

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Monday, 12 December 2022

PRESENT: Councillor S J Conboy – Chair.

Councillors S W Ferguson, M A Hassall, B A Mickelburgh, B M Pitt, T D Sanderson, S L Taylor and S Wakeford.

APOLOGY: An Apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor L Davenport-Ray.

51 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15th November 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

52 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors S J Conboy and B A Mickelburgh declared non-registerable interests in Minute No. 22/53 as Ward Members for Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots and abstained from voting on this item.

Councillor M A Hassall declared a non-registerable interest in Minute No. 22/53 as Ward Member for Buckden and abstained from voting on this item.

Councillors S W Ferguson, T D Sanderson and S L Taylor declared other registerable interests under Minute No. 22/57 by virtue of their membership of Cambridgeshire County Council and vacated the room during discussion and voting on this item.

53 BUSINESS RATES - RURAL SETTLEMENT LIST

See Minute No. 22/52 – Members Interests.

With the aid of a report prepared by the Revenues and Benefits Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet gave consideration to the updated Rural Settlement List comprising settlements with a population of less than 3,000. The report sets out why changes were being proposed to certain parishes and shows that the impact of the changes would not be detrimental in any way to businesses trading in the rural areas of Huntingdonshire.

In introducing the report, the Executive Councillor for Customer Services reported upon the Council's statutory responsibility to compile and maintain a Rural Settlement List under the provisions of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997. The intention of the List was to allow the Council to grant business rates relief to qualifying businesses to support rural businesses and communities. Having assured the Cabinet that no businesses had been

adversely affected by the review and in noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers & Partnerships), it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet approve the changes to Huntingdonshire District Council's Rural Settlement List effective from 1st April 2023.

Councillors S J Conboy, M A Hassall and B A Mickelburgh abstained from voting on this item.

At the conclusion of discussion on this item the Cabinet placed on record their thanks to Mrs A Burns, Revenues and Benefits Manager who would be taking early retirement later this month. Executive Members thanked her for her hard work and efforts since her arrival in 2009.

54 HUNTINGDONSHIRE UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUNDING

Consideration was given to a report by the Corporate Director (Place) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) providing an overview of the proposed activities to be delivered through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in Huntingdonshire that support the delivery of Council priorities and align with other external funding streams to maximise opportunities to deliver the best outcomes for residents, businesses and place.

The Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy & Housing delivered a comprehensive background to the report drawing particular attention to the recommendations proposed. The Cabinet were informed that the Investment Plan was subject to Government approval and that key deliverables had been linked to funding opportunities as necessary. Attention was then drawn to the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth) where the Panel had expressed their wish to receive an update on the Huntingdonshire programme of activity in three months' time. Subject to this, the Panel were supportive of the proposals and the Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy & Housing advised that he was happy to provide a report back to both Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet in March 2023.

A question was raised by the Executive Councillor for Leisure, Waste and Street Scene concerning how the actions and deliverables within the Investment Plan would be measured and evaluated. In response, the Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy & Housing reported that a number of metrics had already been built into the proposals and that progress against these measures would be included in future update reports.

Following brief discussion on the merits of bringing back a report in March 2023 and having expressed their support for it, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) to endorse the submission of the programme of Huntingdonshire wide UK Shared Prosperity Fund activity;

- (b) to delegate authority to the Corporate Director (Place) in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy & Housing and Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources to make amendments to Huntingdonshire programme activity following feedback from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and/or Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority on the proposed programme of activity in response to any changes arising from the Autumn 2022 Budget;
- (c) to delegate authority to the Corporate Director (Place), the S151 Officer and Head of Legal Practice in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy & Housing and Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources to:
 - i) enter into the Funding Agreement with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority to enable the delivery of the Huntingdonshire UK Shared Prosperity Fund Programme, including the Rural England Fund;
 - ii) enter into all relevant and necessary grant Funding Agreements and contracts for the successful delivery of the Huntingdonshire UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme, including the Rural Fund.
- (d) to delegate authority to the Corporate Director (Place) and the S151 Officer in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy & Housing and Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources to re-allocate UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural Fund to existing or new activity to ensure the Huntingdonshire allocation is fully utilised by March 2025; and
- (e) to request an update on the Huntingdonshire programme of activity to both the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth) and Cabinet in March 2023.

