

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

CABINET

Meeting held 20th August, 2008

PRESENT: Councillors Ian Auckland, Steve Ayris, David Baker, Sylvia Dunkley, Bob McCann, Shaffaq Mohammed and Andrew Sangar.

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1. **CHAIR OF THE MEETING**

In the absence of the Chair (Councillor Paul Scriven), Councillor David Baker was appointed Chair of the meeting.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sylvia Anginotti, Simon Clement-Jones and Paul Scriven.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made at this meeting.

4. **MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6th August, 2008 were approved as a correct record.

5. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

Public Questions concerning Post Office closures

Michael Bartholomew asked whether there would be a debate on the proposed Post Office closures at the Council meeting on 3rd September, 2008 and if the Area Panel meetings that had been arranged so far could be brought forward, especially where there were strong campaigns being organised. Barbara Jackson referred to the campaign being organised to keep open the Derbyshire Lane post office and asked when and how the Council proposed to work with those Subpostmasters and Submistresses under threat to help in the preparation of their cases against closures. Andrew Tice referred to the Council's "Save Our Post Offices" campaign and asked what other plans it had to mobilise public opinion in Sheffield to put pressure on Post Office Ltd and the Government to reconsider the closure proposals. He also asked if the Council would be supporting the demonstration planned to be held in the City on 20th September, 2009 by the Sheffield Campaign Against Post Office Closures (SCAPOC). As Sheffield was among the last areas to be consulted on by the Post Office, he asked what the Council had learned from the experiences of other Councils who had undergone the consultation process. Gerda Race stated that a lot of elderly people, especially those who lived at Hangingwater Cottages, relied on the services provided by the Oakbrook Road post office and asked how they would be expected to get to the nearest alternative provision at Bents Green.

In response, Councillor David Baker (the Deputy Leader of the Council) stated that, whilst he noted the concerns now raised in relation to specific post offices, the Council intended to oppose the closure of all of the post offices and had already consulted and were working with those concerned. Evidence was being gathered by officers on a broad range of factors to produce a detailed analysis of the impact the proposed closures would have on the affected communities in order to challenge Post Office Ltd's proposals. This would include the particular circumstances of communities, such as those now mentioned concerning Oakbrook, Derbyshire Lane and Park Grange, amongst others. In relation to the experiences of other Councils who had undergone the consultation process, Councillor Baker commented that greater success had been achieved in areas where there had been unified campaigns. He stressed that the Council would not tolerate the proposed closures and called on all parties to join together with the people of Sheffield in a vigorous campaign to save the threatened post offices. However, if any post offices were subsequently to close, the Council would look at what might be required to retain such services in the community.

Public Questions concerning Review of Taxi Provision in the City

Hafis Rehman referred to the findings of the review of taxi provision in the City which was reported to the Cabinet on 12th December, 2007 and the Council Meeting on 7th January, 2008 when it was agreed that the situation be reviewed in February, 2009. He asked that, because of the cost involved and the short time since the policy was implemented and in order to conduct an effective survey, that the review be put back until July, 2010. He also drew attention to the shortage of taxi rank space in the City and the problems that this was causing between officers and taxi drivers and asked that this be also reviewed.

In response, Councillor David Baker (the Deputy Leader of the Council) asked the Assistant Chief Executive, Legal and Governance to meet with Mr Rehman after the meeting to discuss the issues in further detail.

Petition concerning proposed Tesco Store on Abbeydale Road

The Assistant Chief Executive, Legal and Governance, reported the receipt of a petition containing 982 signatures from traders and customers of shops in Abbeydale Road objecting to proposals by Tesco Stores to erect a supermarket on the former Suzuki Garage site in Abbeydale Road, on the grounds that they believe the area is already well served by a diverse range of shops and supermarkets.

The Cabinet noted receipt of the petition and referred it for consideration by the City Centre, South and East Planning and Highways Area Board, in conjunction with any planning application that may be received.

