

Wednesday 2nd December 2009

PRESENT:

Councillor Francine Haeberling – Leader of the Council
Councillor Malcolm Hanney – Resources and Deputy Leader
Councillor Vic Pritchard – Adult Social Services and Housing
Councillor Terry Gazzard – Development and Major Projects
Councillor Charles Gerrish – Customer Services
Councillor Chris Watt – Children's Services

43 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair was taken by Councillor Francine Haeberling, Leader of the Council.
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

44 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure as set out on the Agenda

45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor David Hawkins.

46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Councillor Malcolm Hanney declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest relating to Agenda Item 12, as Chair of the Primary Care Trust.

47 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR(PERSON)

There was none.

48 QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

There were 17 questions from the following people: Councillor Will Sandry (2), Councillor John Bull, Councillor Nathan Hartley, Councillor Nicholas Coombes(5), Councillor Dr Eleanor Jackson, Councillor Marian McNeir, Councillor Roger Symonds(4), Helen Woodley (2).

[Copies of the questions and responses, including supplementary questions and responses if any, have been placed on the Minute book as Appendix 1 and are available on the Council's website.]

49 STATEMENTS, DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

Debbie Diack, proprietor of The King's Arms, made a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 2*] during which she presented a petition to Cabinet entitled "Keep Live Music at the Kinger". She reminded Cabinet that live music had been played at The King's Arms for a number of years and a recent complaint was the first ever. She said the petitioners were concerned that the King's

Arms might lose its music license.

The Chair referred the petition to Councillor Charles Gerrish for his response in due course.

The Chair agreed that Councillor Andy Furse could make an *ad hoc* statement at this point. Councillor Furse said he was supportive of the petition presented by Debbie Diack and reminded Cabinet that only one complaint had been received about the music noise. He promised to work with Councillor Gerrish to ensure the best outcome for the whole community, including the complainant.

50 MINUTES: WEDNESDAY 4th NOVEMBER 2009

On a motion from Councillor Francine Haeberling, seconded by Councillor Charles Gerrish, it was

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 4th November 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

51 CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE MEMBER ITEMS NOW REQUISITIONED TO CABINET

There were none.

52 CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS REFERRED BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BODIES

There were none.

53 SINGLE MEMBER CABINET DECISIONS PUBLISHED SINCE PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING (Report 11)

The Cabinet noted the report.

54 OFFICE RATIONALISATION PROJECT (Report 12).

Councillor Tony Crouch, Keynsham Town Council, made a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 3*] expressing his personal support for the proposals, on condition that the project would include provision for retail outlets. He thanked Council Officers for their hard work in preparing the project.

Dr Peter Roberts, Chairman of Keynsham Heritage Trust Ltd and Chairman of Keynsham Town Plan Steering Group, made an *ad hoc* statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 4*] in which he reminded Cabinet of the long history of Keynsham. He said that the project was a unique opportunity to do something positive for Keynsham.

Councillor John Bull made an *ad hoc* statement on behalf of the Labour Group. He was not opposed to the proposals but asked for assurances about the retail content; the intention to retain a presence in the 3 main population centres; that transport links would be improved between the 3 centres; and that negotiations with staff unions would be satisfactorily completed.

Councillor Paul Crossley said that the Council had always retained a presence in the 3 main centres and did not doubt that would continue. He was concerned that the Council must not leave behind empty office space. He emphasised that the new development in Keynsham must include adequate retail space.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney, in proposing the item, thanks the team from Property Services who had worked so hard to get the project to the present state. He introduced Tom McBain, Divisional Director, Property Services, who showed a presentation [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 5*]. The

presentation explained the various options and benefits; and the rationale for the recommended option.

Councillor Hanney explained that the recommended option was not identical to that adopted by Cabinet in January 2009, because some details had been reconsidered in the light of consultation feedback. Pilots in Children's Services and in Revenues and Benefits had resulted in higher productivity, which showed that the Council can be flexible at the same time as delivering higher productivity and improved services.

