
Cabinet

Report of the meetings held on 20th May, 18th June and 16th July 2015.

Matters for Information

1. APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS

Executive responsibilities for the Municipal Year 2015/2016 have been allocated by the Executive Leader of the Council as follows:

- Strategic and Delivery Partnerships - Councillor J D Ablewhite
- Strategic Planning and Housing - Councillor D B Dew
- Commercial Activities (to include Leisure Centres, CCTV, Document Centre, Car Parking) - Councillor R B Howe
- Operations and Environment - Councillor R C Carter
- Resources (to include Corporate Estates and Capital Projects) - Councillor J A Gray
- Customer Services (to include IT) - Councillor D M Tysoe
- Strategic Economic Development and Legal (to include Licensing and Protection, Communities and Voluntary Groups) - Councillor R Harrison
- Organisational Change and Development - Councillor S Cawley

The Executive Leader of the Council has been appointed to serve as an ex-officio Member of the Employment Panel.

Executive Councillors have been appointed to serve as ex-officio Members of the following Panels:

- | Executive Councillor for | Ex-Officio for |
|--|--|
| ▪ Strategic Planning and Housing | Development Management Panel |
| ▪ Strategic Economic Development and Legal | Licensing and Protection Panel/
Licensing Committee |

2. APPOINTMENTS TO VARIOUS JOINT GROUPS/ADVISORY GROUPS AND A WORKING COMMITTEE

The Cabinet has made the following appointments for the Municipal Year 2015/2016:

Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Joint Group	- Councillors T H Hayward, B Hyland, T D Sanderson and R J West.
Development Plan Policy Advisory Group	- Councillors Mrs B E Boddington, P L E Bucknell, E R Butler, D B Dew, J M Palmer and P D Reeve. There is one Independent vacancy on this Advisory Group.
Member Development Working Group	- Councillors S Cawley, S J Conboy, K J Churchill, D B Dew, P Kadewere and R G Tuplin.
Safety Advisory Group	- Councillors Mrs B Boddington, J W Davies, A Hansard, R Harrison and Mrs P A Jordan
One Leisure Huntingdon Sports Centre Joint Committee	- Councillors S Cawley, R Howe and T D Sanderson.

3. A14 CAMBRIDGE TO HUNTINGDON IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) (Item No. 2 of their report refers) the Cabinet has been provided with a further update report on progress with the development of the A14 on matters surrounding the Examination in Public and documentation that the Council will submit to the Examination.

The Council has consistently supported the need for the improvement of the A14 since the Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi-Modal Study recommendations in 2001, as an upgraded A14 is vital to the continued economic prosperity of Huntingdonshire.

The Cabinet has been advised that the formal Examination in Public has commenced for a six month duration and the Joint Local Impact Report of the Council, together with other Tier 1 stakeholders, has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by the deadline of 15th June 2015. Prior to the meeting of the Cabinet the Joint Local Impact Report submitted to the Planning Inspectorate was circulated to the Cabinet. There were no substantive changes between the version incorporated in the Cabinet Agenda and the version submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, other than formatting and typographical amendments.

Officers have continued to negotiate on outstanding matters and whilst progress has been made on many, others remain outstanding and were yet to be resolved. It has been highlighted to the Cabinet that noise continues to be an outstanding issue, as suitable noise mitigation measures are required for those properties adversely affected by noise. A further outstanding issue relates to the future long-term maintenance plan of the Borrow Pits.

The Scheme now proposed continues to include the overall improvements that have consistently been sought, including the removal of the A14 Viaduct within Huntingdon. The Council therefore must continue to engage in the Examination process and in order to do this the Cabinet has approved the Joint Local Impact Report, the draft Statement of Common Ground and the Written Representation by the Council to the Planning Inspectorate.

In the interests of expediency, the Cabinet has also resolved to delegate authority to the Managing Director and the Executive Councillor for Planning and Housing Strategy minor amendments required to the documents.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Hayward OBE has addressed the Cabinet and offered alternative suggestions to the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme from Buckden Parish Council. The alternative suggestions include a solution to negate the need for Borrow Pits to enable the re-alignment of the A1, a footpath to Grafham Water, extension of the cycle lane and footpath from Mere Lane to Brampton Wood and retention of the viaduct.

