

# HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held as a Remote Meeting via Zoom on Thursday, 22 October 2020

PRESENT: Councillor R Fuller – Chairman.

Councillors Mrs M L Beuttell, S Bywater, J A Gray,  
D N Keane, J Neish and K I Prentice.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor J M Palmer.

## 29 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17th September 2020 were approved as a correct record.

## 30 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

## 31 HEALTHY OPEN SPACES STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report prepared by the Development Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking endorsement of the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy and its vision of “Embrace Your Space” and the associated action plan.

The Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment outlined the background to the report which set out the direction of focus, development and investment in the open spaces in Huntingdonshire. The Cabinet noted the many benefits that would be achieved including how open spaces can support local people to live healthier lives, improve their mental health and wellbeing and contribute to the fight against change as well as addressing social isolation.

Having been informed that targeted public and stakeholder consultation had been undertaken since August 2019 and that the 10 year action plan would be reviewed on an annual basis and that a refresh of the evidence base would be undertaken after 5 years, the Cabinet commended Officers and the Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment for the production of comprehensive report.

The Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources commented on paragraph 7.2 of the report and encouraged any projects and facilities to be revenue neutral as possible prior to any revenue bids being submitted for consideration.

In noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships), it was

RESOLVED

that the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy and the proposed 10-year action plan be endorsed by the Cabinet.

## **32 PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE WHITE PAPER CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

With the aid of a report prepared by the Planning Policy Team Leader (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were provided with an outline of the proposals set out in the government's White Paper "Planning for the Future" and the draft consultation response highlighting how the proposals might affect the District and the Council's corporate priorities and objectives.

By way of background, the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning reported that the White Paper had been published for consultation on 6th August 2020, proposing fundamental reforms to the planning system in England including Local Plan reform and changes to both developer contributions and development management. Particular mention was also made of the District's strategic planning relationship with neighbouring authorities and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority by removing the formal "duty to cooperate" when preparing development plans.

The Executive Councillor for Corporate Services expressed his support for the draft responses proposed for questions 5, 13 and 14. It was felt that they strongly reflected the Council's views on the matter. With regard to 9(c), comment was made by the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources that the response should be amended to "No" as the residents of Huntingdonshire would want assurances that decisions on new settlements were being undertaken at a local level. Following a suggestion by the Chairman, it was agreed that the proposed response to 8(a) should be amended to either "No" or "Not Sure" to prevent the Council inadvertently agreeing to the proposals around a standard methodology for establishing housing requirements. Finally, it was confirmed that it was the Council's intention not to provide a "Yes/No/Not sure" answer to the draft response to 17 as a means of ensuring the Council's response would be fully considered.

Following a suggestion, the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning agreed to produce a covering letter for Huntingdonshire residents summarising the Council's final response to the consultation.

In concurring with the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) and in noting that the response to the consultation would need to be submitted by 30th October 2020, it was

### **RESOLVED**

that the comments of the Cabinet be noted and that delegated authority to finalise and submit the Council's consultation response be given to the Service Manager (Growth) and the Planning Policy Team Leader in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning.

## **33 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY GOVERNANCE**

A report was submitted by the Service Manager (Growth) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) reviewing and seeking the Cabinet's agreement on future governance arrangements for the spending of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts.

Having been apprised with the background to the report, the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning reported that the current system was no longer considered best suited to meet the Council's strategic aims. He then drew attention to Appendix 1 which provided an outline of all options which had been considered.

In welcoming Option 4, where all governance would be undertaken by the Council, the Cabinet expressed their support that this option would be the most appropriate to safeguard the delivery of the Council's priorities. In noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth), the Cabinet

## RESOLVED

to support the introduction of a new process for the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, including:

- (a) the introduction of a new application form and guidance (as outlined in Appendices 2 & 3 of the report now submitted);
- (b) delegating authority to the Corporate Director (Place) and the Service Manager (Growth) in consultation with the Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning for the allocation of CIL funding for smaller funding applications in the Local Bids category (£50,000 or less) including those from non-parished areas. Those decisions will be notified to Cabinet twice yearly; and
- (c) approving the process requiring applications requesting more than £50,000 in the Strategic Bids category to be approved by Cabinet.

## 34 HOUSING STRATEGY 2020 - 2025

Consideration was given to a report by the Interim Corporate Director (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) setting out the strategic direction for housing in Huntingdonshire in the medium term, highlighting the housing priorities and how they will be achieved by the Council including through partnership working and setting out the short term action plan for the next twelve months.

The Chairman, as Executive Councillor for Housing and Economic Development, reported that the Housing Strategy would cover a 5 year period and that an annual action plan would be produced each year to set out how the priorities within the Strategy would be achieved taking into account current external influences such as COVID-19 and the likelihood of further housing related legislative change. Having been informed of the involvement of Overview and Scrutiny in developing and shaping the Strategy and in welcoming the work undertaken by Mrs L Bisset, Housing Consultant to effectively engage and collaborate with external stakeholders, the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) were noted. Whereupon, it was

## RESOLVED

that the Housing Strategy for 2020-25 and the accompanying one-year action plan be approved.

### **35 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ON COUNCIL OWNED SITES**

With the aid of a report by the Interim Corporate Director (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) and appendices (copies of which are appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) the Cabinet gave consideration to a proposal seeking to secure the disposal and development of parcels of land owned by the District Council for the delivery of affordable housing.

The Cabinet were reminded that should they wish to discuss the content of the appendices, to inform the Chairman so that the meeting could move to private session if required.

By way of background, the Chairman, as Executive Councillor for Housing and Economic Development, reported upon the aspirations of the Cabinet to make better use of the Council's redundant land holdings. The proposals would seek to deliver affordable housing for the residents of Huntingdonshire and provide an ongoing revenue stream and/or capital receipt to the Council.

Having welcomed the proposals and whilst being mindful of the need to ensure an appropriate balance between residential and open spaces, it was noted that the proposals, if relevant, would be subject to the planning process thereby providing an opportunity for the community and residents to be consulted. Comment was made that the parcels of land identified currently fulfilled a number of different uses within the community and that discussions would be held with the public as necessary.

In noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth), the Cabinet

## RESOLVED

- a) to approve the list of 13 parcels of land held by Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) and agreed to reclassify them as assets for sale;
- b) to approve that the Council sells the parcels of land for the delivery of affordable housing;
- c) to select Longhurst Housing Group as the preferred housing development partner and enter into further discussions on each of the sites;
- d) to agree the budget for the housing delivery programme;
- e) to delegate authority to the Leader in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources and Interim Corporate Director (Delivery) to approve the price (subject to RICS Valuation) and execute all associated legal and contractual processes and documentation;

- f) to delegate authority to the Leader in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources and the Interim Corporate Director (Delivery) to determine private rented homes or a capital receipt is received as payment for each of the land parcels; and
- g) to agree that any remaining small land parcels in the Councils portfolio not involved in this disposal remain under consideration for future facilitation of the objectives of the Housing Strategy and wider economic development/growth options.

Chairman