



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 7.00pm on **Thursday 24 February 2011**

PRESENT: Mr N Wainwright – Chairman (in the Chair)
Mr M E Baines (for part of the meeting)
Mr K A Bool
Mr T C Ellis
Mr P J W Golden
Mr B W Roper

Also in Attendance: Mr R B Begy Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services
Mr T C King Portfolio Holder for Development and Finance

OFFICERS Ms S Dring Head of Business Support – Resources
Miss D Muddimer Strategic Director for Resources
Miss T D Stokes Democratic Services Manager

APOLOGIES: Capt V Dighé, Mr P D Ind and Miss C L Jones

873 RECORD OF MEETING

- i) The Record of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel held on 16 December 2010, copies of which had been previously circulated, was confirmed and signed by the Chairman.
- ii) The Record of the Special Meeting of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel held on 13 January 2011, copies of which had been previously circulated, was confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

874 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Regulations, Members were invited to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they might have and the nature of those interests in respect of items on the Agenda and/or indicate if Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

Mr Wainwright declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the urgent items of business (ie Barleythorpe Hall, The Parks/Day Care Centre site and Ashwell Depot). He left the room during their consideration. It was agreed that Mr Bool would assume the Chair for these items.

875 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, deputation or questions had been received from members of the public.

876 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No questions had been received from members.

877 NOTICE OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

No Notices of Motion had been received from members.

878 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

879 TRANSFER OF LEGAL SERVICES

Report No 32/2011 from the Strategic Director for Resources which was considered by the Cabinet on 15 February 2011, was received. Cabinet had previously given its approval to delegate the Legal Services function to Peterborough City Council on 15 February 2011.

During his introduction, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Mr Begy, indicated that whilst the decision had been approved to transfer the Legal Service to Peterborough City Council, consultation with staff and the unions was ongoing. Following implementation on 1 April 2011, Mr Begy believed the Council would receive a better service, a clearer service and a more cost effective service whilst remaining accountable to scrutiny, Cabinet and full Council.

The following points were noted during discussion:-

- i) Querying how the service could be better provided by Peterborough, it was noted that a Service Level Agreement (SLA) would be compiled to provide a basis for monitoring the Authority's expectations and needs in terms of a Legal Service for the future.
- ii) Monthly progress reports would be provided to the Head of Business Support – Resources, detailing hours spent, jobs undertaken and future workload; thus enabling work to be monitored against the SLA.
- iii) Legal representatives from Peterborough City Council would be asked to attend a future meeting of the Panel.
- iv) The Authority would receive the relevant legal support from Peterborough's large team of specialists as and when required.
- v) Legal presence (possibly the Head of Legal Services, Peterborough City Council) would be available to Rutland on site on a regular basis.
- vi) Clarification was provided as to the anticipated value of the saving following transfer. Costings in respect of future capital schemes/specific projects would be sought in the future.

AGREED:-

That the Cabinet's decision to delegate the Legal Service to Peterborough City Council, be supported.

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND TOPICS

880 SCRUTINY PROGRAMME 2010/11 & REVIEW OF FORWARD PLAN

AGREED

That the following items be included in a future agenda:-

- Sustainable Procurement Strategy
- Final Local Economic Assessment
- Q3 2010/11 Performance Management Report
- Q3 2010/11 Financial Management Report
- Legal Service – following transfer

881 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman indicated that he had agreed to allow a report from the Head of Asset Management on Major Property Disposals 2011/12 to be considered as an urgent item of business. This would enable scrutiny panel members to debate three potential major property disposals scheduled for 2011/12 prior to Cabinet considering the matter on 15 March 2011.

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Having previously declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item of urgent business, Mr Wainwright left the meeting.

Mr Bool assumed the Chair.

At 7.30pm, Mr Baines joined the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

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882 MAJOR PROPERTY DISPOSALS 2011/12

Panel members' views were invited regarding three potential property disposals in 2011/12 prior to consideration by the Cabinet on 15 March 2011.

a) Barleythorpe Hall

Consideration was given to the possible re-marketing of the site following the unsuccessful sale in 2008. Issues considered included the potential demolition of the Hall and the provision of a new access.

**Agreed:- that Cabinet be recommended to market the site with offers being reported to full Council;
that the Hall be retained; and
that the potential for a new access from Manor Lane be explored further.**

b) The Parks/Day Care Centre site

Consideration was given to the possible joint sale of the Council's site in conjunction with Tresham College's adjoining land which could, it was anticipated, generate a capital receipt in August 2011 or June 2012. Panel members noted that the site could be suited to affordable housing and supported the proposal to enter into a joint collaboration agreement with Tresham. However, it was important for the Council to retain as much of the sale as possible and the capital value of the site.

Agreed:- that Cabinet be recommended to continue drafting a collaboration agreement with Tresham College; and that joint marketing of the site takes place as soon as practical with offers being reported to full Council for approval in early Summer.

c) Ashwell Depot

RESOLVED:-

- i) That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during discussion of this item of business in accordance with Procedure Rule 239 (Exclusion of Access by the Public and Press).**
- ii) That any elected Members present who were not members of the scrutiny panel be allowed to remain during consideration of this exempt business in accordance to the access to information provisions of Procedure Rule 239.**

Consideration was given to the future of the Ashwell Depot site. Issues considered included the retention/reconfiguration of the salt barn and the development of the remainder of the site, possibly for a mixed tenure housing scheme. Funding could be made available from the Homes and Community Agency (HCA) following submission of a bid by the Nottingham Community Housing Association (NCHA) by mid-April 2011.

Panel members noted that it was in the Authority's interest to press ahead with the proposal as expediently as possible bearing in mind the site's close proximity to Ashwell Prison and the imminent decision on its future. In addition, the availability of funding and the existing planning consents for the site would assist the process.

Agreed:- that Cabinet be recommended to confirm its support to NCHA for the funding bid to the HCA; that more detailed negotiations take place regarding the content of the scheme and the potential capital receipt; that the salt barn reconfiguration project be progressed further, subject to funding being identified; and that the outcome of the negotiations be reported to Council for approval.

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The press and public were re-admitted to the meeting at this juncture.

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883 DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 21 April 2011 at 7pm.

Agenda items noted in 880 above.

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The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.15pm.

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