

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 19 September 2013.

PRESENT: Councillor J D Ablewhite – Chairman.  
Councillors B S Chapman, J A Gray,  
N J Guyatt, R B Howe and D M Tysoe.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor S J Criswell

APOLOGY: Apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor T D Sanderson.

### 28. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Executive Councillors noted that Councillor N J Guyatt had been appointed as the District Council's representative to the Cambridgeshire Pension Fund Board.

### 29. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors D M Tysoe declared a non pecuniary interest in Minute No. 31 as Clerk to Ellington Parish Council.

### 30. PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEES IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

*(Councillor S J Criswell, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well Being) was in attendance and spoke on this item.)*

Further to Minute No. 12/21 and by way of a report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Cabinet were reminded of their previous decision on the proposed establishment of Local Joint Committees (LJC) in Huntingdonshire. This had included the adoption of a constitution and approval to trial a pilot scheme in the Norman Cross County Division. Having regard to the latter, it was reported that only one informal meeting of the pilot LJC had been held.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor S J Criswell, Chairman of the Panel, addressed the Cabinet. He explained that as a result of Members' concerns over the absence of a face to face neighbourhood engagement mechanism within the district the issue of LJC's had been raised with the Executive Leader's Strategy Group. As a result, a series of new principles for LJC's were agreed with the intention of promoting local ownership of the scheme rather than a

top-down approach.

In considering the information before them, Executive Councillors expressed reservations over the prescriptive nature of the proposed boundary map areas adding that some towns/parishes may wish to join up with others not within the areas identified. In response to which, Councillor Criswell explained that the Town and Parish had been consulted on whom they considered to be part of their local communities and that no one had raised any disagreement with their proposed geographical allocation. However, the Cabinet felt that the areas should be perceived as guidelines only in order to allow some flexibility.

Having thanked the Panel for their input, the Cabinet

#### RESOLVED

- (a) that Town and Parish Councils be notified of the opportunity to establish their own Local Joint Committees across the District within the parameters set out in Appendix A and Appendix B;
- (b) that the revised Constitution for Local Joint Committees in Huntingdonshire as set out in Appendix C of the report be approved; and
- (c) that each individual Ward Member be requested to attend their respective Local Joint Committee(s) if a meeting is called by the communities.

### **31. FINANCIAL FORECAST TO 2019**

By way of a report by the Assistant Director, Finance and Resources (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Cabinet were acquainted with the present position in relation to the Council's financial forecast for the period up to 2018/19 together with the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) thereon.

In considering the information contained in the report, Members have been informed of progress to date in the achievement of savings and have acknowledged the major financial challenges facing the authority arising from the Government's Spending Review. Particular attention was drawn to the Government's limit for Council Tax increase in the current year, uncertainty surrounding the level of Government Formula Grant and a proposed requirement for local authorities to pass a significant portion of New Homes Bonus to the Local Enterprise Partnership. The Cabinet acknowledged that the Government's Review had created additional major financial challenges for the Council and its ability to deliver its current portfolio of services. Furthermore, mention was made of the uncertainty that surrounded Government support for Councils after the 2015 General Election with a potential for a fall in grant of 2.5% per year.

In discussing existing savings proposals, Members considered whether to continue with a grant to Town and Parish Councils previously awarded as compensation for changes in funding arising from the Government's Local Council Tax Support Scheme. Given the challenges being faced by the authority as a result of the budgetary cuts, Members felt that this grant should not be continued beyond the current financial year, subject to there being no change in Government legislation.

With regard to additional savings requirements, Executive Councillors recognised the need to focus on the larger areas of the Council's expenditure and the importance of communication to ensure that Huntingdonshire residents are able to influence and remain informed of the process.

Having noted that the Managing Director was currently developing a performance management framework to link the Leadership Direction with the Budget/MTP

## RESOLVED

that Council be recommended to;

- (a) consider the contents of the report and acknowledge the significant financial uncertainty for local authorities;
- (b) confirm that there will be no grants relating to the impact of Council Tax Support to Town and Parish Councils in 2014/15 and subsequent years;
- (c) support the Financial Forecast as the basis to estimate the potential level of savings required by the authority; and
- (d) request the Managing Director to identify proposals for additional major savings for 2015/16.

## **32. HUNTINGDONSHIRE TOWN AND PARISH CHARTER**

By way of a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was invited to consider the content of a proposed Huntingdonshire Town and Parish Charter which sets out a framework for partnership working to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the district. The Charter had been considered also by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

Members were informed that the Charter would be an evolving document which would take into account any future changes such as the proposals for Local Joint Committees in Huntingdonshire, the Parish planning process and any changes announced by the Department of Communities and Local Government in respect of the

Localism Act.