6. ITEMS CALLED IN FOR SCRUTINY/REFERRED TO CABINET/COUNCIL

The Assistant Chief Executive, Legal and Governance reported that the Successful Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Policy Development Board at its meeting to be held on 14th August, 2008 had concurred with the decision

of the Cabinet on 9th July, 2008 that had been called in for scrutiny relating to the Somali Community Centre and had recommended, in light of the financial position of the Somali Community Centre, that payment of the £16,000 be progressed as a matter of urgency to ensure security of tenure for the rest of the financial year.

The Cabinet noted the information reported.

7. **RETIREMENT OF STAFF**

The Assistant Chief Executive reported on the retirement of staff in the Children and Young People and the Development, Environment and Leisure Directorates. Mr Michael Devine attended the meeting, along with his wife, to receive a special presentation in acknowledgement of his 50 years' service with the Council.

RESOLVED: That this Cabinet (a) places on record its appreciation of the valuable service rendered to the City Council by the under-mentioned members of staff from Directorates, over the period of years stated, as follows:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>Years of Service in Sheffield</u>
<i>Children and Young People's Directorate</i>		
Malcolm Richardson	Teacher, Deepcar St. John's Church of England Primary School	32
Rozina Khan	Social Worker, South Assessment Duty Team	23
William Copley-Dunn	Health and Safety Officer, AVEC, Central Management Team	26
<i>Development, Environment and Leisure Directorate</i>		
Michael Devine	Mason Pavior, Street Force	50

(b) extends to them its best wishes for long and happy retirements; and

(c) directs that appropriate extracts of this resolution, under the Common Seal of the Council, be forwarded to them.

8. **SUB-NATIONAL REVIEW OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION DOCUMENT: “PROSPEROUS PLACES”**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (a) referring to the Government's review of sub-national economic development and regeneration, published in July, 2007, the principle aims of which were to promote productivity growth, help improve opportunities and secure the prosperity of citizens and businesses in all parts of England, and to the Government's subsequent consultation document entitled “Prosperous Places”, which was published in March, 2008, to take forward the proposals set out in the sub-national review and (b) commenting on and appending

the City Council's response to the consultation, which was submitted to the Government by its deadline of 20th June, 2008.

RESOLVED: That the submission appended to the report now submitted be endorsed as the City Council's official response to the Government's consultation on taking forward the review of sub-national economic development and regeneration.

9. **POST OFFICE CLOSURES**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (a) providing an update on Post Office Limited's plans to close 16 Post Offices in Sheffield as part of its Network Change Programme, which was announced on 5th August, 2008, with a period of public consultation ending on 22nd September, 2008 and (b) outlining the actions being taken by the Council in relation to the proposed closures and to safeguard vital services in local communities where Post Offices may be forced to close.

RESOLVED: That (i) the information contained in the report now submitted be noted; and

(ii) the following approach with regard to the City Council's response to the proposed Post Office closures in the City, be endorsed:-

- (A) the Council should continue to campaign to prevent Post Office closures in Sheffield and to work closely with community groups to ensure that the voices of Sheffield citizens are heard;
- (B) a rigorous analysis of the impact that the potential closures will have on the local communities in the City be completed and used to challenge Post Office Limited's proposals;
- (C) relevant officers be requested to develop options for how vital services to local communities could be safeguarded in the event of local Post Offices being forced to close, and to submit a report on the options to a future meeting of the Cabinet for consideration; and
- (D) the Chief Executive be authorised to request Post Office Limited to agree in principle to a grace period to allow the Council to enter into a dialogue with the Company about how alternative service delivery options might be implemented: and

(iii) it be noted that the Council will provide whatever assistance it can to those responsible for the preparation of cases against closure.

