

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in Meeting Rooms 0.1A and 0.1B, Ground Floor, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 14 October 2021

PRESENT: Councillor R Fuller – Chairman.

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

APOLOGY: An Apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor D N Keane.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors J M Palmer (Cabinet Assistant) and B M Pitt.

29 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16th September 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

30 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

31 LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT: CONSULTATION DRAFT 2021

With the aid of a report prepared by the Strategic Growth Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the content of the Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) seeking its approval for public consultation.

In introducing the report, the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning reported that the SPD had been updated following several changes to national and local policy, including the National Planning Policy Framework, Localism Act and the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036. He then went on to report that the SPD was a material consideration on planning decisions and an integral part of the design and development process to support the wildlife, habitat, cultural and historical values of defined character areas and particular environments so that developments respond positively to their landscape and townscape context. It was noted that the SPD would be subject to a period of 8 weeks public consultation, the time period for which had been extended in recognition of the length of the revised SPD.

In acknowledging the level of detail provided at Ward level and in noting the inclusion of regional variations within the SPD which would seek to encourage development proposals to consider designs that were sympathetic to the existing streetscene, the Cabinet were apprised with the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth). In doing so, it was

RESOLVED

that the Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document: Consultation Draft 2021 be approved for public consultation.

32 ENVIRONMENT PRINCIPLES

With the aid of a report prepared by the Managing Director, Assistant Director (Recovery) and Strategic Growth Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the adoption of a set of environmental principles for Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) and its activities that align with those developed as part of the Oxfordshire-Cambridgeshire Arc (OxCam Arc).

By way of background, the Executive Leader and Executive Councillor for Housing and Economic Growth reported that 41 authorities had signed up to the environmental principles which would support the renewal of Huntingdonshire's Strategy for the Environment and also inform the delivery of the Corporate Plan. Having drawn the Cabinet's attention to paragraph 3.2 of the report which outlined the five core set of environmental principles to be adopted and in noting the unanimous support of the principles by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships), Executive Members' attention was then drawn to the proposed amended recommendations as tabled at the meeting (copies of which are also appended in the Minute Book).

Matters that were discussed included how the Council's housing stock would become environmentally sustainable in the future, the creative opportunities that existed through the OxCam Arc that wouldn't rely on cost (such as draft building regulations and planning powers) and the 12-month timeframe required to produce the strategy and how the Council would move forward with the principles in the interim. In response to the former, the Executive Leader reported that whilst he was unable to provide a specific response at the present time, a partnership approach would be adopted on such matters with a view to achieving this aim. Having regard to the latter, Executive Members were reminded that activity was already underway and that the Council would continue to work towards these aims.

Having expressed their support for the proposals, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet

- (a) agree that the environmental principles form the basis upon which to inform the renewal of Huntingdonshire's Strategy for the Environment, centred on achieving an environmentally positive recovery; and
- (b) recommend to Council to:
 - (i) adopt the aspiration of a net carbon zero Huntingdonshire by 2040; and

(ii) adopt the OxCam Arc environmental principles.

33 COMMUNITY TRANSITION STRATEGY 2021/23

Consideration was given to a report prepared by the Corporate Director (People) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking the endorsement of the proposed Community Transition Strategy including the list of actions that sit within the supporting Action Plan.

The Executive Councillor for Community Resilience and Well-Being introduced the report and highlighted the range of work and activity which had arisen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. He then went on to report upon the ambitions of the strategy to deliver the best possible outcomes for Huntingdonshire in partnership with residents and community groups, whom had all had an opportunity to input into the development of the strategy via a series of workshops, ongoing shared working arrangements and general business contact. Having had their attention drawn to the 14 actions identified within the Action Plan, the Corporate Director (People) delivered a brief summary of work undertaken to date, which included supporting the shielding population during the COVID-19 pandemic and the distribution of funding to the most vulnerable communities through the Huntingdonshire Network. It was also confirmed that activity was also taking place prior to the pandemic and these actions had also been incorporated within the strategy document.

Prior to opening up the matter for debate, the Executive Leader commented upon an incorrect statement made by the Mayor of St Neots stating that the Council had outsourced the community support provided and expressed his apologies to Officers for the misunderstanding which had been caused.

Having received a response to a question which had been raised regarding the resource implications of delivering the strategy and the funding opportunities which existed, Cabinet Members expressed their support for the strategy and associated action plan. Having commended Officers for their efforts and in concurring with the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers & Partnerships), it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet endorse the proposed Community Transition Strategy (as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report now submitted) and the list of actions that sit within the supporting Action Plan.

Chairman