In response it has been explained to the Cabinet that within the Cambridgeshire County Council Mineral and Waste Plan, material from the Borrow Pits has been allocated to the A14 project, although not all of the material required for construction will be able to be obtained from the Borrow Pits. Alternative routes have been considered and the current option is regarded as the best option. The condition of the viaduct has been part of the evidence submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. Traffic figures have not been supplied by Cambridgeshire County Council for alternative schemes but will be made available if the Planning Inspectorate requests the information. The Cabinet has been referred to the forecast of the traffic flow on various locations of the A1 and A14 in 2035 both with and without the A14 improvements as contained in Table 1 within Section 8 of the Joint Local Impact Report.

The Cabinet has been informed that the A14 is a significant contributory factor to the air quality issue in Huntingdon. The removal of the A14 viaduct will improve air quality and reduce the vehicle movements through Godmanchester. Currently Godmanchester receives 18,000 vehicles per day and with the viaduct removed this will decrease to 9,000 vehicles per day. Cambridgeshire County Council has formally resolved that it will not proceed with the A14 improvements without the removal of the viaduct.

In response to a question it has been explained to the Cabinet that no expansion has been designed into the proposed scheme other than at Bar Hill.

Reference has been made to the Joint Local Impact Report regarding developments at Alconbury Weald and Wyton Airfield. The A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme will provide some relief to traffic problems in Huntingdon, Godmanchester, Brampton and St Ives but new transport links will still be required to cater for the level of new development. Therefore the Cambridgeshire Long-Term Transport Strategy will need to ensure infrastructure is in place to accommodate new development.

The Cabinet agrees that the current A14 improvement scheme is better than previously proposed. In considering the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) the Cabinet has been informed that it will be updated when information is available regarding the transportation route that construction traffic will use.

4. CORPORATE PLAN - PERFORMANCE REPORT

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Social Well-Being), (Economic Well-Being), (Environmental Well-Being) (Item No's. 1, 3 and 1 of their reports respectively refer) the Cabinet has considered and commented on progress against the Key Activities and Corporate Indicators listed in the Council's Corporate Plan for 2014/15 for the period 1st January to 31st March 2015.

Progress against the Corporate Plan objectives is reported quarterly and performance data has been provided in the form of a narrative of achievement accompanied with a Red/Amber/Green status against each Key Action in the Corporate Plan.

During consideration of progress made against the Key Activities and Corporate Indicators the Cabinet has made comments on its aspirations for future performance monitoring.

The Cabinet has welcomed the report and acknowledged that significant improvements are evident and that a link to the Corporate Plan and Performance Indicators is important. The Cabinet has suggested that further work is required to provide an instant snapshot of the current progress against the Key Activities and Corporate Indicators.

It has been noted by the Cabinet that a review of Overview and Scrutiny is being conducted to realign scrutiny with the Corporate Plan. It has also been noted that there has been a decrease in sickness absence during the last quarter with a significant reduction in long-term sickness absence in particular. The Cabinet has stated that it will be preferable if performance could be measured against other local authorities.

In concluding the Cabinet has suggested that other service organisations be used for comparison when establishing the performance indicators as well as considering the target audience.

5. CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY 2015-2018

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) (Item No. 3 of their report refers) the Cabinet has provided feedback on the summary 'Plan on a Page' document of the Customer Service Strategy prior to a full version of the Customer Service Strategy being presented to Members later in 2015.

The Customer Service Strategy is a key corporate document that establishes how customer service is delivered across the Council and the Cabinet has been referred to the timetable for implementation of the Strategy as contained within the Officer's report.

Consultation has already taken place with Officers, Members and the public and the Cabinet has been informed that a further consultation exercise is scheduled.

The Cabinet has expressed the importance for the revised Strategy to be of significance to all Officers and that during the recruitment process Officers should consider the attitude as well as the skills of any applicants to ensure that new Officers are customer focused.

There is a consensus amongst the Cabinet that the strategic direction being adopted within the revised Customer Service Strategy is accurate. However, there should be a corporate template to ensure all 'Plan on a Page' documents are consistent.

6. DISPOSAL AND ACQUISITIONS POLICY: LAND AND PROPERTY

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Item No. 6 of their report refers) the Cabinet has approved the new Disposal and Acquisitions Policy.

As the former thresholds and procedures within the Constitution were considered too restrictive, and to enable a more commercial approach to the management of the Council's property portfolio, a new Disposal and Acquisitions Policy and governance arrangements have been agreed by the Cabinet through which the Council is able to manage its estate of land and buildings within a commercial environment.

The Cabinet has also approved the formation of a Treasury and Capital Management Group whose functions will be:

- Treasury Management investment decisions (including the acquisition and disposal of all types of assets);
- the Capital Programme and undertaking of all capital development, including the approval of Business Cases;
- comment on Treasury Management performance; and

- to call officer's to account in respect of performance relating to capital projects.

