



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP

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Record of a meeting of the **CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham at 7.00 pm on **Thursday 22 April 2010**.

PRESENT: Mr N M Wainwright (in the Chair)
Mr P J W Golden
Mr T Lovell

Also in

Attendance Mr R B Begy Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services
Mr T C King Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services

OFFICERS

PRESENT: Mr M Baish Director of Corporate Services
Mrs V Brambini Head of Capital Projects
Mr D Brown Head of Highway Management
Mrs J Wall Director of Development
Miss G George Senior Governance Officer, Peterborough City Council

APOLOGIES: Mr B W Roper, Mr V Dighé, Mr T C Ellis and Mr P D Ind

1060 RECORD OF LAST MEETING

The record of the meeting of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel held on 25 February 2010, copies of which had been previously circulated, was confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

1061 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr T Lovell declared a personal but non prejudicial interest in item 7.3, Better Schools for All, as he was a school governor.

Mr N M Wainwright declared a prejudicial interest in item 7.1, Catmose Campus, and stated that he would stand down as Chair of the meeting but would remain in the room whilst discussion was taking place of which he would have no part.

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The Chairman announced that, with the consent of the Panel, agenda item 7 (ii) would be considered before agenda item 7 (i).

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1062 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr Alan Walters of Oakham asked the following question with notice:

“My question relates to item 7, updates on capital projects, section (iii) The Little Build.

The question is as to whether the Panel will reject the update briefing in its entirety given the briefing notes part 3) Design subsection 3.2 Access and layout do not accurately reflect the reality of the situation given:

- A. The dubious nature of the statistics included in the Little Build Transport Assessment dated March 2010 in so far as that:
 1. it fails to accurately assess the transport impact of moving the Parks School by relating the figure of “10 vehicles at peak time” instead of the true figure of over 20 vehicles being moved from one location to another
 2. it notes the loss of two lay-byes in front of the school but conveniently ignores that these lay-byes have a capacity for ten cars when stating that the drop off facilities within the school will have “5 additional spaces”
 3. it states that vehicle usage may be reduced by education and encouragement and greater use of public services, but conveniently fails to mention that the plan calls for the loss of two bus stops in front of the school

And

- B. The briefing note glibly states that the plan is a “well considered solution for the school and the local community” but conveniently ignores the outrage of the community at the plans and appears to attempt to show to the Panel that this is a final acceptable plan for the community which it clearly is not due to the greatly heightened risk to children if the plan is allowed to proceed without amendment to address transport parking and road safety concerns.

I therefore ask the Panel to reject the briefing note and to call upon the author to submit a revised report with a more accurate reflection of the true figures involved and the strength of feeling of the community against the detail of the plan.”

In response, Mrs J Wall, Director of Development addressed the Panel and stated that with regards to the impact of traffic, the number of vehicles had been accounted for in the Transport Assessment provided directly by the school. This assessment was based on car counting and the higher figure which had previously been provided had been falsely inflated by local residents parking and visitors to the site.

The lay-bys mentioned were marked as bus stops and not as designated drop off points, however it was widely accepted that one of the lay-bys was regularly used for the purpose of dropping off at peak times and had space for a total of seven cars to be parked in it at any one time. The proposals included provision for eleven on site parking spaces so it was believed that the loss of the lay-bys had been compensated for.

The plan proposed the removal of the bus stops from the front of the school due to their lack of use. The Panel was advised that there was no risk to children by the proposed scheme and the new drop off and parking arrangements would lessen the congestion outside the front of the school. Going forward, Cabinet would address any issues with regards to congestion.

Mr T C King, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, addressed the Panel and stated that he was mindful of the issues faced in Queens Road and he re-iterated that Cabinet would be looking into congestion issues on June 18 2010.

1063 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No questions were received from Members.

1064 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

No Notices of Motion were received from Members.

1065 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE PANEL FOR A DECISION IN RELATION TO CALL IN OF A DECISION

No matter was referred to the Panel for a decision in relation to call-in of a decision in accordance with Procedure Rule 206.

SCRUTINY

1066 UPDATES ON CAPITAL PROJECTS

(ii) The Little Build

A briefing note from the Director of Development, which outlined the project progress, was received.

The Head of Capital Projects addressed the Panel and during discussion the following points were noted:

- a) The full planning application had been submitted and was due to be presented to the Development Control & Licensing Committee on 27 April 2010 for approval.
- b) Pre-works on the site were due to commence during July 2010 with the main construction works due to commence in August 2010.
- c) Completion of the new building was currently scheduled for July 2011 to be ready for occupation in September 2011.
- d) Demolition of the existing school would take place during September/October 2011 and would be followed by the completion of the car park and site landscaping across the original school site.

The Head of Capital Projects presented a copy of the site layout to the Panel for consideration.

- e) There was an expectation from DSCF that all new schools should achieve a 60% reduction in carbon emissions and the Technical Design team had been addressing methods of achieving this.
- f) To achieve the full 60% carbon reduction, £30k of additional capital for the hot water heating system would be required.
- g) Due to the delay in construction over the winter period, costs were likely to be incurred and there would be revenue issues on the schools budget if both schools had to be open at the same time.
- h) The risk of not receiving the funds for the project was low and most of the money had already been paid.

