

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Wednesday, 11 April 2018

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 14th March 2018 were agreed and signed by the Leader.

3. INTENTION TO HOLD PART OF THE MEETING IN PRIVATE IF NECESSARY

There were no items to be considered in private.

4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

Mr Roger Nesbitt addressed Cabinet in respect of Item 7 – *‘Designation of the Queens Park Neighbourhood Area & Forum for the purposes of neighbourhood planning’* and spoke in favour of the recommendations. He commented that the Plan would give residents a stronger voice and allow them more scope with regards to planning applications. He stated that the Queens Park Residents Association (QPRA) wanted to work alongside the ‘Friends of Thornton Park’ and noted that in no way was the proposed plan a takeover bid of the park and emphasised the need for inclusion which would benefit the wider community.

Ms Katie Abu addressed Cabinet in respect of Item 7 - *Designation of the Queens Park Neighbourhood Area & Forum for the purposes of neighbourhood planning’* and commented that although Thornton park was protected, the allotments behind the park were not part of any neighbourhood plan and therefore not protected. She stated that she understood the concerns of some residents of neighbouring areas who would not have voting rights, but noted that they were welcomed to consult on the preparation of the plan. She commented that the plan would empower local communities and give them a stronger voice on local matters and stated that the inclusion of the park was not a ‘land grab’; the inclusion of the park would benefit all users of the park facilities.

Mr Mike Kay (Chief Executive of Northampton Partnership Homes – (NPH)) addressed Cabinet in respect of Item 8 – *‘Procurement of contractor to develop Council owned land at St. Peter’s Way’* and elaborated thereon. He stated that it was with regret that the NPH Board could not agree to the proposals set out in the report.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hallam declared a personal non pecuniary interest in Item 9 – *‘12 month extension of Partnership Delegation Agreement with LGSS for the Delivery of Business Support Services’* as a County Councillor and an LGSS service user.

6. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were none.

7. DESIGNATION OF THE QUEENS PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA & FORUM FOR THE PURPOSES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

Councillor Beardsworth addressed Cabinet and commented that she was not against Neighbourhood Plans but noted her concerns that parks were an asset that belonged to everyone. She stated that residents of Kingsthorpe had not been leafleted until late and noted that Thornton Park had a long history with Kingsthorpe village. She commented that S106 monies had been spent on the park and many of her ward residents had contributed to the success of Park through voluntary work and questioned the fairness that those individuals would not be eligible to vote.

Councillor Marriott commented that he fully supported the report and recommendations and was pleased that the allotments would be protected through the designation. He noted that much of the S106 monies had come from Semilong Ward which he was pleased about. He stated that regardless on the fact the park fell in the Kingsthorpe ward, he was fully supportive and noted that despite the fact he and other residents in his ward would not be eligible to vote, they had been fully involved and their concerns listened to.

Councillor Birch stated that she fully supported the proposal to designate a Neighbourhood Area and thanked the planning officers and residents who had contributed. She reported that residents wanted to have a greater say over issues in their area and this was a positive way forward; the Area would be beneficial to those using Thornton Park and other local amenities. She explained that there appeared to be some lack of understanding with regards to the feedback from the consultation and stated that the Plan would empower local residents and that no one would be excluded from community engagement as local forums would be held for people to feed into.

Councillor Stone congratulated those people who had worked on the proposal and noted the work undertaken had brought people together. She referred to another Neighbour Plan and noted its success and the result achieved since it had been designated. She further noted that the plan would be adopted for all residents and that consultation with others would improve the area for all.

Councillor Hadland, as the relevant Cabinet Member, submitted his report and paid tribute to the hard work carried out by the people of the Queens Park Area. He emphasised the point that designation of the plan was a planning exercise and that it was not a land takeover and commented that it was an excellent way forward. He noted that the only exclusion was that some neighbouring residents would not be able to vote but noted that they would have their voices and concerns heard during consultation.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 That the analysis of representations received in response to the publicising of the Queens Park Neighbourhood Area and Neighbourhood Forum applications at Appendix 1 of the report be noted
- 2.2 That the Queens Park Neighbourhood Area as published in Appendix 2 of the report, for the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan under Section 61G of

the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) be designated.

2.3 That, following the designation of the Queens Park Neighbourhood Area, designated Queens Park Neighbourhood Forum (Appendix 3 of the report) under Section 61F of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for a period of five years for the purposes of producing a Neighbourhood Plan, subject to the following conditions:

- Maintaining a written constitution
- Holding an Annual General Meeting within 12 weeks of the designation
- Maintaining a minimum of 21 members drawn from each of the subsections set out within the Localism Act section 61F(5)

8. PROCUREMENT OF CONTRACTOR TO DEVELOP COUNCIL OWNED LAND AT ST.PETER'S WAY

Councillor Beardsworth addressed Cabinet and expressed concerns about air quality and increased traffic issues in the area. She asked that information be collected from both the Environmental Health and Highways to address her concerns.

