

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Wednesday, 15 January 2014

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

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Mackintosh – Leader of the Council.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18th December 2013 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. INTENTION TO HOLD PART OF THE MEETING IN PRIVATE

There was no intention to hold part of the meeting in private.

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. RESPONSE OF CABINET TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS AND SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS AND CIL

Councillor Hadland, as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report and elaborated thereon. He commented that infrastructure was at the heart of the well-being of the Town Centre and thanked the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Deputy Leader of the Council thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Officer for their work.

RESOLVED:

2.1 That Cabinet was satisfied that:

2.2 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) be maintained and updated by the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (JPU) to ensure it reflects current evidence of the strategic infrastructure requirements necessary to implement the Joint Core Strategy.

2.3 Additional sources of funding were investigated to meet the funding gap identified in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

2.4 The JCS includes policy guidance to ensure the timely delivery of the North West Bypass. Additional funding sources were also being investigated.

- 2.5 Joint working across the partnership seeks to ensure priority be given to assisting future strategic infrastructure provision through CIL.
- 2.6 The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which provides for developer obligations where development impacts on the strategic road network in Northampton between partner authorities, and the emerging CIL Regulation 123 Infrastructure List ensure that Section 106 agreements and CIL contribute to highway improvements as stated.
- 2.7 CIL was not expected to have a significant adverse impact on the provision of affordable housing. In preparing a CIL, policy requirements and the future provision of affordable housing had been taken into account.
- 2.8 The introduction of CIL would have corporate implications which would be considered. These corporate implications would be addressed when Cabinet considers the introduction of CIL in due course.

8. RESPONSE TO CABINET OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - SERIOUS ACQUISITIVE CRIME, VIOLENT CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Councillor Beardsworth addressed Cabinet and noted the excellent piece of work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She commented that community safety aspects relating to the opening up of Abington Street to traffic should be considered to ensure that safety of pedestrians.

Councillor Stone addressed Cabinet and commented that she had chaired the scrutiny panel and thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Officer. She explained that there had been numerous witnesses, who she thanked for their contribution, and stated that one concern was the environmental aspect and how it could contribute to criminal behaviour and activities. She further noted that crime was not produced in isolation and that it was necessary for there to be robust partnerships.

Councillor Markham, as the Deputy Leader of the Council, presented a report and elaborated thereon and thanked the Overview and Scrutiny for their work.

RESOLVED:

1. That the recommendations included in the Overview and Scrutiny report for Serious Acquisitive Crime, Violent Crime and Community Safety are accepted in the main with comments as described in the report were agreed.
2. That the task and finish group are formally congratulated on a high quality and comprehensive report.

9. REPORT OF THE TOWN CENTRE CHAIRMAN

Councillor Markham, as the Deputy Leader of the Council introduced the Town Centre Chairman and thanked him for the work he had undertaken.

Mr Church submitted his report and commented that it was an accurate representation of the opinions of a wide range of stakeholders and contributors. He further noted that it had been an excellent exercise in consultation and suggested that it be repeated in the future for changes affecting the Town Centre. He suggested that the Leader of the Council holds another similar meeting to respond to any public concerns expressed,

Councillor Glynane addressed Cabinet and commented that he welcomed the report and the engagement had with stakeholders and members of the public. He stated that throughout the report, the need for proper consultation resonated and that there was a real need to listen to the views of the public. Referring to the de-pedestrianisation of Abington Street Councillor Glynane stated that there was a need to have proper and meaningful consultations with businesses and stakeholder.

Councillor Beardsworth commented that there was a need to improve the retail experience in the town centre and concurred with Councillor Glynane that the consultation conducted should have been more wide reaching and expressed concern at the number of traders who would have their licenses removed as a consequence.

The Deputy Leader of the Council commented that a number of the recommendations had already been completed and noted that work would continue to be undertaken to improve the Town Centre.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

10. TOWN CENTRE SUMMIT

Councillor Glynane addressed Cabinet and commented that within the report were numerous examples of the Administration's commitment to public consultation and noted that the de-pedestrianisation of Abington Street should have been more exhaustive as is involved major changes to the Town Centre. He remarked that his understanding was that the family of Francis Crick did not want the memorial moving.

Councillor Beardsworth commented that the recent consultation with regards to the housing stock had been comprehensive and suggested that a similar consultation exercise should have been conducted on re-opening Abington Street up to traffic.

Councillor Hadland, as the relevant Cabinet Member, submitted a report and thanked Mr Church for conducting the Summit and noted that the report was the first stage on taking actions to address the recommendations. He noted that with regards to the consultation, response rates may have been low, but probably due to the public not objecting. He further stated that this was a broad and far reaching report giving consideration to the whole Town Centre and not a single issue report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the implementation of a hotline for areas in need of urgent cleaning to be reported be agreed; it further agreed to promote the use of the council's reporting app for customers and businesses who prefer to use this medium for reporting issues to the council.
2. That affirmation be given to town centre cleanliness as one of its top operational priorities and committed to working with its contractor, Enterprise Managed Services, its town centre ranger and other partners and stakeholders in the town centre to drive up standards and to keep town centre cleanliness under regular review.
3. That advice and support be offered to town centre businesses and to use enforcement powers when appropriate in order to help to improve commercial waste collection in the town centre.

