

CABINET

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 4th March 2014 at Retford Town Hall

Present: Councillor S A Greaves (Chair),
Councillors A Chambers, J Evans, J A Leigh, S May, J White and
G J Wynne.

Assistants: Councillors M Gregory, G Jones, C Palmer and J Potts.

Advisory Members: Councillors H M Brand and D Challinor.

Liaison Members: Councillors B Barker, H Burton and K H Isard.

Officers: A Brammall, S Brown, J Hamilton, M Hill, M Ladyman, N Taylor and
R Theakstone.

Also present: Councillors G Freeman and J Sanger.

(The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, read out the Fire Evacuation Procedure, and also enquired as to whether any member of the public wished to film/record the meeting or any part thereof; although there were two members of the public present, no-one responded.)

(The meeting opened at 6.30pm.)

134. QUESTION TIME - PUBLIC

Council Procedure Rules were suspended for fifteen minutes to allow questions from the public; two members of the public were present and three questions were asked by the same person:

Helen Richards, representing the Friends of Ordsall Community Action Group, asked:

Being mindful of the Council's good stewardship of assets, what was the final purchase price for the sale of land to Persimmons, the area behind Newlands, Ashlands and The Oval?

The Leader of the Council confirmed that he was aware of the land in question, which had been sold on a phased basis to realise the greatest benefit, but could not recall the precise figure.

The Chief Executive advised that the report to Cabinet had been confidential but that he would ascertain if the figure could be made public.

Being aware that the proceeds of the sale should benefit the local community, what are the Council's plans for the Section 106 obligations?

The Leader of the Council did not know the answer but was aware that much effort had been made to secure the maximum benefit for the community. He recognised that development is a difficult issue but local authorities are obliged to reach the Government's development targets. These are currently the subject of consultation, and working with local communities, any development must result in a direct benefit for the local community. Regarding the proceeds of any land sales, he advised that the Council is using part of this towards its statutory obligations to the local community with regard to disabled facilities grants.

I thought the consultation currently being carried out is for a different phase of development? The development behind Newlands is about to commence. I am aware that regulations changed in February 2013 to the Community Infrastructure Levy, is the Newlands development under these new regulations or does this development pre-date the change?

The Leader of the Council replied that Section 106 Agreements would be phased out in favour of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to stop developers short-changing residents.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration advised that the CIL changed in February but only in respect of self-build developments.

The Leader of the Council confirmed this change in local policy which is designed to help local, smaller scale developers. The Council took soundings and found that, in some circumstances, the CIL would be prohibitive to development taking place, e.g. one or two properties on a plot. So a decision was taken to assist the long term by change. Large developments will still be subject to Section 106 Agreements.

RESOLVED that a written response be made to Mrs Richard in respect of her three questions.

135. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C Wanless.

136. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

(a) Members

There were no Declarations of Interest by Members.

(b) Officers

There were no Declarations of Interest by officers.

137. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13TH FEBRUARY 2014

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2014 be approved.

138. MINUTES FOR ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

RESOLVED that the Minutes for Action and Implementation be received.

139. OUTSTANDING MINUTES LIST

RESOLVED that the Outstanding Minutes List be received.

140. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be received.

SECTION A – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PUBLIC

Key Decisions

141. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
– COUNCILLOR S A GREAVES

(a) Corporate Plan 2014-2017 (Key Decision No. 424)

Members' approval was sought for the updated Corporate Plan which was appended to the report. The draft Plan was initially reported to the December 2013 meeting and consultation with local partners has taken place.

The main themes of the Plan are:

- A viable co-operative council
- Local growth
- Quality housing and decent neighbourhoods
- Local living standards

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

Members may wish to alter the updated version of the next Corporate Plan for Bassetlaw as they see fit, subject to officer capacity and the diminishing resource envelope Bassetlaw is operating with.

As the public sector moves into unknown territory and funding sinks to new and significantly lower levels, there is a risk that some of the ambitious work set out in the Plan may not reach fruition. However, if the Council takes an overly cautious approach then it will achieve nothing as the funding cuts start to bite into the core of the Council's capacity, with no alternative strategy to meet the challenges Members wish to see dealt with. The Corporate Plan provides a counter to that mindset.

In order to ensure the Corporate Plan is valid from the start of the financial year, waive of Call-in has been sought from and agreed by the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny. As it is necessary to obtain Council approval before the document is valid, to wait for the full call-in period to pass by would trigger the need to call an Extraordinary Meeting of Council which would incur additional cost. As the report to Council marks the end of the process and all Members have had an opportunity to comment on the proposals over the past few months including at scrutiny meetings, then this action is not seen as detrimental to the overall rigor of the process.