55 MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME - WINTER UPDATE

A report by the Corporate Director (Place) was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) providing an update on activity across the strands of the Market Towns Programme, which includes updates on funding opportunities, activity on the St Neots Fund Future High Street highways related projects, engagement carried out regarding the wider draft masterplans for St Ives, Ramsey and Huntingdon and the imminent external funding opportunities.

By way of background, the Cabinet were informed by the Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy & Housing that consultations on the masterplans for Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey had extended into November without causing any delay to the programme. Responses received were in the process of being reviewed by Officers. The comments received for Huntingdon and Ramsey had been reviewed to date but that owing to the volume and nature of comments received for St Ives work was continuing to be undertaken in this respect. In his introduction, the Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy & Housing also referred to the considerable progress which had been made in St Neots with regard to highways related projects and the close working practices which had been

adopted with St Neots Town Council in respect of the Priory Centre. He also referred to the submission of a bid to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Local Growth Fund which sought £1.15m capital funding for a project seeking to innovate and revitalise the Great Whyte area of Ramsey. Finally, he drew the Cabinet's attention to the latest developments with the Wayfinding Project, a scheme which was currently being recommenced as to how best to develop and deliver this programme. Assurances had been delivered to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth) that no firm decisions had yet been made but that its feasibility and options were only currently being explored at this stage.

Matters that were discussed by the Cabinet included the Town Council's investigations into the purchase of the neighbouring Oast Lounge and its impact upon the Priory Centre project which was designed to complement the work being undertaken and the position with the Wayfinding Project. In terms of the latter, Cabinet Members were supportive of the recommencement of the scheme. Whereupon, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- a) to note progress on the Market Towns Programme (MTP) over the last quarter; and
- b) to delegate authority to the Corporate Director (Place) in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy & Housing and Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources to submit proposals to the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) to fully utilise unallocated CPCA Accelerated Programme funding ensuring the Huntingdonshire allocation is fully utilised by March 2024, subject to CPCA Board approval.

56 INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT

The Cabinet received and noted a report by the Chief Planning Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking endorsement of the Infrastructure Funding Statement 2021/22 including an update on the infrastructure delivered during this time to March 2022. The statement also set out projects that would be, or may be, wholly or partly, funded by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

The Executive Councillor for Planning reminded the Cabinet of the background to the report where it was noted that the Council had been a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging authority since May 2012 and as such, was required to publish an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement covering the previous financial year by no later than 31st December. The purpose of CIL was to improve, replace and develop the infrastructure within Huntingdonshire. Having drawn the Cabinet's attention to the headline figures contained within the Funding Statement for 2021/22, it was noted that over £37m of CIL funding had been retained.

Having had their attention drawn to the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth), the Cabinet welcomed the structure and format of the report and briefly discussed the position with S106 receipts across St Neots,

Huntingdon and Warboys. Following questions raised by the Executive Councillors for Leisure, Waste and Street Scene and Corporate and Shared Services the Managing Director undertook to request Officers to provide a response to why there were delays on the delivery of projects and spend across CIL projects and S106 schemes which would be circulated to Cabinet Members outside of the meeting. Whereupon, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- a) to approve the statement on the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure which the Council intends will be, or may be, wholly or partly funded by Community Infrastructure Levy stated in paragraph 2.5 (of the report submitted) in the Infrastructure Funding Statement; and
- b) to delegate authority to the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning in consultation with the Chief Planning Officer, to make any final amendments to the Infrastructure Funding Statement, if necessary, prior to publication.

57 GREATER CAMBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP - MAKING CONNECTIONS CONSULTATION

See Minute No. 22/52 – Members Interests.

Councillors S W Ferguson, T D Sanderson and S L Taylor vacated the room during discussion and voting on this item.

A report by the Chief Planning Officer was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking approval for submission of a draft response to Greater Cambridge Partnership's "Making Connections" consultation which was out for public consultation between 17 October and 23 December 2022.

The Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy & Housing provided a detailed explanation on the background to the consultation and reported that the benefits of the proposals included positive steps towards climate change and an improved bus network infrastructure and sustainability. He then drew the Cabinet's attention to comments which had been made by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth) in respect of the development and infrastructure of park and ride sites within the District, the need for better connections in rural areas, specifically in the northern and western parts of the District and the concerns which had been raised regarding the Addenbrookes hospital site.