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Mr N M Wainwright, having declared a prejudicial interest in item 7.1, Catmose Campus, stood down as Chair of the meeting but remained in the room whilst discussion was taking place. Mr P J W Golden took the Chair for the following item.

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Mr P Golden in the Chair

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(i) Catmose Campus

A briefing note outlining the project progress was received from the Director of Development.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- a) Work had been progressing well but had slowed down over the winter months and the number of days lost had yet to be confirmed. The contractor had claimed that the delay now stood at 7 weeks.
- b) Construction progress was now back to a normal pace with the external works on the pitches and public piazza going well. The building was due to be watertight by the end of April 2010.
- c) Tenders for the ICT systems and equipment were due for return on the 16 April 2010 and the final details were being completed on the product specifications and tender packages for the various loose furniture and equipment.
- d) The risk register continued to be managed by the project team and a number of key risks had heightened over the last period in relation to cost and partnership working.
- e) There had been an attempt during Autumn 2009 to bring forward the sports management contract and associated campus agreements, however these had stalled after Catmose College issued a letter offering licences in lieu of some of these agreements. It had been agreed by both parties that the original timescale should be reverted to.
- f) Progress on the occupation agreement had been slow and a meeting was due to be held with the college on 28 April 2010 to negotiate levels of governance. It was hoped that this situation would be moved forward in advance of the Campus opening date in 2010.
- g) There had been questions raised by the college regarding the walkway that had been constructed in the school. It was a steel structure and was visibly obtrusive to theatre seats. Conversations would need to take place with the college in order to agree whether the walkway should be modified or removed.

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Mr N M Wainwright resumed the Chair.

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Mr N M Wainwright in the Chair

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(iii) Better Schools for All

A briefing note providing an update on the Better Schools for all Strategy was received from the Director of Development.

The Head of Capital Projects addressed the Panel and during discussion the following points were noted:

- a) All schools had received an initial visit from Capital Projects Children & Young People's Services officers to review project requirements, assess

condition survey data and prioritise needs and to understand each schools' key drivers for change.

- b) A report was due to be submitted to Cabinet on 18 May 2010 highlighting detailed proposals school by school.
- c) The schools had been assessed along 7 strategic themes and work had been undertaken with the contractor upfront in order to target the cost of the contract. Contingencies would enable funds to be rolled forwards from school to school if they were not used.
- d) Discussions had taken place with the schools prior to the report being submitted to Cabinet. These discussions had highlighted the work the schools would like to be undertaken and what could be achieved within the budget available.
- e) Initial budget costs and feasibility reports for each of the schools were being prepared by the contractor prior to the report due to be submitted to Cabinet, which may recommend some alterations to the indicative sums the schools were working with in order to ensure a consistent approach to improving learning whilst tackling the most pressing condition needs.

1067 CUSTOMER CARE

Report No 79/2010 from the Chief Executive, as considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 6 April 2010, was received. The report introduced the draft guide to Customer Care Standards to be subject to public consultation.

The Director of Corporate Services gave an overview of the report and during discussion the following points were noted:

- a) A small working group from within the Council had been reviewing the Council's current customer care standards as part of the overall Access2Services project.
- b) The proposed vision for Customer Care and the proposed Standards were outlined and the Panel was informed that the proposals were currently out for public consultation. If the proposals were adopted they could then be implemented. However, there may be hidden resource requirements.
- c) The proposed targets, which made up the customer care pledge, were outlined to the Panel and it was noted that the pledge could be easily be achieved. However, the question was one of cost. If it was identified that the pledge was worth progressing the costs would need to be established.
- d) It was identified that a lot of the calls received by the Council were requests to be re-directed to the relevant department or person, therefore an automated service would be a good idea, but again costs would need to be established and it would need to be identified whether the calls could be dealt with quicker by customer services.
- e) The issuing of direct numbers for individual people was to be discussed further. Reservations were highlighted regarding this point as it would not be good practice to have one individual answering numerous calls. There would also be the problem of individuals being away from their desks.
- f) The customer consultation was due to take place over the next four weeks and it was highlighted that a report on the findings would be welcomed.

1068 UPDATE ON ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

A briefing note was received from the Director of Development which provided the Panel with an update on the Asset Management Plan.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- a) Discussions had taken place in order to identify what constituted good practice in terms of asset management.
- b) Part of establishing the work for a new plan was the review of good practice elsewhere. Six different performance areas including Corporate Governance and Data Management were highlighted to the Panel. These points were considered by the beacon authorities on asset management to be the key criteria for an excellent plan.
- c) Combining the Asset Management Plan and the Capital Strategy was a significant piece of work and would ensure that the Council's overall assets and borrowing requirements were considered as a single entity with analysis of return on capital employed to ensure best value was achieved.
- d) The Plan structure and developments were set out in 9 areas, these areas including the aims and purpose for asset management, condition and maintenance and estate management were highlighted to the Panel.
- e) The Plan was due to be presented to Cabinet in June 2010.

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND TOPICS

1069 SCRUTINY PROGRAMME 2010/11 REVIEW OF FORWARD PLAN

The following topics were noted as requiring the attention of the Panel:

- Benchmarking with other local authorities to provide a value for money overview
- Benchmarking with other local authorities to provide an overview of how the Council performs similar services

1070 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

1071 DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 24 June 2010 at 7pm.

Draft agenda to include: Catmose council buildings – condition and long term plans.

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The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.15 pm.

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