



Communities Select Committee
14 August 2013

Magna Carta Anniversary

Purpose of the report: Scrutiny of Services and Budgets/Policy
Development and Review

To scrutinise the Cabinet decision of 23 July 2013 to agree the outline Magna Carta Partnership Masterplan, its additional project funding, and delegation of project oversight.

Introduction:

1. On 23 July 2013 the Cabinet made a decision to agree the outline Magna Carta Partnership Masterplan, its additional project funding, and delegation of project oversight.
2. Four Members (Mr John Orrick, Mrs Jan Mason, Mr Alan Young and Mr Robert Evans) of the Communities Select Committee have called-in this Cabinet decision for reconsideration by the Committee.

Background:

3. On 23 July 2013 the Cabinet made a decision to agree the outline Magna Carta Partnership Masterplan, its additional project funding, and delegation of project oversight. The details of the Cabinet's decision, extracted from the printed decisions, are stated below:

Resolved:

“(1) The outline Partnership Masterplan be agreed as set out in paragraphs 10 to 19.

“(2) Additional project funding support, comprising of £700,000 capital funding for the legacy programme and £300,000 revenue funding for the events programme, to be factored into the refresh of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

(3) *A major bid will be made to the Heritage Lottery Fund to contribute to the Magna Carta programme.*

(4) *To delegate the financial oversight of the Partnership Masterplan to the Leader of the Council, with implementation by the Assistant Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Community Services.*

Reason for decisions:

To ensure that the significance of the 800th Anniversary is recognised and the benefits are maximised for the area in 2015 with lasting benefits beyond. To achieve these aims, partners are working collaboratively to pool resources and expertise. To fulfil all the ambitions of the report, the partnership will submit an exciting and innovative bid for match funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.”

4. On 30 July 2013, Democratic Services received notification that four Members (Mr John Orrick, Mrs Jan Mason, Mr Alan Young and Mr Robert Evans) of the Communities Select Committee had called-in this decision of the Cabinet. The reasons for the call-in are as follows:

“That despite a paper being presented to Communities Select Committee, this item lacks scrutiny and lacks detail or clarity in the proposals, in that:

1. The Cabinet Member, Assistant Chief Executive and Programme Lead Magna Carta were not present at the meeting of the Communities Select Committee to answer members’ concerns and questions.

2. That the concerns raised by the Communities Select Committee and appearing as item 5b on the Cabinet agenda were not considered by the Cabinet. Being:

- i. the receipt by the Committee of the financial information concerning these proposals on the day of the Select Committee meeting, which made it difficult for them to scrutinise the proposals in light of the financial information,*
- ii. the capacity of the highways budget to cover the costs of works required in the area to complement the celebration proposals*
- iii. the absence of a detailed business case justifying the expenditure by the County Council of £1.2m (in addition to the highways provision) on these proposals at a time when there is considerable pressure on the Council’s resources,*
- iv. the absence of information on projected visitor numbers,*
- v. the absence of detailed assessments on the impact of these proposals to include economic, environmental, and equality,*
- vi. the absence of a detailed explanation of the concept ideas and events planning behind the proposals including the necessity for a new commission in the landscape,*
- vii. the lack of private sponsorship committed to these plans,*

viii. that the estimated £200,000 annual staffing costs for this project, from existing resources, could potentially delay achievement of proposed efficiency savings elsewhere in the Council.

In addition the following concerns raised by some members:

- i. the report to Cabinet does not make it clear that the County Council previously withdrew its financial support of up to £5m to fund a new visitor centre in Runnymede to mark the 800th anniversary,
- ii. the economic and health information used to support the proposals is incomplete and does not compare the Egham statistics with neighbouring areas as a means of benchmarking,
- iii. whether the proposed changes to the highways in the area would provide adequate infrastructure to support the celebration proposals,
- iv. the need for better assurances that the proposals will be a joint venture including Runnymede, Spelthorne, and Windsor and Maidenhead Councils.

3. That the concerns raised by the Section 151 Officer under paragraph 33 of the report to Cabinet were not discussed at Cabinet.

4. That the report by consultants was not available for consideration.”

5. The following documents in relation to the decision made on 23 July 2013 are attached:

- Report considered by Cabinet on 23 July 2013 (**Appendix 1**).
- Cabinet decision sheet for 23 July 2013, published on 25 July 2013 (**Appendix 2**).
- Extract from the draft minutes of the Cabinet meeting of 23 July 2013 (**Appendix 3**).
- Report considered by Communities Select Committee on 11 July 2013 (**Appendix 4**).
- Report with recommendations from Communities Select Committee to Cabinet on Magna Carta proposals, item 5b of Cabinet Agenda for 23 July 2013 (**Appendix 5**).
- Extract from the draft minutes of the Communities Select Committee meeting of 11 July 2013 (**Appendix 6**).
- The call-in notice received by Democratic Services on 30 July 2013 (**Appendix 7**).
- Officer response to the reasons set out in the call-in notice (**Appendix 8**).

The Call-in

6. The Select Committee is asked to consider the above evidence together with evidence presented at the Call-in meeting in order to review the decision taken by the Cabinet.
7. The Committee is asked to decide whether or not it wishes to refer the decision back to the Cabinet for reconsideration.

8. If the Committee decides to refer the matter back to the Cabinet for reconsideration, the nature of the Committee's concern must be stated.
9. The Members calling-in the decision have recommended that the Committee refer the decision back to Cabinet with the following recommendations:

“That the Communities Select Committee reconsiders the item with the Cabinet Member and responsible officers present and if necessary requests the Cabinet to reverse those decisions that it considers have not been fully considered, are too ill defined in their scope and therefore not suitable for approval for expenditure.”

For decision:

10. That the Committee reviews the Cabinet's decision made on 23 July 2013, to agree the outline Magna Carta Partnership Masterplan, its additional project funding, and delegation of project oversight, and decides whether it wishes to refer the decision back to the Cabinet for reconsideration.

Next steps:

11. Should the Select Committee decide to support the decision of the Cabinet; the decision will take effect on the date of the Select Committee meeting.
12. Should the Select Committee refer the decision back to the Cabinet, a meeting of the Cabinet must be held within seven working days of the Select Committee meeting. The Cabinet can then decide to amend the decision or not, before adopting a final decision.

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