A proposal was made by the Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy & Housing to amend the draft response outlined in Appendix B to strengthen the wording around park and ride sites and the need for better rural connections in the northern and western parts of the District. This was welcomed by the Cabinet.

Cabinet Members commented on the balanced nature of the draft response and looked forward to seeing the proposals develop in the future. The Cabinet were reminded that the District Council was not a member of the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) and that the Council's role primarily was an influential one.

The Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy & Housing also reported that the GCP had engaged with Officers ahead of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth) meeting on 7th December 2022 and that Officers were in the process of reviewing their response to some of the concerns which had been raised by the Council.

In noting the synergies which had emerged through the Council's engagement on the Place Strategy, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- a) to comment on the draft response letter as set out in Appendix B of the report submitted, subject to amending the response to pick up comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth) in respect of the development and infrastructure of park and ride sites within the District and the need for better rural connections in the northern and western parts of the District;
- b) to delegate authority to the Chief Planning Officer in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy and Housing to make amendments to the Huntingdonshire District Council response prior to submission to the Greater Cambridge Partnership; and
- c) to encourage Huntingdonshire residents and businesses, who it is recognised will have a range of opinions on the proposed scheme, to submit their own feedback to the consultation to ensure the Greater Cambridge Partnership has the fullest evidence base from within the District to inform its decision-making.

Following the conclusion of the Cabinet's discussions on this item, Councillors S W Ferguson, T D Sanderson and S L Taylor re-entered the room and took their seats at the meeting.

58 FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23, QUARTER 2

A report by the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) presenting details of the Council's projected financial performance for 2022/23.

Following an introduction from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, it was reported that the forecast outturn at the end of quarter 2 was £21.933m which reflected a forecast overspend of £418,000 which had increased from £275,000 in quarter 1. Cabinet Members noted that this was attributed to reduction in income from Parking, One Leisure and Markets, increased staff costs in Development Management and One Leisure services and increased operational costs in One Leisure, ICT and Housing Benefits. These costs had been offset by a number of underspends in various service areas which included Waste Management, Corporate Finance, Elections and Democratic Services, Document Centre, Licensing, Parks and Planning Policy.

In respect of the capital forecast, the forecast outturn was reported to be £11.035m against a total gross budget of £41.899m reflecting an underspend of £30.864m. In her concluding remarks, the Director of Finance and Corporate

Resources reported that Council Tax and Business collection rates were regularly monitored and that performance levels had improved when compared to the previous year.

The Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources then went on to report upon the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth), drawing particular attention to the comments which had been made in respect of One Leisure. Further information had been sought around the plans to increase fees and charges across the One Leisure Service which was currently being pursued by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Whereupon, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- a) to consider and comment on the financial performance to the end of September 2022, as detailed in Appendix 1 and summarised in paragraph 3.2 of the report now submitted; and
- b) to also consider and comment on the capital financial performance at the end of September 2022, as detailed in Appendix 1 and summarised in paragraph 3.3 of the report now submitted.

59 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 6 MONTH PERFORMANCE REVIEW

With the aid of a report by the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were updated on the Council's treasury management activity for the first 6 months of the year, including investment and borrowing activity and treasury performance.

The Financial and Treasury Accountant introduced the report which set out treasury performance between the period 1st April 2022 and 30th September 2022 outlining the position with regards to investments and borrowing. Whilst there had been some increases in interest rates, it was reported that the Council had not used any short term loan facilities so far this financial year and had also paid off an outstanding loan with the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) which was welcoming news.

Following a brief discussion on the rates given on maturity loans and whether the Council had been subjected to early repayment charges as a result of paying off the PWLB loan sooner, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

to note the treasury management performance for the first 6 months of 2022/23 and recommended the report to Council for consideration.

60 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

61 SENIOR OFFICERS' COMMITTEE - CABINET NOTIFICATION

In accordance with Officer Employment Procedure Rules contained within the Council's Constitution, the Executive Leader reported upon the outcome of the Senior Officers Committee held on 24th November 2022. No objections were made on the proposed appointment to the post of Interim Managing Director, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer from 1st March 2023 for a fixed term ending on 31st August 2023. A final decision would be taken at Council on 15th December 2022.

Chair