

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 17 March 2016.

PRESENT: Councillor J D Ablewhite – Chairman.
Councillors R B Howe, R C Carter, S Cawley,
D B Dew, R Harrison, J A Gray and
D M Tysoe.

88. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

89. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary or other interests received at the meeting.

90. HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL PLAN TO 2036 QUARTERLY UPDATE

The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Development (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to note the progress on preparation of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (HLP2036) and its supporting evidence base in the light of recent government announcements relating to the timescale for the production of local plans.

The government has announced that it expects new local plans 'to be written' by early 2017 although there has been no clarification of what statutory stage of preparation this referred to. The next stage of the preparation process for the HLP2036 would be the proposed submission stage, which was the first statutory stage. This involved a six week public consultation period, specifically inviting representations on issues of soundness and legal compliance.

When the Cabinet received an update in the previous quarter, the highest priority was the brief for a Strategic Transport Study. The Cabinet was informed that this had now been prepared and was being processed by Cambridgeshire County Council's procurement team, with the intention that the contract was awarded in May 2016.

Revalidation work of the Cambridge Sub-Regional Model was currently being undertaken on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council by Atkins. This work was necessary to ensure that the model incorporated the most up-to-date data on traffic demand, was updated with all recently completed transport infrastructure schemes and the public transport, walking and cycling assignments were correct. Due to the complexity and volume of data in the model the Cabinet was informed that the revalidation work would not be complete until the end of May/early June.

At the Cabinet meeting on 19th November 2015 it was resolved that 'as a priority, infrastructure requirements for Wyton Airfield are further scoped with a view they can be identified and fully costed'. The Cabinet were referred to the four potential development scenarios that had subsequently been prepared to test.

Following appointment of JBA Consulting, work on the first element of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) had commenced and was scheduled for receipt by the Council in late April 2016. This was later than originally scheduled due to delays in provision of extensive datasets by the Environment Agency. Completion of the second element of the SFRA was now anticipated in July 2016, subject to availability of Environment Agency inputs.

The Cabinet agreed that a county-wide approach to the replacement Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment (GTANA) being coordinated by the Joint Strategic Planning Unit on behalf of Huntingdonshire District Council, in partnership with a number of other Councils, was the best approach. The Cabinet also discussed the difficulties in allocating sites and was informed that a criteria based approach to guide site selection continued to be proposed. The Cabinet noted the difficulties that could be presented for schools when gypsy and travellers sites were granted at appeal. The Cabinet was informed that the GTANA would take account of the new, more restrictive definition of gypsy and traveller which had been published and was expected to result in less of a demand on accommodation needs.

The budgets for consultants and related costs to support the HLP2036 and other Planning Policy initiatives had previously been agreed each financial year. Dependencies on others such as the County Council for transport modelling, meant that timescales could be outside the District Council's control and budgets not spent as planned. Rather than continue on this basis, the Cabinet agreed that a single Planning Policy earmarked reserve was established with money used from the reserve to support the work programme.

Having been invited to address the Cabinet, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) stated that the Panel had been pleased that progress was being made with the HLP2036 and its supporting evidence base. The Panel also supported the establishment of a single Planning Policy earmarked reserve. Whereupon the Cabinet,

RESOLVED

- i. to note progress on preparation of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and its supporting evidence base; and
- ii. agrees the establishment of a single Planning Policy earmarked reserve as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the submitted report.

91. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

By way of a report from the Head of Development (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was presented with the new Local Development Scheme which established the timetable for preparation and examination of the Local Plan to 2036.

The previous Local Development Scheme was published in April 2014. It was essential that the Council had an up to date Local Development Scheme to ensure the Local Plan met the legal compliance checks as part of its statutory examination. It was also important that the Scheme was up to date as the Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report, which the Council published each December, reported in relation to the Local Development Scheme in place at the end of March that year.

The Cabinet were informed that once the remainder of the evidence base documents were complete the intention was to undertake the statutory six week consultation on the proposed submission version of the Local Plan during January and February 2017. Following which submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for examination was expected in July 2017. However, it was noted that once submitted the timetable was dependent on the Planning Inspectorate and the duration of the examination would be determined on the availability of an Inspector, the scope and complexity of issues raised and the need for further consultation on modifications that had arisen from the examination.

