

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 Tuesday, 12 December 2023

PRESENT: Councillor S J Conboy – Chair.

Councillors L Davenport-Ray, S W Ferguson,
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 M A Hassall.

51 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14th November 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

52 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor B M Pitt declared a registerable interest under Minute Nos 56 and 59 by virtue of his membership of St Neots Town Council. He abstained from voting on both items.

53 INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT 2023/24

The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Planning Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) that required agreement on the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) 2022/2023 and the update on the infrastructure delivery during this time (to 31 March 2023) and statement required in relation to projects that will or may be, wholly or partly, funded by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The main points of the discussions on the report may be summarised as follows:

The Cabinet noted that the District Council has been a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging authority since May 2012. Under the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended), a CIL contribution receiving authority such as the District Council is required to publish an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) by no later than 31st December including a statement on the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure which the Council intends will be, or may be, wholly or partly funded by the CIL, report about CIL on matters specified in the regulations and report about planning obligations specified in the regulations

The IFS in this report covers the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 and provides detail on how the Council is delivering the Corporate Plan to Do: Enable; Influence and the Local Plan with particular regard to infrastructure to enable growth. In noting the contents of the IFS detailed at Appendix 1,

commented on the infrastructure delivery in the reporting year and noted the statement on future projects that may be supported by CIL, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the statement on the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure which the Council intends will be, or may be, wholly or partly funded by CIL stated at para 2.5 of the report now submitted in the Infrastructure Funding Statement be approved; and
- (b) that the Chief Planning Officer, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning, be authorised to make any final amendments to the IFS, if necessary, prior to publication.

54 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY UPDATE

The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Planning Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) presented by the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning that invited the Cabinet to consider recommendations relating to infrastructure projects seeking extensions of time for their funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies received to date.

The Cabinet noted that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a planning charge to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of the area. The Council must spend the levy on infrastructure needed to support the development of their area. This helps to deliver across the Council's Corporate Plan priorities through the creation of a better Huntingdonshire for future generations by maintaining the level of new housing delivery, that meets the needs of Huntingdonshire residents, including the type of home and tenure (open market and social housing) and forward-thinking economic growth to influence the delivery of infrastructure including East West Rail, A428, A141 Strategic Outline Business Case and future Transport Strategies.

In October 2020 approval had been given to a revised approach to the governance arrangements for allocating the funds held by the District Council as the 'Strategic Proportion'. Under these arrangements the Cabinet considers those applications received seeking over £50,000. Of the projects approved to date, it was noted that there are three current projects that have applied for an extension of time which included:

- Warboys Village Hall;
- Wheatsheaf Road/Somersham Road junction improvements; and
- Ramsey Skate Park.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) at its meeting held on Wednesday, 6 December 2023 had discussed the Community Infrastructure Levy Update Report and commented that it was positive to observe that works would be beginning with particular reference to the Wheatsheaf junction project.

As a result of discussions on the report, it was

RESOLVED

that an extension of time be approved for their funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy for the following –

- (a) the Warboys Village Hall project until 30th March 2025;
- (b) Ramsey Skate Park project to 31st December 2025; and
- (c) B1040 Wheatsheaf Rd/Somersham Rd and the St Ives Accident Reduction Scheme project until 30th September 2025.

55 NON-DOMESTIC RATES RURAL SETTLEMENTS LIST

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

The Cabinet considered a report by the Revenues and Benefits Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on 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.

The Council's statutory responsibility is 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. It is a legal requirement that boundaries are set and published by 31st December each year.

Following a review of the latest population data estimates available from Cambridgeshire County Council, no changes are proposed to the Rural Settlement List.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) at its meeting on Thursday, 7 December 2023 had discussed the Rural Settlement List for non-domestic rates and the Panel heard that there were no changes to the list from last year. It was also clarified that the map areas highlighted in blue were parts of urban areas which had been designated as defined rural settlements in order to support local businesses and observed that due to there having been no change from the previous year, it might be prudent to pursue an alternative method of publishing. In response the Executive Councillor had confirmed to the Panel that there was an option to do this via a delegated responsibility and that this would be investigated.

As a result of discussions on the report, it was

RESOLVED

that the changes to Huntingdonshire District Council's Rural Settlement List for publication by 31st December 2023 to facilitate the award of Rural Business Rates Relief for the financial year effective from 1st April 2024 be approved.

56 MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME - WINTER UPDATE

The Cabinet received a report by the Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the Market Towns Programme (MTP). The Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy and Housing then reported upon progress with the MTP. With particular reference to the start of work on the Town Centre Improvements (St Neots), the progress towards the refurbishment of the Priory Centre (St Neots) and delivery of the wider Market Town Programme focusing on activities across Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives, and Ramsey.

The Cabinet noted that whilst there will unfortunately be disruption as part of the improvement programme, it was stressed that this was intended to be a seamless process with businesses still being able to trade. Accordingly, the MTP governance and reporting lines will be continually monitored to ensure that the key programme milestones are managed and achieved.

Members noted that a key element of the MTP is having in place a well-planned communications strategy that is both monitored weekly and designed to be initiative-taking, looking ahead several months for any likely challenges and situations for which communications and publicity are vital tools in facilitation any successful resolution.

The Cabinet were advised that good planning and effective regeneration can renew and reshape local town centres and high streets in a way that promotes growth, improves experiences and ensures sustainability in the future.

As a result of discussions on the report, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that progress regarding the projects (part of the Market Towns Programme) over the last quarter be noted; and
- (b) that discussion was noted on feedback concerning the potential extension of the Shop Front Grant scheme to St Neots and Ramsey town centres.

57 HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK JOINT GROUP

The Cabinet has received and noted the Minutes of the Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Joint Group held on 17th November 2023.

58 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

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

59 MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME WINTER UPDATE - PART II

See Minute No. 52 – Members’ Interests.

The Cabinet gave consideration to an exempt report (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) which provided a Winter update on the Market Town Programme.

Having received an update from the Executive Councillor for Jobs, Housing and Economy who responded to a number of questions raised and in noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth), the Cabinet

RESOLVED

to endorse the recommendations contained within the exempt report now submitted.

(Councillor B M Pitt abstained from voting on this item).

60 SENIOR OFFICER COMMITTEE - CABINET NOTIFICATION: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PLACE)

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 12th December 2023. No objections were made on the proposed appointment to the post of Corporate Director Place.

Chair