An Advisory Member queried the consultation process and the fact that it had only been circulated through the Bassetlaw Community and Voluntary Service. As far as she was aware, no parish councils had seen it. She raised three issues:

- There was no mention of other village settlements, other than Carlton-in-Lindrick, Langold and Tuxford.
- There was no mention of engagement with the public sector, which is probably Bassetlaw's largest employer.
- With regard to barriers to growth, she felt that other areas were equally important, e.g. infrastructure, broadband, travel to work.

The Chief Executive responded by saying that the consultation process used was felt to be the most appropriate but that changes have since been made. Consultation was only undertaken on the four main themes and the outlined projects, and not the introduction page. The villages referred to were the larger settlements; projects are business-led, hence the referral to the private sector; and the reference to barriers to growth is factual in respect of the Sheffield City Region, although the Council is looking at transport schemes; there is no work being undertaken on broadband within the City Region.

The Leader of the Council added that there will also be introductions to the Plan by himself and the Chief Executive, and that the points raised may be included in the most appropriate way.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration referred to the Growth Strategy later in the Agenda and that maybe the points raised could be included in the Growth Strategy instead.

Other Members were supportive of the Plan, particularly in respect of the Authority being a 'co-operative council', and as a basis for smarter working with partners, both public and private.

The issue of consultation with parish councils was raised again by an Advisory Member and a Liaison Member. The Leader of the Council felt that the issue should be recognised but gave an assurance that the process would be modified, and that they would be included in any consultation on the Growth Strategy.

RESOLVED that, subject to editorial licence, the updated Corporate Plan for 2014-2017 be agreed and referred to full Council for approval.

(b) Town Centres and Night Time Economy (Key Decision No. 364)

Members' approval was sought for the Night Time Economy (NTE) Strategy and Policy Statement for Bassetlaw which was appended to the report. The draft Strategy was initially presented to the December 2013 meeting and further consultation has taken place with licence holders and partners.

The meeting with licence holders was constructive and informative, and the view was secured that the preferred aim of a 2.00am closure within the town centres would be supported in general. Work is now being undertaken to develop actions to support each statement made within the Policy, and proactive action is already being taken by partner agencies to reinforce this approach.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the Strategy and Policy Statement is discretionary and therefore not enforceable but the Policy Statement will assist the Licensing Committee, particularly in conjunction with the new Statement of Licensing Policy which was approved in January 2014. The Strategy has been welcomed by the Police and other partners, and it is hoped that other local authorities within the County will adopt a similar position.

Several Members made supportive comments.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

Reviewing and developing a NTE Strategy for Bassetlaw ensures that the Council identifies and utilises the tools and powers at its disposal to both tackle the negative effects and support the positive benefits of a clearly defined NTE in the short, medium and longer term. In addition, through working with partner agencies, it also ensures wider powers (Police, Trading Standards, etc) are utilised and positive outcomes can be achieved for all those involved in a cohesive manner.

RESOLVED that the Strategy and Policy Statement for the Night Time Economy in Bassetlaw be approved.

142. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – REGENERATION – COUNCILLOR J WHITE

(a) Investing in North Nottinghamshire – Regeneration and Growth Strategy (Key Decision No. 443)

Members' approval was sought for the commencement of a consultation exercise on the draft Investing in North Nottinghamshire Growth Strategy 2014-2028 which was appended to the report. A clear objective in the Corporate Plan is:

"We want Bassetlaw to be a productive place to invest where business and enterprise thrive, where local people are working and creating confident communities where everyone does their bit."

This new economic vision for the District sets out a framework for growth and economic development over a 14-year period. It focuses on long-term objectives for sustainability, positioning the District as an important economic centre outside the major conurbations of the Sheffield City Region and those covered by the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The Council hopes to create a strong, buoyant, robust and successful economy, taking a lead in developing an area built on economic participation that stimulates opportunities for all.

The draft Strategy will be circulated to all partners, including those partners in the two LEPs' business and voluntary sectors.

Several Members gave supportive comments, and made suggestions, including:

- Extending the Robin Hood Line eastwards from Retford to Boston, possibly calling it the Pilgrim Fathers Line.
- The need for a formula to keep land values affordable.
- Building links to the east of the District, e.g. with Lincoln.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

Option One – To not support the draft Strategy and the subsequent consultation exercise.

