
Cabinet

Report of the meeting held on 17th October 2013

Matters for Information

22. A14 IMPROVEMENTS – HIGHWAYS AGENCY CONSULTATION

Having regard to the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) (Item No.17 of their Report refers), the Cabinet has considered a suggested response, on behalf of the Council, to a consultation paper issued by the Highways Agency on the proposed A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme. In so doing, the Cabinet had regard to representations made at the meeting by Councillors Ms L Kadic and R West. Both expressed their support for the improvement scheme. However, Councillor West raised concerns over the impact of tolling for local residents and Councillor Kadić stressed the need to effectively communicate the benefits of the scheme to residents.

Executive Councillors were reminded that the scheme will be supported by a local finance package of £100m, comprising contributions from various partners including the County Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership, with the District Council contributing up to £5m over a 25 year period. In discussing the information before them, Executive Councillors reiterated that the District Council's financial contribution was conditional on the overall scheme including the removal of the Huntingdon Viaduct, the creation of an improved new local road network for Huntingdon and the construction works commencing by 2016.

In considering the key aspects of the scheme, the Cabinet's attention has been drawn to a proposal to introduce a toll road between the A1/A14 junction and Swavesey. The Cabinet has agreed that if the scheme has to include a tolling element, that this must be collected in a free-flow fashion and that the daily charge must be maintained at a level which is as low as possible i.e £1 for cars and £2 for HCV's, over an appropriate extended time period to be agreed between all the funding partners.

The Assistant Director, Environmental, Growth and Planning has been requested to reflect these comments in the Council's response to the Highways Agency.

23. CUSTOMER SERVICES STRATEGY 2013-18

The Cabinet has considered the content of the Customer Services Strategy for 2013-18. As part of their deliberations, the Cabinet had regard to the conclusions reached by **the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) on the matter (Item No.17 of their Report refers).**

In so doing, Executive Councillors have queried the need to create a business case for the relocation of the call centre to Pathfinder House and have raised concerns over the timescale for the publication of customer service performance information. Members were of the view that performance data should be readily available and the dates within the action plan reviewed.

Having also suggested that the Council should be aspiring to provide a high level of service rather than achieving excellence, the Cabinet has approved the contents of the Strategy subject to minor amendments to reflect the views above.

24. JOINT MATERIALS RECYCLING FACILITY PROCUREMENT INVITATION TO TENDER

Further to Item No. 20 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 25th September 2013 and having regard to the conclusions reached by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) (Item No.15 of their Report refers), the Cabinet has authorised the Head of Operations, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Environment, to approve the Invitation to Tender document for the procurement of a Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) service for the bulking, sorting and onwards processing/sale of recyclable materials.

Disquiet continues to be expressed by Members over the lack of a risk/sensitivity analysis for the contract. Owing to Member's concerns, the Head of Operations has agreed to arrange for further information on the financial implications of the new arrangements to be circulated to the Cabinet.

25. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INVOLVEMENT IN IDENTIFYING PRIORITY AREAS FOR SAVINGS

Further to Item No. 21 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 25th September 2013, the Cabinet has approved a process for a detailed review of service areas by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels. The Panels will focus on the most significant options for each service and have been tasked with prioritising areas where savings can be achieved. All the reviews must be completed by December 2013 to enable the outcome of the Panel's deliberations to be reported to the Cabinet's January 2014 meeting. The process will be the subject of an external assessment (Peer Review) by the East of England Local Government Association.

**26. STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING –
IMPLEMENTATION OF CHARGES**

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) (Item No.16 of their Report refers), the Cabinet has considered a proposal to introduce a charge for Street Naming and Numbering Services.

Under the provisions of the Public Health Act 1925, the District Council has to provide street names for new streets and numbering for new properties. The Act also gives the Council a duty to maintain and replace damaged, missing or illegible street name plates.

In considering a proposed schedule of charges, Executive Councillors have expressed concern over the lack of reference to the cost of providing the service or alternative charging options available to the Council. Given their unease, the Cabinet has deferred consideration of the proposals, until their next meeting, to enable these issues to be addressed.

27. PAY REVIEW – PROGRAMME PLAN

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the progress being made on the Council's Pay Review project. Members were informed that the consultation process with employees was about to commence and will involve the release of a comprehensive pack, on the proposed new pay model, to all staff. The process will be supported by a series of presentations and briefings and will formally end in December.

J D Ablewhite
Chairman