

CABINET

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 5 November 2019 at 1.00 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE (in the Chair)

Councillors Steve Pitt
Dave Ashmore
Suzy Horton
Darren Sanders
Matthew Winnington
Rob Wood

110. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

These had been received from Councillors Lynne Stagg, Lee Hunt and Tom Wood.

111. Declarations of Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations of members' interests.

112. Record of Previous Decision Meeting - 8 October 2019 (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the record of the previous decisions taken at the Cabinet meeting on 8 October 2019 be approved as a correct record.

113. Home Energy and Water Efficiency Strategy (AI 4)

Meredydd Hughes, Assistant Director of Housing, presented the report of the Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services. The Action Plan would be brought back to Cabinet in February which would reflect the consultation with residents and stakeholders. The report sought to address the high level of fuel poverty in Portsmouth, detail the current offer that the local authority can make to all residents in Portsmouth to support energy and water efficiency and the contribution the draft strategy can make to the wider climate change and water nitrate agendas.

Councillor Vernon-Jackson, as Leader, welcomed the report which showed how fuel poverty was already being addressed to benefit residents via more efficient homes and also benefit the environment. He asked how the problems in the private housing sector can be tackled? Andrew Waggott, Energy Services Team Manager, reported that the scheme included private rental with offers available to landlords.

Councillor Sanders, Cabinet Member for Housing, was pleased by the innovative work being undertaken which had been recognised with Portsmouth awarded Council of the Year for Energy Efficiency. He was also

keen that there be encouragement for landlords to make their properties more energy efficient.

Councillor Rob Wood, Cabinet Member for Children & Families, stressed the importance for safe and sustainable solutions for future generations and families in all tenures.

Councillor Winnington, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care, stressed the importance of this area of work which assisted those on low incomes access both funding and advice. He was also valued the water efficiency measures and the marketing of these schemes. Mark Sage, Tackling Poverty Co-ordinator, explained the links to income maximisation and referrals to money advisers as well as making homes more efficient.

Councillor Ashmore, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, thanked the officers for all their work in taking forward the council's aspiration to go carbon neutral, and was pleased to see the environmental and social impact assessment included (which would be reflected in future reports).

Councillor Horton, Cabinet Member for Education, stressed the impact on children's learning when in a cold home and also the influence of children's views in encouraging their parents to make changes in their habits.

Councillor Pitt, Cabinet Member for Culture & City Development, was grateful to James Hill's team and the joint work with Ian Maguire's team in Planning on tackling the nitrates problems, and he was aware that a response was awaited from Natural England to inform the Nitrates Mitigation Scheme.

Councillor Udy was also present and commented that the website information was useful but information was also important to reach those not using the internet. Examples of the promotional leaflets were circulated at the meeting.

DECISIONS - The Cabinet:

- (1) noted the successful work already taking place in Portsmouth to improve home energy and water efficiency, and reduce household bills.**
- (2) noted the contribution that this strategy can make towards achieving the council's goal of becoming carbon neutral, and increasing water efficiency to mitigate the impact of nitrate levels.**
- (3) approved the draft strategy for publication, and has the goal of working together with our residents and stakeholders in the city to ensure that everyone understands the help that is available and can meet their energy needs, to make Portsmouth a fairer, healthier and more prosperous city.**
- (4) asked officers to begin a two month period of consultation on the draft strategy, engaging with residents, stakeholders and partner organisations who can contribute to shaping and delivering the strategy.**

(5) asked officers to lead on the development of a detailed action plan to achieve the strategic objectives, with timescales and measures to assess progress and drive improvement.

(6) asked officers to deliver a marketing and communication campaign around home energy and water efficiency that can engage residents in all demographic groups, across housing types and tenures, to inform and inspire them to take up the opportunities on offer.

114. Aquind Interconnector Project (AI)

Paddy May, Corporate Strategy Manager, presented the Chief Executive's report, which was to request delegated powers for officer to make swift decisions during the Inquiry process. He reported that the applicant wished to raise corrections to the report and the following was therefore clarified:

(i) In Paragraph 3.3 re the DCO process, in the 4th bullet point down, there is reference to a 30 day registration period, it was confirmed that this period is a minimum of 28 days.

(ii) Also in paragraph 3.3 bullet point 6 there will be a Preliminary Meeting held by PINS with the Examining Authority and the 6 month examination period starts after this meeting. The length of the period between notice of application and the Preliminary Meeting is not set and is up to PINS.

(iii) Paragraph 3.6: There is reference to PINS making the decision, it should reference PINS making a recommendation to the Secretary of State.

(iv) Recommendation 1 - Aquind were not able to submit on 31/10/19 and were expecting to submit their proposal on 14/11/19.

The Cabinet Members were asked to give consideration to whether they wished to change their position of objection (a previous report had gone to Cabinet in July 2019).

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson, as Leader, remained concerned that the proposed route would be through densely populated areas in the city, as well as causing disruption with drilling under the Milton allotments. Councillor Sanders was also concerned that there would be closure of bus lanes and roadworks on a major route for weeks and digging at Farlington Playing fields so would oppose the scheme. Councillor Winnington questioned the chosen route, which was not the nearest land from France to get to the Lovedean destination, and would also cause disruption in the Bransbury area. Councillor Pitt, as Cabinet Member for Culture & City Development, had been in meetings regarding the proposals and knew that residents had been worried about compulsory purchase implications.

DECISIONS - The Cabinet:

(1) Noted that Aquind have been engaging with PCC officers as they develop their application to the Planning Inspectorate and that they are due to submit their application by the end of October 2019.

(2) After consideration did not wish to change its position of objecting to the Aquind proposal.

(3) Delegated authority to the Chief Executive and to the Assistant Director Planning and Economic Growth, after consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to make representations and to respond to queries and requests from Aquind and the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Council in a timely manner.

(4) Delegated authority to the Chief Executive and to the Section 151 Officer, after consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader, to agree access, rights or land acquisition proposals affecting the Council's land with Aquind if they are necessary to develop the infrastructure detailed in Aquind's DCO application.

(5) Delegated authority to the Chief Executive and to the Section 151 Officer, after consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader, to make representations, and to respond to queries and requests from Aquind and the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Council in a timely manner in relation to land ownership matters.

(6) Delegated authority to the Assistant Director Planning and Economic Growth to make decisions on behalf of Portsmouth City Council during the DCO Examination that respond to issues raised by the Examining Authority that is considering the Aquind proposal.

115. Dates of Cabinet Meetings (for information) (AI)

It was agreed that the proposed Cabinet meeting of 3 December be cancelled but the following meetings of 4th February and 10th March 2020 were noted.

The meeting concluded at 1.35 pm.

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Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE
Leader of the Council