Councillor McCutcheon noted that the Council had been trying to improve the area for a number of years. He further noted that it was a very difficult site for a number of reasons and questioned whether it would be suitable for NPH.

Councillor Hadland, as the relevant Cabinet Member, explained that the project had been running for a long time and as had the negotiations between the Council and NPH; the Council were currently in a position where more clarity and certainty was needed. He noted that they had indicative build costs and rent but this would need to be 'firmed up' and that the proposal was to allow for the tender process to get underway as soon as possible and to appoint a project and design team to commence work imminently to avoid any further unnecessary delays. Councillor Hadland concurred that section 3.1.6 could have had a little more clarity in detail but noted the need to do the best for the people of the Town and concerns raised by Councillor Beardsworth would be considered in the consultation process. In response to comments from Mr Kay, Councillor Hadland explained that the Section 151 Officer would have to be satisfied with the Business Case from both the perspective of both the Council and NPH.

The Leader reported that this project had been ongoing for a long time and that there was now a need to deal with it more expediently. He commented that the new Chief Executive Officer (NBC) would be on the project board and that there was a commitment to maintain the market rate. The Leader stated the need to reflect on previous costly decisions and a cautious approach taken. Due diligence was being undertaken and the project had become a priority of the Council.

Councillor Larratt concurred that the project was a priority and that it would provide an opportunity for an area needing improvement to be regenerated. He commented that there was a need to ensure that tenants and the tax payers would get value for money and the tender process would need to be completed and the rent guaranteed whilst vigilance and due diligence was exercised.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 That subject to a positive gateway exercise being carried out in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning, the Cabinet Member for Finance, and the Chief Finance Officer; the Head of Economic Development and Regeneration be authorised to commence the procurement of a contractor through an OJEU-compliant Open Tender process in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 be agreed.
- 2.2 That subject to a satisfactory review of the business cases (encompassing both an HRA Value for Money position and the Council's General Fund position) being carried out after receipt of tenders, the Head of Economic Development and Regeneration, acting in consultation with the Borough Secretary & Monitoring Officer, the Chief Finance Officer and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning, be authorised to finalise the terms of the Lease between the Council and Northampton Partnership Homes Limited, and to enter into an Agreement For Lease (AFL) be agreed.
- 2.3 That consideration of the recommendations of the Horizon Park Project Board relating to the project design team, and agrees to appoint RG+P Ltd., Aecom Limited, Desco (Design and Consultancy) Ltd., and Wood Group Ltd. as the Design Team pursuant to paragraph 3.1.8 of the report be agreed.
- 2.4 That a further report be brought to Cabinet following the procurement exercise making recommendations on the award of the main construction contract be agreed.
- 2.5 That any further issues that arise would be reported to Cabinet.

9. 12 MONTH EXTENSION OF PARTNERSHIP DELEGATION AGREEMENT WITH LGSS FOR THE DELIVERY OF BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES

Councillor Beardsworth questioned whether the LGSS contract had offered the Council value for money and asked for assurance that alongside the extension of the contract that the Council receive their money's worth.

Councillor Stone asked why the review had been so late in the contract and questioned why it had not been put in place a year previously. She commented that some services had been brought back in house with little explanation for the reasons behind the decision and recognised that whilst there was a need for Councils to make savings she questioned the costs of doing so.

Councillor Eldred, as the relevant Cabinet Member, reported that there was a review of the shared services in every area of the Council. He commented that he and the Deputy Leader had worked closely looking at the contract and that it was hoped in 6 months to a years' time they would be better position to assess whether there was a need for a change to the contract.

Councillor Larratt stated that there was a need to ensure that the Council achieved the best value for money. He noted that there had been some very positive aspects of the shared service, which included the revenue and benefits department. He recognised that there had been some issue with the service but expressed the need of a balanced view to be taken.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 That a one year extension to the current PDA with the joint committee comprising Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire County Council LGSS)) for the core ICT

service, Business Systems service, Finance Operations service, Finance Professional service, Insurance service and the Procurement service to allow time to consider all options for the future delivery of the said services be approved.

- 2.2 That existing internal resources are allocated to undertake the required service reviews and the development of a future Business System solution be agreed.
- 2.3 That the outcome of the service review would inform a future cabinet report outlining the options and recommendations for delivery of support services post May 2019 be agreed.

The meeting concluded at 7.01pm