Having been invited to address the Cabinet, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) stated that satisfactory progress was being made with the timetable for preparation and examination of the Local Plan to 2036.

The Cabinet were informed that to accord with the call-in process an amendment was required to modify the date included in the recommendation. Whereupon the Cabinet,

RESOLVED

to approve the new Local Development Scheme (March 2016) for publication and commencement as of 31st March 2016, attached as Appendix 1 of the submitted report.

92. CORPORATE PLAN

By way of a report from the Corporate Team Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the Corporate Plan 2016/18.

The Council's Corporate Plan was reviewed in 2015 when it was agreed that a full refresh would take place in early 2016. The Plan was a two year document that outlined the Vision, Strategic Priorities and Objectives for Huntingdonshire. The Plan also established what the Council aimed to achieve in addition to the core statutory services.

It was explained to the Cabinet that the review had been timed to coincide with the development of Service Plans and where appropriate, actions or performance indicators in Service Plans for 2016/17 had been included in the Corporate Plan.

The Cabinet was informed that feedback received via the quarterly update reports had been incorporated in the revised Plan and that the

objectives, key actions and performance measures were still being finalised.

The condensed version of the Plan was welcomed by the Cabinet as were the reduction in the number of Strategic Priorities from four to three. However, the Cabinet agreed that the wording within the Plan should be bolder with active titles that provided more clarity about what the Council was trying to deliver and its role for example 'Ensuring sustainable growth' rather than 'Sustainable growth...'

The Cabinet agreed that the document should relate to both officers and Members. The Cabinet also thought the Plan should be more explicit in terms of how it translated to officers and the delivery of services.

In considering the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Panels, the Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Finance and Performance) and (Economy and Growth), having been invited to address the Cabinet, the proposed performance measures relating to sickness absence and the impact of long term sickness on the overall average were discussed. The Cabinet agreed that there was value in understanding this and it was noted that this was reported separately to the Employment Panel. However, for the purposes of the Corporate Plan the Cabinet agreed to retain the current measure, of reducing the days lost per full time employee to 9 days per person, as this was a standard measure used across the public and private sector and it allowed for performance to be compared. The Cabinet emphasised the importance of addressing and changing the current culture in relation to sickness absence and that Heads of Service must take action to address current sickness levels.

The Cabinet agreed with the Panel that Executive Councillors should take ownership of Corporate Plan and be instrumental in the development of the objectives. However, the Cabinet stated the importance of the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels in also taking ownership of the Corporate Plan and challenging on delivery of corporate objectives.

The Cabinet commended the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for their in-depth comments and contribution.

In recommending the Corporate Plan to Council for adoption the Cabinet requested that their comments made should be included. Subsequently the Cabinet,

RECOMMENDED

that the Council adopt the Corporate Plan 2016/18, subject to inclusion of the comments made by the Cabinet, as detailed in the Minute.

93. REVIEW OF WASTE POLICIES

By way of a report from the Interim Head of Service (Operations), presented in his absence by Corporate Director (Services) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the revised waste policies and the consultation on the options for waste

minimisation and potential charges for bin replacements.

The Cabinet was informed of a correction to Policy 3 'Number of Wheeled Bins and Sacks Provided', and it was confirmed that up to two additional 240 litre bins for green and food waste could be provided on request subject to an annual charge, not one bin as detailed in the Policy.

The waste collection policies had been reviewed to ensure they were fully customer focused and represent the best practice for top performing local authorities.

A new Policy for lane end collection arrangements had been developed based on the results of a detailed survey of individual locations. Bespoke collection arrangements had been identified for implementation along with the operational policies and procedures against which these arrangements would be managed.

A rejections policy was also included in respect of repeated contamination of recycling and garden waste bins. Residents would be provided with details of ongoing contamination and allowed time to resolve the issues, which would be deemed as the 'first yellow card warning'. If further contamination incidents occurred a 'second yellow card warning' would be issued, followed by a 'red card', concluding with the removal of the bin. No additional capacity would be provided for waste collection if a bin was removed. The Cabinet emphasised that the yellow and red card warning system only applied to recycling and garden waste bins.

In response to questions, it was explained that Amey Cespa monitored the waste taken to its treatment centre and determined whether the waste was contaminated to a level that it should be rejected. There was an 8% tolerance regarding contamination above which the Council was charged. It was noted to the Cabinet that the Council had a low rejection rate. Contamination occurred most frequently in garden waste which had health and safety implications for the recycling operatives that emptied the bins.