(NOTE: 1. This item is referred for approval by the City Council and cannot, therefore, be called-in for scrutiny; and

2. The report on Post Office closures is circulated to all Council Members with the Council Summons.)

10. **REVISED ARRANGEMENTS FOR COUNCIL MEETINGS**

The Assistant Chief Executive, Legal and Governance reported that the arrangements for the revised rules of debate at monthly Council meetings, which were adopted by the Council on 5th December, 2007 for a trial period of three months and extended for a further period of up to six months by the Council on 5th March, 2008 would expire at the end of August.

She stated that a meeting of the Modernising Local Government Working Group was planned to be held in September, 2008 to consider a report of the Chief Executive on future arrangements for Council meetings, including possible measures to enable a greater number of matters to be debated and a review of the arrangements for public questions and petitions. It was suggested, therefore, that a recommendation be made to Council that the arrangements for the revised rules of debate at monthly Council meetings be extended for a further period.

RESOLVED: That the arrangements for the revised rules of debate at monthly Council meetings which were adopted by the Council on 5th December, 2007 for a trial period of three months and extended for a further period of up to six months by the Council on 5th March, 2008, be extended for a further period of up to four months to enable recommendations to be drawn up about the future operation of Council Meetings.

(NOTE: This item is referred for approval by the City Council and cannot, therefore, be called-in for scrutiny.)

11. **SHEFFIELD DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY:
SUGGESTED CHANGES TO NEW AND AMPLIFIED POLICIES**

The Acting Executive Director, Development, Environment and Leisure submitted a report providing details of policy changes suggested by officers in the light of public representations that were being considered by the Planning Inspector at the public examination of the Sheffield Development Framework Core Strategy. The policies related to aspects of housing, safeguarding of open space, design, renewable energy/carbon reduction, and management of flood risk. The annex to the report set out the full consultation version of the new and amplified policies and all the changes that officers were suggesting.

RESOLVED: That (a) approval be given to the suggested changes, as detailed in the report now submitted, to the policies originally endorsed by the City Council at its meeting held on 2nd April, 2008, and the Executive Director, Development, Environment and Leisure be requested to inform the Planning Inspector conducting the public examination of the Sheffield Development Framework Core Strategy accordingly; and

(b) pending the recommendations of the Inspector, it be confirmed that the changes carry the same weight as the original policies for the purposes of informing future planning documents and consultations.

12. **BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE PROGRAMME**

The Executive Director, Children and Young People's Services submitted a report (a) providing an update on the submission of the Outline Business Case for Sheffield's Building Schools for the Future Programme to Partnership for Schools (the Department for Children, Schools and Families' funding body) and (b) responding to the request made by the City Council at its meeting held on 4th June, 2008, to submit to the Cabinet and the City Council a detailed report on the issues relating to the future of secondary schools in the north-west of the City.

It was indicated in the report that the Outline Business Case (OBC)

was the next stage in the approvals process for Building Schools for the Future and that the OBC must be approved before funding for the entire next phase of BSF in Sheffield was confirmed. The Council had, since May, 2008, been exploring all available options for submission of a revised strategy for the north-west, including Myers Grove and Wisewood as separate schools. However, following a meeting between Members and the Government's Schools Minister on 14th July, 2008, it had been concluded that, in the light of the Government's response, it was evident that the submission of an alternative strategy for the north-west of the City would entail unacceptable financial risks and delays to the City's Building Schools for the Future Programme and the Authority's ambition for the regeneration of Sheffield's secondary school buildings.

RESOLVED: That, having taken into account the decision of the Cabinet at its meeting held on 30th January, 2008, and the further matters contained within the report now submitted, including the response from the Schools Minister on the issue of Government funding, the Executive Director, Children and Young People's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning, the Chief Executive and the Director of Corporate Resources, be authorised to submit to Partnership for Schools the original Outline Business Case for Building Schools for the Future funding, including a single school to replace Myers Grove and Wisewood schools, and to work with all stakeholders to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people in Sheffield.

(NOTE: 1. This item is referred for approval by the City Council and cannot, therefore, be called-in for scrutiny; and

2. The report on Building Schools for the Future Programme is circulated to all Council Members with the Council Summons.)