



CABINET

5.30 – 6.30 pm

19 January 2011

Present: Councillors Morpew (chair), Arthur (vice-chair), MacDonald, Sands, Waters and Westmacott

Also Present: Councillors Offord, Stephenson and Wright

Apologies: Councillor Bremner and Brociek-Coulton

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2011.

2. LOCAL DECISIONS: A FAIRER FUTURE FOR LOCAL HOUSING – RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

(The Chair agreed to take this as an urgent item for consideration and endorsement because the consultation deadline had coincided with the Cabinet meeting).

Councillor Arthur, cabinet member for housing and deputy leader, introduced the report and said that it set out Norwich City Council's formal response to the consultation paper Local decisions: a fairer future for social housing. The response had been developed with input from officers, elected members and the chair of the Norwich Tenants' CityWide Board.

RESOLVED to note and endorse the response to the consultation.

3. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES DPD – REGULATION 25 CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Councillor MacDonald, cabinet member for the environment, introduced the report and said that it should be discussed alongside item 6 on the agenda regarding the Norwich site allocations and site specific policies development plan document for consultation. The combination of documents would be put out to consultation to ensure that the public had an opportunity to be involved in the policy development and to comment on the shortlisted sites.

The Chair proposed that site M007, the former Lakenham Sports and Leisure Centre, be withdrawn from the proposed shortlist because development on the site could lead to the loss of open space and local amenities.

Councillor Stephenson said that officers should be applauded for the production of the documentation and the ongoing consultation with members and the public. She commented that green spaces, conservation areas and employment areas should be spread throughout the city, enhancing bio-diversity corridors and protecting animals and plants, whilst providing a greater number of mixed use residential/employment areas. In response to comments regarding the inclusion of the reuse of materials, energy efficiency and water efficiency, the planning team leader - policy, explained that those areas were covered at a strategic level within the joint core strategy, and therefore were not repeated within the development management policies.

RESOLVED to -

- (1) authorise the Regulation 25 consultation for the Development Management Plan; and
- (2) give delegated authority to the director of regeneration and development to make minor changes required to the document following Cabinet.

4. NORWICH SITE ALLOCATIONS AND SITE SPECIFIC POLICIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT FOR CONSULTATION

The item was discussed within item 'development management policies DPD – regulation 25 consultation document' above.

RESOLVED to –

- (1) authorise the second stage of Regulation 25 consultation for the site allocations plan, subject to the removal of site M007 from the site shortlist; and
- (2) give delegated authority to the director of regeneration and development to make minor changes required to the document following Cabinet.

5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL SETTLEMENT AND DECENTRALISATION AND LOCALISM BILL

Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources, performance and shared services, introduced the report and explained that a letter had been sent to the local government minister regarding the provisional local government settlement, setting out compelling arguments against the proposals which would result in an increase to the authority's total saving requirement for 2011/12. The letter requested clarification on points such as 1) that Norwich City Council's low council tax base, which created a greater dependence on the formula grant, had not been reflected in the proposals; and 2) £1.7 million had been removed from the budget regarding concessionary bus fares. He did not expect any change to the proposed financial settlement but wanted to demonstrate how poorly Norwich had been treated.

The head of strategy and programme management, provided a summary of the decentralisation and localism bill which was introduced into parliament on 13 December 2010, proposing various changes to local government powers and responsibilities. The bill would take approximately 12 months to go through

parliament and the progress and potential impacts would be monitored and reported back to members.

In response to a question from Councillor R Wright, Councillor Waters said that the implications of the bill required clarification. He said that the bill could undermine the council's commissioning as well as increase the cost and time taken to allocate contracts because some could fall under the European Procurement Regulations. He said that the bill would give provision for the secretary of state to set council tax for all local authorities around the country. The authority would be seeking clarification of the powers of the secretary of state and a general statement outlining the roles and power of local government. He said that an effective localism bill should enable the public to be part of the decision making process and provide a framework for strong local government.

RESOLVED to –

- (1) note the local government financial settlement and its implications for the council's medium term financial strategy; and
- (2) note the new decentralisation and localism bill.

6. DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ANGLIA LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LEP)

The chair presented the report and said that although the New Anglia LEP did not currently appear to be a better alternative to the abolished Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), the authority would fully support the LEP. It was a positive opportunity to talk to a new range of people and build on the relationships developed through regional cities east. The creation of a detailed business plan had begun, setting out the priorities for the LEP, and focusing on specific areas to deliver in partnership. The business plan would be signed-off by all members of LEP however because the timescale was unclear and could fall at the same time as purdah, it was proposed that sign-off should continue to be delegated to the director of regeneration and development.

In response to a question from Councillor Stephenson, the chair explained that the process would need to be open and engage as many as possible including local businesses and councillors. Some issues regarding processes needed to be resolved and guidance from the government was still outstanding.

RESOLVED that the director of regeneration & development is given delegated authority, in consultation with the leader of the council, to consider and take appropriate action to:

- Support the development of a detailed business plan for the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership that will meet the needs of the City of Norwich.
- Secure the best council and business representation for Norwich in any proposed Local Enterprise Partnership operational structure.
- Capture the opinions of the local business community and ensure that their needs and aspirations are used to inform the actions of a Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Formally endorse, if appropriate, the New Anglia LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) and its formal business plan on behalf of Norwich City Council

7. ALLOTMENTS RULES REVIEW

The parks and open spaces manager, presented the report and said that the new allotment rules aimed to provide clarity to tenants and officers.

Councillor Offord thanked all officers for their engagement of tenants and other groups in the review of the allotment rules and clarification of tenancy rights. In response to further comments, the parks and open spaces manager said that the rules deliberately avoided being too specific because they could be difficult for officers to enforce, for example the use of certain pesticides.

The chair said that the rules would require sensitive application and congratulated all involved in their review.

RESOLVED to adopt the allotment rules 2011 for all the council's allotments (including existing tenancies) with effect from 7 March 2011, in accordance with Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 section 28 (as amended).

CHAIR