The Cabinet noted that a Waste Minimisation Officer was in post to assist with increasing recycling rates. The Cabinet acknowledged that the Corporate Plan included measures relating to recovery of missed bins and to reducing the level of household waste sent to landfill. However, the Cabinet suggested that the measure should be about increasing recycling levels.

To reduce the waste produced by households, the Cabinet approved the following three options for public consultation to reduce the grey bin capacity on domestic collection, subject to consultations not commencing until the new Municipal Year:

- Option 1: Issue 140 litre bins to all new properties, unless built to accommodate 6 plus residents, and an additional 240 litre blue bin can be provided for recyclates on request. A 140 litre bin would be provided to any resident requesting a smaller bin.
- Option 2: Issue 140 litre bins to all new properties, unless built to accommodate 6 plus residents, and an additional 240 litre blue bin can be provided for recyclates on request. A 140 litre

bin would be provided to any property requesting a replacement bin.

- Option 3: Issue 140 litre bins to all new properties, unless built to accommodate 6 plus residents, and an additional 240 litre blue bin can be provided for recyclates on request. All bins at existing properties throughout the District would be replaced with 140 litre bins.

The Cabinet also approved public consultation on options for charging for replacement bins that have been damaged, lost or stolen.

Having been invited to address the Cabinet, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) stated that the Panel supported the revised waste policies, but suggested the questions proposed for consultation on future bin capacities should be revised to allow them to be more easily collated.

Whilst considering the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) the Cabinet suggested that it would be difficult to monitor the policy if the Council replaced the first bin for free and charged for a second replacement. However, the Cabinet suggested that the Council should consider that a charge be levied on those that removed their bin when moving properties. In conclusion the Cabinet,

RESOLVED

- i. to endorse the revised Waste Collection Policies, as attached as Appendix 1 of the submitted report, with the revision to Policy 3 'Number of Wheeled Bins and Sacks Provided', that up to two additional 240 litre bins for green and food waste can be provided on request subject to an annual charge; and
- ii. approves the consultation on the options for waste minimisation and potential charges for bin replacements, as detailed in the submitted report, subject to consultations not commencing until the new Municipal Year.

94. ANNUAL MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR COUNTRYSIDE ASSETS

By way of a report from the Interim Head of Service (Operations), presented in his absence by the Team Leader (Grounds Maintenance) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the structure of annual management plans for countryside assets and the proposed programme for the development of management plans for all countryside assets.

The purpose of the management plans was to better direct the management, development and maintenance of countryside assets over the short and medium term. This would ensure there was a clear strategic framework for the Countryside Service going forward. The management plans would be developed with input from existing voluntary groups involved with the Countryside Service as their expertise and contributions were essential in order to progress the self-management of selected assets by these groups.

The draft management plan for Barford Road Pocket Park, Eynesbury, would be used as the template for the development of future management plans for all countryside assets.

Having been invited to address the Cabinet, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) stated that the Panel looked forward to receiving an update report at its meeting in June and had suggested that site plans should be included with each asset ranked in order of amenity and wildlife value.

The Cabinet noted the fantastic countryside assets within the district and, in commending the comprehensive report and commenting that it could be shared with Town and Parish Councils,

RESOLVED

to approve the structure of Annual Management Plans for countryside assets, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the submitted report, and the programme for the development of management plans for all countryside assets, as detailed in the submitted report, to provide the future strategic framework for the service.

95. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE SERVICE SPECIFICATION

By way of a report from the Interim Head of Service (Operations), presented in his absence by the Team Leader (Grounds Maintenance) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the Grounds Maintenance Service Specification as the primary document to direct the future delivery of the service. The Service Specification would be subject to review and refinement based on performance monitoring results and customer satisfaction findings.

Along with waste and recycling collections and the street cleansing service, the grounds maintenance service was one of the most visible services delivered by the Council and impacted directly on residents and businesses in the District.

The Grounds Maintenance Service Specification had been developed to better direct the grounds maintenance activities delivered by the Operations Service and to make maintenance frequencies and standards more transparent for residents. The service availability details and maintenance frequencies would form the core information on the Council's website regarding the grounds maintenance service provided by the Council.

