

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 17 July 2014.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors J W Davies, R Fuller, R Harrison and Ms L Kadic.

24. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 10th July 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

26. BUDGET MONITORING 2014/15 REVENUE AND CAPITAL

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Resources (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) highlighting the emerging variations to the approved 2014/15 revenue and capital budgets. The report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

It was reported that the New Homes Bonus for 2015/16 would be based on the increase in houses in the year ending September 2014. Members were encouraged to note that the Council was currently ahead of its profiled new-homes target which would equate to a gain on 2015/16 NHB receipts of £168,000.

Having been advised that a further report on the outcome of an audit review into the Huntingdon Multi-Storey Car Park and the One Leisure St Ives redevelopment would be presented to a future meeting, it was

RESOLVED

that the forecast variations to the approved budgets, detailed in the report now submitted, be noted.

27. 2013/14 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT

With the aid of a report by the Head of Resources (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the Council's treasury management activities for the year ending 31st March 2014.

In accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management Code of Practice, Executive Councillors received the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) on the matter.

Having acknowledged that the Council had performed well with regard to the returns it had achieved on its investment in the year, the Cabinet

RECOMMEND

that Council receives the Treasury Management Annual Report 2013/14.

28. CAMBRIDGESHIRE HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY - 2 YEAR REVIEW

Further to Minute No.13/14, a report by the Housing Strategy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) was submitted summarising the outcome of a review of the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) Service with Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils following its second year of operation, the demand for Disabled Facilities Grants and the implications of the Governments Better Care Fund. The report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

By way of background, Members were reminded that the establishment of the shared service was the first to be introduced by the Council. Whilst there had been some problems, experienced in the first year of operation, the service was now operating as intended and had met its aims and objectives. A major part of the service is the administration of Disabled Facilities Grants. In acknowledging the role these grants have in helping people live independently, Executive Councillors have stressed that the cost of these improvements should be monitored with a view to keeping costs to a minimum whilst delivering an efficient and effective service. Members also concurred with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel that smaller local firms should be encouraged to tender for such work.

In considering a proposal to broaden the shared service to include the other districts within Cambridgeshire, Executive Councillors felt that its expansion would deliver further efficiencies and benefits for commissioners and customers. Given that the current three year service agreement expires in March 2015 and would need to be extended whilst the countywide service was being developed, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted and Officers be granted permission to work up an outline Business Case for expansion to a County-Wide service, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning and Housing Strategy and subject to the final agreement

being submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet for consideration;

- (b) that the current Shared Service Agreement be extended by a further 12 months to 31st^t March 2016; and
- (c) that Officers be requested to report further to Members after the Cambridgeshire Housing Improvement Agency has operated for three years.

29. CAMBRIDGESHIRE LONG TERM TRANSPORT STRATEGY & LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 3 REFRESH

By means of a report by the Head of Development (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with progress being made with the development of a Long Term Transport Strategy (LLTS) for Cambridgeshire and the delivery of the key elements of the Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan (LTP3).

Members were advised that the draft LLTS seeks to provide an integrated network enabling efficient and reliable travel across Cambridgeshire and beyond. The Strategy has been developed to support project growth in all emerging Local Plans and includes Action Plans for setting out key infrastructure requirements.

Particular attention was drawn to schemes planned for public sector delivery in the period 2014 to 2021 which includes proposals for Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots together with proposed rail service improvements for Cambridgeshire. Whilst appreciative of the work done to produce the Plan, Executive Councillors were of the view that reference should be made to the required improvements to the A1, particularly at the Buckden roundabout and the need to improve the two track section surrounding the Welwyn Viaduct given its impact on the local rail network.

It was also pointed out that the County Council intends to refresh the Local Transport Plan to reflect current environmental issues, ongoing funding concerns, delivery and progress of schemes, as well as issues arising from the growth agenda.

Having noted that the document had been endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being), the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the development of the Cambridgeshire Long Term Transport Strategy and the refresh of the Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan LTP3 be noted.

30. DRAFT HUNTINGDON & GODMANCHESTER MARKET TOWN TRANSPORT STRATEGY

(Councillor L Kadic, Ward Member for Godmanchester, was in attendance and spoke in support of this item.)

A report by the Head of Development was submitted (a copy of which

is appended in the Minute Book) inviting the Cabinet to consider the content of the draft Huntingdon & Godmanchester Market Town Transport Strategy which sets out a transport vision for both towns up to 2026. The report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

Executive Councillors were advised that the Strategy covered all Huntingdon wards and Godmanchester as well as the Parishes of Alconbury & the Stukeleys and Brampton and had been developed under the guidance of a Member Steering Group made up of representatives from interested parties.