4. That there be continued work with the Police and other partners to address the presence of street drinkers and beggars in the town centre, through initiatives such as the week of action that took place in the town centre in December.
5. That consideration in detail be given to the environmental issues raised via the Town Centre Summit and committed to taking steps to address them as appropriate.
6. That the attention of the Town Centre Summit Chairman was drawn to the proposed introduction of free first two hours and free Saturday car parking (in addition to free Sunday car parking) as part of its 2014/15 budget proposals and committed to keeping its charging policy for car parks under regular review in order to draw more visitors into the town centre and to encourage them to dwell longer.
7. That affirmation was given to the ongoing commitment to ensuring the town centre is properly served by convenient and accessible car parking.
8. That a commitment was made to improving the standard of cleanliness and maintenance in its town centre car parks and their ancillary areas.
9. That affirmation be given to the commitment of assisting small businesses to start up in the town centre.
10. That considered be given to developing a Shop Front policy, including encouraging the application of vinyls to the windows of empty shops, where appropriate.
11. That it was agreed to actively encourage landlords to take responsibility for maintaining their shop fronts.
12. That the exploration of the opportunity to access external funding to help to address the issue of empty retail units in the town centre was agreed
13. That Central Government be approached to explore ways of potentially alleviating the pressures on town centre businesses caused by Business Rates.
14. That the retail issues raised at the Town Centre Summit be noted and continued work with partners and town centre businesses to address them as appropriate be agreed.
15. That there be a continuation to actively focus on the expansion and development of the Cultural Quarter.
16. That full consideration be given to the Town Centre Summit Chairman's views on innovation in relation to 'new build' in the town centre and agrees to encourage inclusive public debate on the future regeneration of the town centre.
17. That it be agreed to ensure that regular consultation takes place between key partners such as Pub Watch, the BID and the Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner to address issues of concern arising from the town's night time economy.
18. That the Town Centre Chairman's comments about the town's historic market be noted.
19. That the use of wide public consultation to drive town centre improvement be supported.
20. That regular consultation regarding town centre policing with all key partners and town

centre stakeholders be encouraged.

21. That full consideration was given to the Town Centre Summit's Chairman's suggestions for the use of empty shops for the benefit of school children.
22. That vigorous and innovative marketing campaigns would be ensured to encourage visitors and investors into the town centre.
23. That agencies and organisations that are stakeholders in the town centre meet regularly to be consulted with and to advise the council on matters relating to the town centre.
24. That affirmation to the commitment to effective communication with local businesses and the general public about town centre developments and initiatives were given.
25. That support was offered to the BID on continuing to promote its aims and achievements to town centre businesses and to the public.
26. That very careful consideration was given to all matters set out in the report of the Town Centre Summit Chairman and to respond promptly to matters raised, as appropriate.
27. That a second Town Centre Summit in about two years' time to feedback progress and to refresh learning from consultation be held.
28. That thanks be given to the Town Centre Summit Chairman and all those who took time to contribute to the Town Centre Summit for the valuable contribution they have made.

11. BATTLE OF NORTHAMPTON 1460 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Councillor Glynane addressed Cabinet and commented that he welcomed the report and noted that it provided a large opportunity to provide valuable historical heritage to the people of Northampton.

Councillor Hadland, as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report and commented that a wide consultation would be undertaken.

RESOLVED:

That the draft document for the purpose of public consultation be issued.

12. BRACKMILLS INDUSTRIAL ESTATE LTD (BIEL) BUSINESS PLAN

Councillor Hadland, as the relevant Cabinet Member, submitted a report and commented that extensive and comprehensive research had been completed.

RESOLVED:

1. That the excellent work of BIEL over the previous 5 years be noted.
2. That it be noted that BIEL had produced a new Business Plan for the 2014-19 period (as summarised in the Report Background section of the report).

3. That if the Biel ballot is in favour of an extension to the BID period for a further 5 years the Memorandum of Understanding, Operating Procedures and Baseline Agreements would have to be updated to cover the additional 5 year plan and delegated powers to the Director of Enterprise Regeneration and Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Enterprise Regeneration and Planning to agree the terms of the documents be noted.
4. That the NBC Returning Officer be approved to run the BIEL ballot in March 2014.

13. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2014-15

Councillor Bottwood, as the relevant Cabinet Member, submitted a report and reported that recommendation 2.1 of the report should read 2014/15, not 2013/14. He thanked the Chief Finance Officer – LGSS and his team for their hard work.

RESOLVED:

1. That is be recommend to Council to approve the tax base for 2014/15 at 60,651.14 Band D equivalent properties and associated parish tax bases within this report.

	2014/15	2013/14
Billing	2,402.29	2,394.26
Collingtree	508.64	443.35
Duston	5260.40	4,748.13
Great Houghton	279.44	246.80
Hardingstone	757.93	658.39
Upton	2,006.64	1,687.65
Wootton & East Hunsbury	6,214.60	5,442.79
West Hunsbury	1,585.70	1,447.71
Hunsbury Meadow	475.24	369.95
Northampton (Unparished)	41,160.27	40,635.31
Total tax base	60,651.14	58,074.34

2. That delegation be granted to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance to make any technical adjustments necessary arising out of the Local Government draft settlement which impacts on the tax base, and to confirm, and inform the relevant authorities, the estimated surplus/deficit on the Collection Fund and how much would be attributable to each council, including NBC, after the statutory date of the 15th January 2014.

The meeting concluded at 6.33pm