The grounds maintenance service includes grass maintenance; amenity shrub beds; pruning of roses; seasonal bedding displays; maintenance of dykes, ditches and watercourses; and minor tree works. The Cabinet were referred to the core hours of future delivery of the service as detailed in Table 1 of the submitted report.

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) the Cabinet,

RESOLVED

to approve the Grounds Maintenance Service Specification as the primary document to direct the future delivery of the service, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the submitted report.

96. EVENTS POLICY FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

By way of a report from the Interim Head of Service (Operations), presented in his absence by Corporate Director (Services) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the Policy for events in the Council's parks and open spaces and the introduction of fees and charges.

There was a requirement for an appropriate policy framework that established clear guidelines for the consideration of applications and the staging of events, to provide greater control and to deliver objectives within the Corporate Plan.

The Cabinet were informed that previously events in Council parks and open spaces were agreed outside of any policy framework, with no coherent structure of fees and charges to ensure the Council recovered the costs incurred with accommodating the events.

When an application was submitted the Cabinet agreed that it was important for the Operations Team and Licensing Team to work in partnership so that the applicant received a seamless service.

Whilst discussing the schedule of charges and deposits the Cabinet noted that there should be some flexibility in the fees and deposits as there should be a balance between financial protection for the Council, so that it did not forfeit clean-up costs after an event, and not being a deterrent to groups of volunteers. Therefore, the Cabinet agreed that local non-commercial, charitable and community organisations should be exempt from the charging scheme and that the finalised wording of the Policy be delegated to the Interim Head of Service (Operations) in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Operations and the Environment.

Having been invited to address the Cabinet, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) stated that the Panel were pleased that the Policy had been updated to incorporate the comments made at the meeting. The Panel were disappointed that an event would not be allowed if balloons were to be released. However, the Panel accepted that this was for environmental reasons.

Whereupon the Cabinet,

RESOLVED

to approve the Events Policy for Parks and Open Spaces and the introduction of fees and charges for events from 1st April 2016, subject to:

- i. that local non-commercial, charitable and community organisations are exempt from the charging scheme; and
- ii. the finalised wording of the Policy be delegated to the Interim Head of Service (Operations) in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Operations and the Environment.

97. SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP REPORT

RESOLVED

The draft report of the Safety Advisory Group meeting held on 24th February 2016 was received and noted.

At the conclusion of the above item, at 8.46pm, Councillor S Cawley left the meeting.

98. SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY FOR HUNTINGDONSHIRE 2016 - 2021

By way of a report from the Head of Leisure and Health (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the revised Huntingdonshire Sports and Leisure Facility Strategy 2016 – 2021 which contained nine recommendations.

The Scope of the Strategy included all known sport and leisure facility provision within the district under the following categories: Indoor Sports Facilities; Outdoor Sports Facilities; Watersports Facilities; and Specialist Facilities such as gymnastics, table tennis, trampolining etc.

At 8.48pm Councillor S Cawley returned to the meeting.

In response to a question it was explained to the Cabinet that the audit of existing provision was not a simple task and that the Strategy was based on Sports England recommendations. In terms of the Sport England's definition of 'useful' water space Huntingdonshire did not reflect well as there were a number of pools in the district that were operated by commercial organisations, where community access was limited by educational use. There were three swimming pools in the district that were not acknowledged within the Strategy as they were not to the Sports England standard in terms of length.

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Communities and Customers) the Cabinet,

RESOLVED

to endorse the Huntingdonshire Sports and Leisure Facility Strategy 2016 – 2021, as appended to the submitted report, which contains the following nine recommendations:

- i. Encourage investment in projects where the most significant impact can be made on participation levels to address both health and social wellbeing;
- ii. Commit to the retention of all strategically important sports facilities as highlighted in section 5.2 of the Strategy, in particular given the current shortfall of indoor sports hall provision;

- iii. Support projects identified as priority projects to refurbish/upgrade existing sites as identified in section 5.3 of the Strategy;
- iv. Support projects identified as sites planning new facilities to increase the sport and leisure stock as identified in section 5.4 of the Strategy;
- v. Ensure that significant identified gaps in provision are addressed as opportunities permit as identified in section 5.5 of the Strategy;
- vi. Work with partners and stakeholders including other operators to develop and deliver new facilities in areas of identified strategic need as identified in section 5.6 of the Strategy and in correlation with the new major housing sites;
- vii. Seek to maximise all funding opportunities including Section 106, Community Infrastructure Levy, external grants or sponsorship contributions;
- viii. Seek to ensure all sports facilities are fit for purpose, of good quality and with excellent access with Huntingdonshire District Council's own stock being the exemplar for others to follow (including sports pitches and built facilities); and
- ix. Work with other sports and leisure providers to seek improvements in sports provision and encourage participation in sport and active leisure.

