

# HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held as a Remote Meeting via Zoom on Thursday, 19 November 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.

## 36 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## 37 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

## 38 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21, QUARTER 2

With the aid of a report prepared by the Performance & Data Analyst (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered progress made against the Key Actions and Corporate Indicators listed in the Council's Corporate Plan 2018/22 for the period 1st July to 30th September 2020. The report also incorporated progress on the current projects being undertaken by the Council.

The Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning summarised the progress made in delivering the Key Actions for 2020/21 over the reporting period and the Cabinet were advised that 77% of these were on track, with 23% being classified as being within the acceptable variance. In doing so, Cabinet's attention was drawn to those areas where positive progress had been achieved, as set out in Section 3.4 of the report submitted.

In terms of performance against the Council's Corporate Indicators, Cabinet were pleased to note that the majority of these were on track at the end of Quarter 2 with only three being classified as 'Red' because performance was below an unacceptable variance. The latter being a direct result of the impact of Covid-19.

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) who had commended the overall performance of the Council during this period, the Cabinet expressed their appreciation to the Managing Director and her team for the progress which had been made during this difficult time. Whereupon it was

## RESOLVED

to note the progress made against the Key Activities and Corporate indicators in the Corporate Plan and current projects, as outlined in

Appendix A and detailed in Appendices B and C of the report now submitted.

### **39 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21, QUARTER 2**

A report by the Chief Finance Officer was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) presenting details of the Council's financial performance, to the end of September 2020.

In introducing the report, the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources reminded the Cabinet that the Council's financial performance was a dynamic and evolving situation, which would continue to change as Quarter 3 progressed. The Executive Councillor drew Cabinet's attention to the highlights within the report, specifically the forecast overspend of £2.403m in the Revenue outturn and a forecast underspend of £10.802m in the Capital Programme at the end of 2020/21. A brief update on collection rates for Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates and the projected outturn from the Commercial Investment Strategy was also provided, the latter of which was expected to demonstrate a variance in the region of £1m from the Budget position.

The Chief Finance Officer explained that the report included the first claim from the Government's Income Compensation of £1.568m and that the Council would be seeking to continue to claim against this scheme throughout the financial year, alongside other mechanisms which were available to the Council. Cabinet's attention was drawn to the specific budgetary pressures continuing to have an impact upon the Council's revenue budget as outlined in Section 3.2 of the report and were reminded that the outstanding projects within the Capital Programme would be reviewed as part of the 2021/22 Budget setting process which was now underway.

Having reviewed the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) who had been pleased to note that the Council's finances appeared to be performing better than originally expected, the Cabinet received an update on the Government consultation the use of funds from the Public Works Loan Board, together with the implications should this source of funding no longer be available to local authorities.

In concluding the discussion on this item, the Executive Leader reminded the Cabinet that despite the revenue deficit, overall the District Council continued to maintain a strong budgetary position and would not find itself in the perilous situation being faced by other authorities within the Country. A message which should continue to be conveyed to local communities within Huntingdonshire.

Whereupon it was

**RESOLVED**

that the Cabinet note the Council's financial performance at the end of September and the register of reviews of Commercial Investment Strategy propositions.

#### **40 TREASURY MANAGEMENT - SIX MONTH PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

Consideration was given to a report by the Chief Finance Officer summarising the Council's treasury management activity over the first half of the 2020/21 financial year which included investment and borrowing activity and treasury performance.

Following a brief introduction by the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources, the Chief Finance Officer updated the Cabinet on the main elements of the report including the external economic context, the Council's borrowing and investment position, non-treasury investment activity, performance against treasury management indicators and the prospective outlook for the remainder of 2020/21.

Attention having been drawn to the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) who had endorsed the report for submission to the Cabinet, clarification was sought and provided in relation to their comments regarding the discontinuation of Council loans to other organisations.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the treasury management performance for the first six months of 2020/21 be noted; and
- (b) that the Council be recommended to consider the content of the report.

#### **41 HUNTINGDONSHIRE TREE STRATEGY REVIEW**

Consideration was given to a report by the Arboricultural Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was appended a draft Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy and Action Plan for 2020-2030 for endorsement.

By way of introduction, the Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning outlined the background to the development of the new Strategy, which had been formulated in collaboration with a Councillor working group to ensure that there was a clear direction for arboricultural management across all Council services. It was also explained that the development of the Strategy also linked with a number of other areas of activity - healthy living, open spaces and climate change for example.

Cabinet's attention was drawn to the vision for the Strategy, which focused on sustainability and creating a legacy of tree establishment and management. Members were also informed that an Action Plan had also been developed to set out the key projects and tasks to be completed over the ten-year lifespan.

In welcoming the development of this Strategy, the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources commented upon the importance being placed by national government on increasing the overall tree coverage for the country with regards to climate change and carbon capture and welcomed efforts to engage with this broader ambition. He also emphasised the need for the actions arising

from the Strategy to become embedded in the overall thinking of the District Council.

Having noted the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships) and their involvement with the formulation of the Strategy, it was agreed that the Cabinet's appreciation should be recorded to them for their overall and individual contributions.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020-2030 and the proposed 10-year Action Plan be endorsed by the Cabinet.

#### **42 HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK JOINT GROUP**

The Cabinet received and noted the Minutes of the Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Joint Group on 16th October 2020.

Chairman