In considering the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being), the Cabinet has agreed that the suggested amendments by the Panel should be incorporated into the new Policy.

The Cabinet has recommended to the Corporate Governance Panel that it approves all required changes to the Constitution (including the Code of Financial Management) to reflect the requirements of the Disposal and Acquisitions Policy.

7. PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2014/15 (REVENUE AND CAPITAL)

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Item No. 4 of their report refers) the Cabinet has noted and approved the following information in relation to the analysis of the outturn against the original budget for the financial year ending 31st March 2015.

- i. Note, in respect of the 2014/15 provisional outturn the:
 - revenue net expenditure of £18.171m;
 - reasons for the £2.699m variance on the original service budgets (as listed in Table 1 of the Officer's report);
 - capital expenditure of £2.999m; and
 - reasons for the £0.489m variance on the capital programme (as listed in Table 5 of the Officer's report).
- ii. Approve, in respect of the revenue provisional outturn noted in (i) above the transfer to Earmarked reserves of:
 - £0.100m - Alconbury and Molesworth Support and Challenge reserve;
 - £0.261m - Carry forwards to the 2015/16 service revenue budget;
 - £0.443m – Transformation Challenge Award Funding for Shared Service reserve;
 - £0.500m - Chequers Court Development reserve; and
 - £2.728m - Commercial Investment Strategy reserve.
- iii. Approve, in respect of the capital and provisional outturn noted in (i) above, the carry forward of committed expenditure on capital projects of £0.271m.
- iv. Approve a delegation for the Head of Resources to adjust the revenue contributions noted in (ii) above, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Resources and the Managing Director, if the actual outturn varies to that noted in (i) above by more than 2.5%.

The Cabinet had been pleased to note the positive report and has expressed appreciation to the Executive Councillor for Resources and to all Officers involved in generating the level of savings achieved.

It has been noted by the Cabinet that the Commercial Investment Strategy reserve is being established in order to provide a source of funding for the development of the Council's Commercial Investment Strategy and to remove the New Homes Bonus from the Council's core funding stream.

As some of the savings generated have been via vacant posts the Cabinet has noted that savings should not be to the detriment of the respective service area.

8. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2014/2015

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Item No. 5 of their report refers) the Cabinet has reviewed and noted the treasury management performance for the 2014/2015 financial year.

The Council's Treasury Management processes are underpinned by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Code of Practice on Treasury Management. The Code requires the Council to produce an annual Treasury Management Strategy and recommends that Members are informed of treasury management activity at least twice a year. The report presented to the Cabinet is the second of the biannual reports.

It has been noted by the Cabinet that the Officer's report summarised the treasury management transactions undertaken during the 2014/2015 financial year.

9. HUNTINGDONSHIRE MARKETING STRATEGY

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Item No. 7 of their report refers) the Cabinet has endorsed the implementation of the Marketing Strategy and Branding profile for the promotion of Huntingdonshire.

The Cabinet approved the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013 - 2023 in July 2013 and one of the key short-term actions is the development of a Marketing Strategy for the promotion of the District as a location of choice to live, work and invest.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has endorsed the Marketing Strategy with the following additional recommendations which were accepted by the Cabinet -

- progress on the implementation of the Marketing Strategy to be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being Panel) at six monthly intervals; and

- an annual report on the impact of the Marketing Strategy work programme to be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being).

The Cabinet has accepted that external expertise has been procured to assist with the development of the Strategy, branding, a website and marketing materials but has questioned the choice of depictions contained within the Strategy.

Referring to the SWOT analysis, the Cabinet has expressed concern at the inclusion of 'Low Aspirations' and has felt the issue is skill shortages rather than low aspirations. The Cabinet has therefore agreed to remove 'Low Aspirations' as contained within the 'Weaknesses' section of the SWOT analysis and amend 'Deprivation' to 'Concentrated pockets of deprivation in some key areas with some skill shortages'.

Now the Strategy has been approved by the Cabinet, preparation of the external facing marketing materials and branding profile will begin, with the assistance of the Executive Councillor for Strategic Economic Development and Legal. However, development of the website with input from current and potential businesses in the District is crucial.

It has been emphasised to the Cabinet that the Strategy is an internal document for use by Officers in promoting the District and is not for circulation externally. In light of the level of production costs it has been suggested that the document could be amended and produced as an external document.