In considering the key proposals outlined in the Strategy, Executive Councillors were of the opinion that, while all modes were contained in the Strategy, greater emphasis should be placed on the need of the motorist given the rural nature of the district and to traffic calming measures. Having requested the Head of Development to reflect these sentiments in the Council's response to the County Council as part of the consultation process, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that progress of the publication of the Draft Huntingdon & Godmanchester Market Town Transport Strategy be supported; and
- (b) that the Head of Development, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning and Housing Strategy, be authorised to agree any minor changes to the draft strategy following public consultation and prior to its formal adoption.

31. REVIEW OF RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

By way of a report by the Internal Audit and Risk Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the outcome of the Annual Review of the Risk Management Strategy.

By way of background, Members were advised that the Strategy had previously been approved by the Corporate Governance Panel but following a review of the Panel's effectiveness it was no longer considered the appropriate forum to consider the document.

Having expressed their satisfaction with the conclusion that there should be no change to the Council's risk appetite either in general terms or specifically for health and safety, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Risk Management Strategy now submitted be approved; and
- (b) that Councillor R Harrison be appointed Risk Management Champion.

32. A TREE STRATEGY FOR HUNTINGDONSHIRE

(Councillor J W Davies, Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) was in attendance and spoke on this item.)

Consideration was given to a report by the Arboricultural Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a draft copy of a Tree Strategy for Huntingdonshire which had been produced to define the Council's approach to tree care management, risk management and statutory planning requirements, and through a five year action plan would determine the direction of the Council's tree related management and projects.

In so doing, Members were advised that the Strategy had been developed in consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) Consultation Processes Working Group and reflected the Council's vision outlined in the Corporate Plan. Having agreed that the document be made available electronically and that officers engage with Parish Councils to promote its content and the appointment of Tree Officers, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the content of the Tree Strategy for Huntingdonshire be approved, subject to any minor amendments being agreed by the Head of Development after consultation with the Executive Councillors for Planning & Housing Strategy and for Operations & Environment; and
- (b) that the Corporate Director (Delivery) be authorised to proceed with the implementation of the Action Plan 2015-2020.

33. LOVES FARM COMMUNITY BUILDING - COMMITMENT TO CONTRACT

By way of a report by the Project and Assets Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Cabinet was acquainted with details of a scheme to provide a community building at Loves Farm, St Neots on land owned by the District Council. The report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

Members were advised that the proposal would create essential community facilities as well as accommodation for a pre-school group. The building will be owned by the District Council and sub-let to a local Community Group and to the County Council who will govern the pre-school. Although fully supportive of the scheme, Executive Councillors have raised concerns that the final tender figure for the scheme may be significantly higher than that budgeted. Having confirmed that no additional funding would be made available, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Head of Resources, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Strategic Economic Development and Legal, be authorised to enter into a contract with Cambridgeshire County Council for the construction phase for the Loves Farm Community Building scheme, subject to the final tender figure being within budget; and
- (b) that the Head of Resources, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Strategic Economic Development and Legal, be authorised to agree the content of the leases with the County Council and the Community Group.

34. SHARED SERVICES BUILDING CONTROL

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Development (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was acquainted with a suggested approach for the development of a shared Local Authority Building Control Service between Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils. The report had been considered also by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

In discussing the contents of the report, Executive Councillors stressed the importance of becoming more “business like” and efficient in the way the authority delivers its services. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the development of a business case for a shared Local Authority Building Control Service with South Cambridgeshire District Council be supported;
- (b) that a viability assessment of the IT solution developed by South Norfolk District Council be included in the business case;
- (c) that the Head of Development be authorised to work with interested local authorities from Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire to develop a proposal for a Local Authority Building Control cluster to operate within a regional network supported by South Norfolk District Council; and
- (d) that the Head of Development be authorised to work with South Norfolk District Council and other interested local authorities to develop a proposal for an Eastern Region Approved Inspector Company, that will interact with the Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire Local Authority Building Control cluster.

35. REPRESENTATION ON ORGANISATIONS 2014/15

Consideration was given to a report by Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding

the Council's representation on a variety of organisations/partnerships.

Having received an updated schedule of organisations/partnerships to which the Council appoints representatives, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that with the exception of the following, nominations be made to the organisations as set out in the schedule now submitted:

Councillor L Kadic – Huntingdon Freeman's Trust; and

- (b) that, in the event that changes are required by the Council's representative in the course of the year, the Corporate Team Manager, after consultation with the Deputy Executive Leader and Vice-Chairman of the Cabinet be authorised to nominate alternative representatives as necessary.

Chairman