She questioned the feasibility of having a refresh of the strategy paper to demonstrate and clarify how the various strands would be integrated with each other.

The Leader commented that consideration would be given to holding a Councillor briefing session that would explain how the amalgamation of housing services would work.

Councillor Hibbert commented that a refresh strategy was on the horizon and being considered and would come forward in the near future.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the principle of establishing a Council-owned Development Company (DevCo) to build homes for sale and rent, together with associated development be approved;
- (b) That the principle of funding the initial start-up costs of the DevCo and agreed that a sum of up to £20,000 is made available from Reserves be approved;
- (c) That support and was commitment was given to the principle of PWLB borrowing being loaned to the DevCo, and it was agreed that work start on identifying initial projects and working up scheme costs and viability; and
- (d) That it be agreed to receive a further report in October 2018 when Cabinet approval would be sought for approval of the DevCo's Business Plan and Legal & Governance structure and the establishment of the DevCo.
- (e) That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing & Wellbeing, the Chief Finance Officer and the Borough Secretary & Monitoring Officer) to set up a Development Company, appoint initial directors and implement the Legal & Governance structure.

10. FINANCE MONITORING TO MAY 2018

Councillor Eldred submitted a report and referred to the overspend that was forecasted as a result of increased homelessness and noted that the number of households living in temporary accommodation had quadrupled in 2 years. He reported that the finalisation of the Environmental Services contract had highlighted a number of detailed budget areas that required corrections and noted that there had been increased costs of Microsoft Licenses.

Councillor Stone commented that she welcomed the report but requested that further details be provided in future reports although she appreciated the information contained within the narrative. She questioned what the reasons were for the Council having incurred additional costs at the beginning of the Environmental Services (ES) contract and expressed her concern about the growing fragility of the budget.

In response to questions asked, the Director of Customers and Communities explained that the new ES contract required Veolia to empty all bins regardless of the total number and explained that the additional costs incurred were due to an oversight by LGSS finance.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 That the contents of the report be noted and future reports would set out the actions being taken by Corporate Management Board to address issues arising.
- 2.2 That the General Fund budget changes set out in Appendix 1 of the report be approved.
- 2.3 That an increase to the General Fund Capital Programme of £0.301m to fund the increased cost of Environmental Services vehicles be approved.

11. MUSEUM EXPANSION - APPOINTMENT OF MAIN CONTRACTOR

In the absence of Councillor King, Councillor Nunn elaborated on the report which sought delegated authority to appoint the main construction contractor for the Central Museum and Art Gallery expansion project. He stated that it was very good news that progress was being made and that the Council had reached a milestone and offered his full support to the recommendations.

Councillor B Markham commented that whilst he welcomed the presentation of the business case but questioned whether or not the project would be completed within the £6.7 million budget. He further reported that extra money would have to be spent on the annual running costs of the Museum and commented that to financially commit the money could potentially be risky. In response to questions asked, Councillor B Markham explained that at this stage of the process, it was necessary to commit and proceed with the Museum project but he cited his disappointment that Sekhemka had been sold to facilitate the expansion and refurbishment.

Councillor Eldred commented that when Sekhemka had been sold, it had been done so to expand the Museum; the museum prior to the expansion was only capable of showing 10 percent of the goods Northampton had to show. It was further noted that the expansion would allow big touring exhibitions to visit and would transform what the museum could offer residents and visitors.

Councillor Stone commented that it was an exciting vision and would be happy to see it reopened for school children to enjoy and asked that more emphasis be put on educational strands. She noted that she was upset that the museum had been closed for 18 months for the expansion project and considered that it being closed had damaged the Towns reputation. She questioned why more radical plans had not been considered and suggested that the building could have been knocked down and rebuilt for similar costs.

The Leader expressed his disappointment that the museum had been closed for 18 months, but noted that this had been a necessity due to assessing the risks and carrying out due diligence.

Councillor Eldred stated that he was disappointed that the Council had lost accreditation following the sale of Sekhemka but hoped that it would be reinstated in the future.

Councillor Birch stated that she recognised the need to progress in order to get accreditation and asked how much was paid for the gaol block and what the financial implications would be once the first phase had been completed.

The Director of Customer and Communities responded by noting that the project could be halted after the first phase.

In response to a question asked, the Leader confirmed that despite the formation of a proposed Unitary authority, the museum project nor the funding would be affected as it was protected.

RESOLVED:

That authority be delegated to the Director of Customers and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety and the Borough Secretary, to appoint the main construction contractor for the Central Museum and Art Gallery Expansion Project provided that the total cost of the successful contractor's tender is within the approved capital budget of £6.7m.

12. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Chair moved that the public and Press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that there was likely to be disclosure to them of such categories of exempt information as defined by Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 as listed against such items of business by reference to the appropriate paragraph of Schedule 12A to such Act.

The Motion was Carried.

13. MUSEUM EXPANSION - PRIVATE APPENDIX

The item was discussed at Item 11

The meeting concluded at 6.57pm