

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Wednesday, 21 October 2015

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

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 9th September 2015 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 Rodney Giddens addressed Cabinet in respect of Item 13 – Northamptonshire County Cricket Club, and stated that he welcomed the proposal to invest more money as it would allow the club to attract and welcome more members of the public. He asked for officers to meet with Trustees to discuss incentives for repaying the loan.

County Councillor Brendan Glynane addressed Cabinet in respect of Item 12 – Delapre Abbey Restoration Project and urged the administration to consult with the residents of Far Cotton and Delapre with regards to the enhancement of the car park. He also asked for reassurance that when installing superfast broadband trees would not be dug up. He also asked that a full consultation be undertaken to ensure conservation and heritage of the site be fully considered.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hadland declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in Item 12 – Delapre Abbey Restoration Project as a member of Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust.

Councillor King declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in Item 12 – Delapre Abbey Restoration Project as an observer of the Friends of Delapre Abbey.

6. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

None

7. CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY PANEL - POVERTY IN THE TOWN

Councillor Duffy addressed Cabinet and questioned whether the increase use in foodbanks was indicative of poverty.

Councillor Stone commented that she welcomed the work carried out by the Scrutiny Panel and stated that there had been a huge increase in the number of people living in poverty and highlighted the significant impact that this had on children, in particular, and asked the administration to consider developing an anti-poverty strategy.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Stone commented that the figures she referred to was from a number of action groups and that whilst they were estimates, she considered them to be reliable.

Councillor Beardsworth commented that one child living in poverty was one too many and welcomed the report. She expressed concern that there had been an influx of people moving to Northampton as a result of the benefit cap in London as people needed affordable homes and urged the administration to ensure that homelessness does not increase and that the number be closely monitored.

The Leader commented that they had been monitoring people's movement and that the rise in the number of people moving from London had not been as significant as first thought.

Councillor Meredith commented that there were people living in poverty which had impacted his ward as it was an area affected by deprivation. He stated that there was a need to assist people affected by poverty and to question how and why they had ended up in poverty.

Councillor Bottwood as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted his report and commented that they were aware of the problems relating to poverty and that they would continue to work with all the relevant agencies to offer help and assistance where possible.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations included in the Overview and Scrutiny report – 'Poverty in Northampton' be accepted.

- It was noted that the recommendation in the report was incorrect and should have been as above.

8. CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY PANEL - IMPACT OF THE WELFARE REFORM ACT

Councillor Bottwood as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report and elaborated thereon.

Councillor Markham thanked officers for their hard work during that ensured a smooth transition resulting from the introduction of the Welfare Reform Act.

RESOLVED:

1. That the recommendations included in the Overview and Scrutiny report "Impact of the Welfare Reform Act" be accepted.
2. That the Scrutiny Panel be thanked for their commitment to evaluating and mitigating the impact of the Welfare Reform Act on the public and council employees, their commitment to improving the customer experience and the high quality and comprehensive report produced and thanked for the time and effort given to produce it.

9. SITES IN THE ENTERPRISE ZONE

Councillor McCutcheon addressed Cabinet and commented that he hoped that this was not going to be a repeat of before, whereby too much office space had been built and had become surplus to requirements.

Councillor Hadland as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report and noted the progress that had been made to date, including the creation of 1,118 jobs in the Enterprise Zone and the creation of 25,000 sq m new floor space. He explained that the increase in high quality commercial and industrial floor space would attract businesses and it was necessary for there to be 'stock' ready for them to move into.

Councillor Markham thanked the Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning and his team for ensuring that though EZ, SEMLEP agreed the use of the Business Rates Uplift (BRU).

RESOLVED:

1. That the progress made to date be noted.
2. That it be approved that the Council take a lease of up to 30,000 sq ft of space at Four Waterside on terms to be agreed by the Director of Regeneration in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning and Cabinet Member for Finance.
3. That authority be delegated for the delivery of Four Waterside to the Director of Regeneration and Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning and Cabinet Member for Finance.
4. That the funding source for the lease, if required, would be Business Rates Uplift from the Waterside Enterprise Zone.
5. That that New Home Bonus monies, if required, could be used to forward fund the development in advance of receiving the Business Rates Uplift through the Waterside Enterprise Zone be agreed.

10. PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDERS FOR THE BOROUGH OF NORTHAMPTON

Councillor Russell addressed Cabinet and asked what the timescale of the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) would be, how it would be adopted and who had been consulted.

Councillor Birch commented that she welcomed the intention to start the consultation process on PSPO and noted that enforcement would be crucial to the success of the scheme if approved.

Councillor King submitted a report as the relevant Cabinet Member and commented that she was pleased that Labour had given their support. It was noted that the consultation would run from the 2nd November 2015 to the 21st December and would include members of the public, the Police, Forums and members of the public.

RESOLVED:

1. That the undertaking of consultation on the introduction of Public Spaces Protection Orders under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report be authorised.
2. That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive and the Director of Customers and Communities to take all actions necessary to undertake the consultation.

11. ESTABLISHMENT OF A SOCIAL LETTING AGENCY

Councillor Ashraf addressed Cabinet and stated that Social Letting Agencies (SLA) could reduce the number of rogue landlords and also suggested that there were landlords who were turning their premises into Houses of Multiple Occupation as a means of maximising their profits.

Councillor Beardsworth commented that there were other councils who had established SLAs and lesson could be learned from them. She said that it was a good way of routing out bad landlords and stated that the Liberal Democrats were in favour.

Councillor Hibbert as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report and commented that he was pleased to have cross party support and noted that it was envisaged that the SLA would improve communities and confidence in accessing affordable private rented housing.

Councillor Markham thanked the landlords who had attended the landlord forums .

RESOLVED:

1. That the principle of establishing a social lettings agency be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to establish a social lettings agency that would operate as part of the Housing and Wellbeing Service, subject to due diligence and the production of a detailed business case that would be signed-off by the Section 151 Officer.

12. DELAPRE ABBEY RESTORATION PROJECT

Councillor Hadland, as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report and elaborated thereon. It was noted that additional monies were required to ensure that the project would be delivered successfully and noted that a thorough and inclusive consultation would be completed with local residents and wider stakeholders.

RESOLVED:

1. That approval for the Council to increase the capital contribution towards the restoration of Delapre Abbey be given, and approve the funding sources as identified in table 1 of the report. The existing capital contribution during the restoration was £5,650,000. Additional monies of £525,000 would be required to ensure that the project be delivered successfully.
2. That approval be given for the provision of capped revenue funding to the sum of £150,000 in the form of a grant required by DAPT prior to their operational phase. This would firstly to be funded from any regeneration underspends in the current 15/16 budget, then from the Regeneration Directorate revenue reserves if required.
3. That approval be given for the provision of revenue funding to the sum of £100,000 in the form of a capped loan facility required by DAPT to ensure that in-year deficits within their Business Plan are cash-flowed in the initial stages of their operation. This would be funded from existing NBC resources, which would be replenished by the repayments received from DAPT.
4. That to cash flow the £812,000 fundraising requirements which form part of the overall Phase 1 works be approved, in the short-medium term which would be the responsibility of DAPT to fundraise prior to opening. The monies would have to be

repaid by DAPT from future operational surpluses.

5. That authority be delegated to the Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning and Chief Finance Officer to agree final terms and conditions regarding monies to be given to DAPT for the pre-opening cash flow requirements and operational support monies (within the capped amounts), and to agree the conditions regarding the cash flowing of £812,000 fundraising requirements, as outlined within the report.

13. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY CRICKET CLUB

Councillor Stone commented that she had no problem with the Council loaning money but expressed a need to be extremely cautious, especially in light of the recent problems with NTFC.

Councillor Beardsworth echoed some of the concerns expressed by Councillor Stone and stated that she wondered whether the loan was viable and did not want to see another club unable to pay back their loan.

Councillor Markham as Leader submitted her report and elaborated further by noting that there were 3 significant sports facilities in the Town of which she was proud and that work had been undertaken to get a sustainable business plan in place.

RESOLVED:

1. That the principle of providing a secured loan to NCCC be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and the Leader of the Council, to approve the amounts, up to a maximum of £250,000, and terms of any loan finance arrangements on a basis that takes into full account the matters set out at 3.2 of this report.

The meeting concluded at 6.47pm