99. ONE LEISURE - SIX MONTHLY UPDATE REPORT

By way of a report from the Head of Leisure and Health (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet received a six month update report on the progress of One Leisure, following the Cabinet meeting in September 2015.

The progress made included:

- The Group was on target to achieve annual sales of £6.85m (Budget £6.97m) with an operating surplus of £350K (Budget £343k). This represented a turn-round of £420k in comparison to 2014/15.
- Management had controlled monthly trading with each month still remaining in profit, with the exception of October where several significant maintenance issues were resolved. Due to busier periods, expenditure had risen in accordance with increases in revenue;
- 2014/15 admissions showed an increase in attendance of 9% against the previous year and were currently showing a year to date improvement of just under 2%;
- Phase II of the management restructure was complete and all sites now had a new structure in place and operated effectively;
- Following the review of One Leisure Sawtry a new operating model with reduced times and staffing resources had been implemented successfully which had reduced the operating deficit by circa £50k in this financial year with further savings expected. This review had

- also renewed a productive partnership with the on-site college as part of a strategy to re-engage with the local community;
- One Leisure Ramsey was now trading at near breakeven levels with strong performances from One Leisure St Neots and One Leisure St Ives; and
 - Following the delivery of a new membership model in June, pre-paid memberships had increased by over 300 members, which when coupled with a pricing restructure had increased revenue in Impressions memberships by £155k.

In response to questions it was explained to the Cabinet that the issues regarding tenure of One Leisure Huntingdon had been resolved and a full Business Case had now been submitted to the Finance Governance Board to request release of agreed funding in 2016 for the extension of Impressions. Regarding the Members that cancelled their membership each month, it was confirmed that they were invited to provide feedback as to the reasons for cancelling their membership.

Whilst discussing memberships the Cabinet agreed to extend the Armed Forces Discounted membership to include Active Reservists. It was noted to the Cabinet that take up of the Armed Forces Discounted membership was low mainly due to the facilities that were accessible at RAF Wyton.

The Cabinet commended the Executive Councillor for Commercial Activities and all of the One Leisure Team for the significant financial achievements. Previously income and expenditure had converged. However, this financial year income was tracking above expenditure. The Cabinet also expressed its appreciation for the retention of the smaller Leisure Centres throughout the district.

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Communities and Customers) the Cabinet,

RESOLVED

that it considered and noted the progress of One Leisure over the last six months.

At the conclusion of the above item, at 9.11pm, Councillor J Gray left the meeting.

100. ONE LEISURE STRATEGIC PLAN

(Appendix 2 - One Leisure Strategic Plan 2016-21 was attached to the agenda as an exempt item under paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

By way of a report from the Head of Leisure and Health (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet received the exempt Strategic Plan for One Leisure 'Growing a healthy business'.

The strategic plan had been devised to guide the facility operations, development and identify strategic facility investment for One Leisure over the next five years.

The three key strategic themes that the strategy had been developed upon were:

- To care about our PEOPLE;
- To be a CUSTOMER focused organisation; and
- To provide the FACILITIES and SERVICES that meets and exceeds customers' expectations.

At 9.13pm Councillor J Gray returned to the meeting.

Although One Leisure had significant success in attracting some of the segmented groups, there were specific under-represented facility user groups or areas of potential for significant growth that the Strategy aimed to target, particularly:

- Children under 19;
- Families with young children;
- Young adults 19 to 30; and
- Older people (over 55)

The Cabinet were informed that efforts would also be focused on retaining existing customers whilst seeking to target new markets which included niche segments like cycling.

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Communities and Customers) the Cabinet,

RESOLVED

to endorse the five year Strategic Plan for One Leisure 'Growing a healthy business', as attached as Appendix 2 (exempt) to the submitted report.

Chairman