Option Two – To support the draft Strategy and consult with partners from:

- Major local employers
- Nottinghamshire County Council
- D2 N2 Local Enterprise Partnership
- Sheffield City Regional Local Enterprise Partnership

RESOLVED that:

1. Thanks be recorded to officers and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration for their work involved in producing the Growth Strategy.
2. The draft Investing in North Nottinghamshire Growth Strategy 2014-2028 be supported and consultation with relevant partners be undertaken.
3. A further report detailing the feedback from the consultation exercise be presented to a future meeting of Cabinet.

Other Decisions

None.

143. REPORTING MINUTES

None.

144. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RESOLVED that, in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and after considering the public interest test as set out by the officer in the body of the report, Members agreed that the following items of business involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 2 and 3, and therefore, in accordance with Section 100A of the Act, the press and public be excluded from the meeting:

Agenda Item No. 11(a) – Core Business Applications Contract (Key Decision No. 419) – Paragraph 3

Agenda Item No. 12(a) – Legal and Licensing Service Review - Paragraph 2

(Councillor Sanger remained in the meeting with the Chairman's permission.)

SECTION B – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PRIVATE

Key Decisions

145. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – CUSTOMER AND SUPPORT SERVICES – COUNCILLOR S MAY

(a) Core Business Applications Contract (Key Decision No. 419)

Members' approval was sought to contract for core business applications which facilitate a number of key business services within the Authority.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

Members have the option of either approving re-commitment of the revenue expenditure with the best value supplier, or to reject the proposal. However, it should be noted that the applications discussed herein and their continuation are mandatory to many of the Council's key functions.

RESOLVED that:

1. Thanks be recorded to the Strategic ICT Manager for his work involved in this contract and for achieving efficiencies and savings.
2. Delegated authority be given to the Strategic ICT Manager, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Customer Services, to award the contract to the successful G-Cloud supplier, for an initial term of three years with the option to extend by a further two years.
3. The outcome of contract negotiations and award be reported to Cabinet at the earliest opportunity.

Other Decisions

146. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – CUSTOMER AND SUPPORT SERVICES – COUNCILLOR S MAY

(a) Legal and Licensing Service Review

Members were updated on the outcome of the formal consultation process approved by Cabinet on 3rd December 2013 relating to the proposed restructure arrangements for Legal and Licensing.

Members' approval was sought for the proposed arrangements detailed within the report.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The Legal Service has been in a state of flux for two years and has been wholly dependent upon the goodwill of existing staff in addition to the dependency of locum support. The organisational review has provided much needed guidance on some of the issues that must be addressed to create the optimum structure. Notwithstanding the budgetary pressure to reduce costs, the proposal represents the most pragmatic and viable restructuring option at this time which would also represent value for money by reducing the need to buy external support through locums and private legal services. It would further reinstate the team as a professional legal resource.

Members have the option of either progressing or not progressing with the proposed changes identified in this report. However, Members should be mindful of the issues identified, therefore any decision made must reflect a will to address those issues and mitigate risk to the Council.

RESOLVED that the proposed arrangements for the Legal and Licensing Service be approved.

147. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

After advising that the meeting of Cabinet scheduled for 6th May 2014 may not take place unless there are urgent reports to be considered, the Chairman reflected on the municipal year 2013/14 and outlined achievements in a positive year, namely:

- Living Wage accreditation for the Authority
- Securing low rent increases for Council tenants
- Securing a future contract with A1 Housing
- Supporting local businesses and apprenticeships
- A programme of new build Council housing
- Economic growth, locally, in Nottinghamshire and also the Sheffield City Region
- A new framework for Licensing
- The Growth Strategy
- Funding for the community and voluntary sector
- Continuation of concurrent grants for parish councils
- The achievement of awards by the Parks and Open Spaces Team, including the Green Flag Award for Kings' park
- Completion of the new Ordsall play area
- Commencement of works in Langold Country Park
- Action against environmental crime, including fly-tipping and dog-fouling
- Action against anti-social behaviour in the town centres, involving alcohol and drugs, and including the closure of crack-houses
- Approval for the new bus station in Worksop
- Lobbying in respect of the East Coast mainline - a vital link
- Being prudent with Council Tax payers' money

The Chairman closed the meeting after thanking everyone for their very positive work during the year and for their attendance tonight.

(Meeting closed at 8.00pm.)