

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Civic Suite 0.1B, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 10 July 2014.

PRESENT: Councillor J D Ablewhite – Chairman.
Councillors B S Chapman, J A Gray,
R B Howe and T D Sanderson.

APOLOGY(IES): Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors D B Dew and D M Tysoe.

21. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th June were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

22. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

23. SHARED SERVICES

(Councillor R S Farrer was in attendance and spoke on this item.)

By way of a report by the Managing Director, the Cabinet was invited to consider the development of a strategic shared services programme with the Council's strategic partner, South Cambridgeshire District Council and where the opportunity exists with Cambridge City Council and other appropriate partners.

Members were reminded that the authority has significant budget challenges to address and given its low council tax precept there is limited opportunity to increase income through this route. Furthermore, budget reductions were no longer sufficient to ensure that the Council can continue to deliver core services in the context of rising needs and expectations from both residents and businesses.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Farrer, Ward Member for St Neots Eaton Ford, addressed the Cabinet. Councillor Farrer informed members that he acknowledged the Council needed to make savings but, in his opinion, this was not the right way to do it. He expressed the view that a partnership arrangement would have an adverse effect on the excellent service currently provided by the Council. Furthermore, in Councillor Farrer's opinion building control should be managed in-house and fees increased.

The Executive Leader advised Councillor Farrer that the addition of private sector approved inspectors together with the financial

challenges faced by the Council had prompted the need to consider new approaches for the delivery of services. It was reiterated that the proposal was intended to improve services, reduce costs and protect and enhance delivery and performance through a strategic approach.

Having noted that the formation of a strategic partnership had been endorsed at an earlier meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well Being), the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that a strategic shared services partnership be formed with South Cambridgeshire District Council, whilst continuing to work with other councils including Cambridge City Council on services where there is a business case and a shared commitment to work together;
- (b) that a joint informal steering group with the Leaders and/or relevant Portfolio Holders of Huntingdonshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, and where appropriate Cambridge City Council be established, to oversee progress and report back to the respective Cabinets and decision-making bodies;
- (c) that phase 1 of a shared services programme incorporating Legal, ICT and Building Control be endorsed; and
- (d) that initial funding of up to £50,000 for project management costs from the Transformation Budget be approved.

Chairman