



**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET
TUESDAY 13 JULY 2010**

Held At 7.00pm in Committee Room 1, Civic Centre, Pavilion Road, West Bridgford

PRESENT:

Councillors J A Cranswick (Chairman), D G Bell, J E Fearon, R Hetherington, Mrs D J Mason

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors Mrs D M Boote, S J Boote, A MacInnes, R Mallender, J A Stockwood

OFFICERS PRESENT:

C Bullett	Deputy Chief Executive (CB)
A Graham	Chief Executive
S Griffiths	Deputy Chief Executive (SG)
S Harley	Head of Planning & Place Shaping
N Morton	Head of Financial Services
P Randle	Deputy Chief Executive (PR)
D Swaine	Head of Corporate Services
L Reid-Jones	Democratic Services Manager

APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE:

Councillor J N Clarke

16. Declarations of Interest

There were none declared.

17. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 8 June 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18. Charging for Pre-Planning Application Advice

Councillor Bell presented a report of the Head of Planning and Place Shaping which brought forward proposals for charging for pre-planning application advice. He reminded Members that this had been identified in the Budget Workshops last year and it had received a high level of support from both Members and resident representatives.

Commenting further Councillor Bell indicated that the provision of pre planning application advice had a resource implication for the Council in that it impacted on officer time. He added that as a result a number of local authorities were introducing a charge for the advice. He went onto to explain that potential

service users had been consulted and there had been a mixed response to the proposals which was understandable as a charge was being proposed. The report at appendix two set out an appraisal and evaluation of the consultation response.

By referring to the report Councillor Bell indicated that there were exemptions to the charges particularly in relation to advice on applications for single household extensions. The proposed charges were expressly set out at appendix one within the report and it was planned that the scheme would be reviewed and amended if necessary in future.

In response to a question from Councillor Cranswick, the Head of Planning and Place Shaping informed Members that advice would be given in best faith and that planning permission could not be guaranteed on the strength of advice given. This would be made clear in the scheme and was a clear and established principle upon which the provision of advice was based.

RESOLVED THAT:-

- (a) the proposed charging regime as set out in appendix 2 of the report be approved;
- (b) free advice be provided for extensions to premises of small local businesses with up to 10 employees; and
- (c) minor adjustments could be made to the scheme in consultation with the portfolio holder.

19. **STABLE BLOCK, WEST BRIDGFORD HALL**

Councillor Mrs Mason presented the report of the Head of Community Shaping, which outlined the financial implications of converting the Stable Block at West Bridgford Hall into additional accommodation for the Rushcliffe Community and Voluntary Service (RCVS).

The report indicated that the proposal for the conversion originated from work relating to a Community hub and included upgrade work and general improvements. By referring to the report Councillor Mrs Mason stated that the implications were considerable and drew Members' attention to the work of RCVS, in particular its commitment to enhancing and developing the 'Stronger Communities strand' of the Rushcliffe Community Partnership.

Councillor Mrs Mason went on to explain that the present financial climate and the potential implications for the Council and the third sector had played a significant part in considerations regarding the stable block. Furthermore these had required a balanced view to be drawn taking into account the RCVS business case and the financial implications for the Council.

The report indicated that RCVS received £44,548 funding from the Borough Council as part of a service level agreement, with £8,200 of this being paid back to the Council as rent for Park Lodge. This meant the net cost to the Council was £36,348. Furthermore, the initial quotes for the renovation of the Stable Block had exceeded the £125,000 provided through the capital

programme With indicative costs being in the region of £250,000 Therefore, because of the present financial climate, the report indicated that the Borough Council was not in a position to increase its contribution and it recommended not to proceed with the renovation at this time. Councillor Mrs Mason drew Cabinet's attention to the reasons and justification for the report's recommendation and she indicated that she supported the proposed course of action. By referring to the report she also highlighted the fact that expenditure of £2,800 from the capital programme allocation had been incurred in 2009/10 to cover advance fees.

Counillor Fearon stated that he had been in contact with RCVS and he sensed that their approach and opinions had changed in relation to the renovation work in view of the financial climate. He went on to comment that it was important to ensure the stable block was maintained if the conversion did not go ahead, as the Council needed to ensure the asset did not deteriorate to a point that it increased financial liability.

Commenting on the report Councillor Cranswick stated that the RCVS would have to find additional resources to fund their occupation and would also be likely to be facing financial pressures as a result of the cut-backs. As such the conversion would not appear a viable proposition at this time.

The Deputy Chief Executive (SG) concurred with comments made by Cabinet Members and stated that the financial climate had been different when the negotiations had started. She added that RCVS now understood the Borough Council's position and were also aware of the implications of the conversion for them as an organisation.

In conclusion the Chief Executive stated that Cabinet Members should not lose sight of the valuable work of RCVS and the continuing successful partnership between them and the Borough Council. Furthermore the decision taken on the conversion of the stable block should not negatively impact on any future discussions and exploration of opportunities with them.

RESOLVED that:

Cabinet would not progress the conversion of the Stable Block, West Bridgford Hall, at this point in time.

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm.

CHAIRMAN