Councillor Hanney confirmed the commitment to the 3 population centres and said that it was essential to attract the private sector to Bath, which would be possible once the Council released some of the prime office space. He also agreed that the inclusion of retail outlets as part of the Keynsham development was essential.

In moving the item, Councillor Hanney explained that clause (3) had been slightly amended from the published recommendations, in the interests of clarity; and a new clause (6) had been added in order to give an assurance to retailers and residents in Keynsham of the Council's commitment to include new retail outlets in the project brief.

Councillor Charles Gerrish seconded the proposal. He was very pleased that Councillor Hanney had given the assurance about the inclusion of retail outlets in the plans. He would ideally have wanted to maximise the Council's investment in Keynsham, but said that he recognised that option (c) was the right choice. He asked Councillor Hanney to ensure that local people would have opportunity to input into the plans.

Councillor Gerrish referred to the point made by Councillor Crossley and said that a recent Business Land Study had determined that Bath needed more office space; so by releasing space, the Council would enable the private sector to invest in Bath. He also referred to the points made about transportation by saying that the recent Rail Utilisation Study contained positive news for those travelling between Keynsham and Bristol or Bath. He was also looking to encourage improved bus services between Keynsham and Midsomer Norton. The Council would produce a green travel plan along with its proposals.

Councillor Chris Watt welcomed the broad terms commitment to maintain and improve The Hollies. He felt that the proposals went even further than this, because it would bring additional staff to Midsomer Norton. He believed that in Bath the public sector had been in a danger of crowding out the private sector; and that by vacating some space, some of this pressure would be relieved. He wanted to emphasise that by enabling locality working – social workers, health professionals and police together – the proposals would support the effective safeguarding of children.

Councillor Vic Pritchard was very supportive of the proposals. He wanted to see Keynsham rejuvenated and hoped that the historical artefacts spoken of by Dr Peter Roberts could be given a permanent home so that they could be put on show for the benefit of the public.

Councillor Terry Gazzard also supported the proposals and appealed for the splendid Roman mosaics to be given an appropriate setting in which to be seen by the public.

Councillor Francine Haerberling said that the proposals, while centred on Keynsham, were important for Bath too. She had been approached as a last resort by a number of businesses asking for help in releasing office space in Bath. The proposals would constitute a first step in this process.

In summing up, Councillor Hanney said he was pleased that Councillor Gerrish had acknowledged the additional 5% of savings offered by the proposed option. He emphasised that the points made about the need for retail outlets had been fully taken on board.

Rationale

Having regard to the options and financial analysis work, Option C is the most affordable and deliverable option that will meet the objectives set out in the report.

Other Options Considered

Other options considered were listed within the January 2009 Cabinet Report.

On a motion from Councillor Malcolm Hanney, seconded by Councillor Charles Gerrish, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

- (1) To NOTE the implementation of the medium term office plan in order to resolve the issue of lease expiries in Bath. Further details of this plan are contained within Appendix 3 of the report. The February Budget Report will include this work, but the plan is self funding and generates a saving;
- (2) To NOTE the outcome of the Viability and Urban Regeneration Study, summarised within Section 4 of the report, which confirms that the Council's plan for a new build office within Keynsham is viable and deliverable;
- (3) To CONFIRM the intention to pursue option C of the office accommodation plan and report back in August 2010 when we have proposals from developer partners;
- (4) To AGREE that Property Services will proceed to seek a development partner for the redevelopment of the Keynsham Town Hall site;
- (5) To ASK the Chief Property Officer to report back to Cabinet upon receipt of developer proposals for the Keynsham Town Hall site, prior to their appointment and commencement of detailed design and construction;
- (6) To AGREE to seek to maximise the retail offer of the town.

The meeting ended at 18:02

Chair _____

Date Confirmed and Signed _____

Prepared by Democratic Services