In considering the contents of the Charter, Executive Councillors concurred with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel that in Appendix C reference should be made that the District Council would advise Town and Parish Councils of developments which were taking place through “permitted developments”. Having also supported the Panel’s view that Local Joint Committees in Huntingdonshire should be included within the document as an example of an appropriate forum in which to engage with communities, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that, subject to the inclusion of the suggested amendments referred to in the text of the preamble hereto, the contents of the Huntingdonshire Town and Parish Charter be approved.

**33. MAKING ASSETS COUNT - CAMBRIDGESHIRE'S PROPOSED APPROACH TO STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT**

Further to Minute No 11/15, consideration was given to a report by the Assistant Director, Environment, Growth and Planning (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) updating Members with progress of the Making Assets Count project which aims to deliver high quality and effective management of public sector assets across Cambridgeshire. The report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

Executive Councillors were advised that the MAC Partnership consisted of Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire’s District Councils, the Police Service, the Fire Service and some of the local Health Providers. It was reported that there had been some initial success thus far including the re-letting of office space to accommodate health service requirements at Pathfinder House.

Members’ attention was drawn to a proposal to establish a publicly-owned joint venture vehicle which would enhance the work of the Partnership by delivering projects and managing transferred assets. In recognising the importance of investigating all opportunities and having noted that none of the authority’s assets would be committed to or encumbered by this without further reference to a future meeting, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Making Assets Count principles, outlined in paragraph 2.1 of the report now submitted, be endorsed and the County Council’s intention to proceed with the creation of a countywide publicly-owned joint venture (the MAC Public Property Partnership) noted; and
- (b) that the pragmatic approach taken to date by the authority in respect of maximising the use of our own assets be supported and all further ‘common sense’ sharing opportunities fully explored and expediently delivered wherever that may be possible;

#### **34. JOINT MATERIALS RECYCLING FACILITY PROCUREMENT**

With the aid of a report by the Head of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a proposal by the Recycling Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership (RECAP) to jointly procure a materials recycling facility to manage and process all the recycling materials collected across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The proposals relates only to bulking, sorting and onward processing/sale of recyclable materials.

In considering the information in the report, Executive Councillors discussed the risk associated with the contract and sought assurances that the authority would benefit from being part of a combined procurement with other local authorities. Having referred also to the lack of any financial justifications in the report, the Cabinet

#### **RESOLVED**

- (a) that, subject to all RECAP partners agreeing to the appointment, the Council's commitment to the procurement and appointment of a Contractor to deliver a joint materials recycling facility for bulking, sorting and onward processing/sale of recyclable materials for all participating partners, be endorsed;
- (b) that the RECAP Advance Partnership Working Charter and Governance Agreement, appended to the report now submitted, be approved;
- (c) that the final Invitation of Tender document for the project be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) prior to final approval by the Cabinet and if necessary a special meeting be called for that purpose in order to meet the timetable for the joint procurement;
- (d) that the nomination of a preferred supplier by Peterborough City Council, in collaboration with the participating partners, for the provision of the services of bulking, sorting and onward processing/sale of recyclable materials contract on behalf of Peterborough City Council and the RECAP participating partners be endorsed; and
- (e) that the RECAP approach to the Waste Framework Directive and Waste Regulations for the collection of recycle materials streams from 2015, as set out in Appendix 3 of the report, be approved.

#### **35. FACING THE FUTURE 2013**

With the aid of report by the Managing Director (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Cabinet was invited to consider

future potential business options for the delivery of Council services together with a programme of activity aimed at supporting the delivery of a robust business plan.

Members were advised that the proposals explored a range of options available to reform the way the authority delivers its services, with the aim of creating a sustainable solution to the stark financial difficulties facing the authority. In welcoming the pragmatic approach being adopted by the authority and in acknowledging that consideration would need to be given to a number of difficult decisions in the future, the Cabinet

#### RESOLVED

- (a) that the list of potential options for future service delivery be approved and they be considered in respect of all the services currently delivered by the Council;
- (b) that the Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen be requested to prepare proposals for a delivery programme to be presented to the next meeting of the Cabinet for approval and to agree resourcing for that programme and a proposed governance structure; and
- (c) that the Overview and Scrutiny Panels be requested to review all options in line with the programme and present their conclusions and recommendations to the Cabinet.

Chairman