For the Strategy to be successful an effective events calendar detailing target dates for the introduction of promotional material is essential. The Strategy is light on case studies and the Cabinet has requested that current businesses be represented in the document as well as other businesses that have benefitted from being located in the District.

10. REVIEW OF THE RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Cabinet has considered and approved the Risk Management Strategy following its annual review.

The Cabinet has been advised that the Strategy was previously 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.

The Risk Management Strategy previously included two risk appetite statements – one that referred to the appetite surrounding health and safety risks and a second 'catch-all' statement for all other areas. However, in order to better reflect the Corporate Plan the two former risk appetite statements are to be deleted and replaced with seven individual statements, each of which reflects the different types of risk

which the Council could face and which could impact on its ability to meet both its statutory requirements and strategic outcomes.

The seven risk areas relate to Transformation; People and Culture; Financial; Operational/Service; Reputation; Compliance and Regulation; and Health and Safety. The Cabinet were referred to the risk appetite levels for each of these areas and has been informed that work will commence on mapping the 142 risks against the seven risk areas.

11. SHARED SERVICES OVERVIEW

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Economic Well-Being) and (Environmental Well-Being) (Item No's. 8 and 8 of their reports respectively refer) the Cabinet has approved the recommendations regarding the first phase of the partnership arrangement between Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC), South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) and Cambridge City Council (CCC) being shared service proposals for ICT, Legal Services, and Building Control.

The Councils intend to share services as there are significant risks in doing nothing. Each Council must find significant savings as well as protecting and preserving services and retaining skilled staff in a competitive market place. Shared services offer a way of mitigating these risks.

The Cabinet were referred to the main risks associated with sharing services across the three Councils as highlighted in the Officer's report.

A Lead Authority model is to be used for the shared service arrangements since this best reflects the current vision for shared services and the starting position of each partner Council

A Joint Committee with no delegated powers or functions is to be established to oversee the operation of shared services, supported by an Officer Board. The remit of the Joint Committee is to provide advice, oversight, challenge and endorsement of the shared services business plans and budget. The Joint Committee will receive regular updates on the operation of the shared services and will take reports and recommendations for decision to their respective Executives (and Full Council, if appropriate), at agreed points and with the engagement of each Council's Scrutiny Committees. Membership will consist of the Leaders of each Council with a nominated Deputy attending in their absence. The Cabinet has appointed Councillor Howe to deputise for the Leader on the Joint Committee.

The Cabinet has endorsed the Sovereignty Guarantee to give confidence to individual Councils' Executives that they will retain sovereignty of their organisations, as well as Executive decision-making powers.

The Cabinet has expressed appreciation to the Managing Directors and Management Team of the three respective Councils and to the Leaders of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council for their assistance throughout the process.

In considering the additional recommendations by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) the Cabinet has suggested that the three respective Executive Councillors responsible for ICT should convene regularly to discuss the matter and that the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panels should receive update reports from the respective Councils' Scrutiny Panels to scrutinise topics related to shared services.

In concluding it has been noted that the final partnership agreement will be delegated to the Managing Director, in consultation with the Executive Leader of the Council and that the formal consultation commences with Staff Council and affected staff on 24 July 2015, closing on 1 September 2015 regarding ICT, Legal and Building Control shared services.

12. LEGAL SHARED SERVICES BUSINESS CASE

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Item No. 9 of their report refers) the Cabinet has approved the business case and has delegated authority to the Managing Director, in conjunction with the Executive Councillor for Strategic Economic Development and Legal, to make decisions and to take steps which are necessary, conducive or incidental to the establishment of the Legal shared service in accordance with the detailed business case.

There are strategic and financial benefits to all three partners in creating a Legal shared service and the report includes a detailed financial model showing how savings will be achieved against the baseline budget.

In discussing the financial detail it has been noted that external legal costs were not incorporated into the level of spend figures and recharges are yet to be incorporated into the financial information.

The Cabinet has noted that the Authority has learnt from the CCTV shared service experience and in order to maintain good relations between the Partners financial projection figures over a 5 year period are necessary so that all Partners fully understand the financial commitments.

The three Councils have been awarded funding from Government via the Transformation Challenge Award to support the work towards a range of shared service arrangements.

During the Cabinet's discussions it has been emphasised that the Council has already experienced a significant amount of staff changes and incurred expense via redundancies and it has been noted that the Council will not incur further expense as a result of any redundancies in the Partner Authorities.

13. ICT SHARED SERVICES BUSINESS CASE

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Item No. 10 of their report refers) the Cabinet has approved the business case and delegated the authority to the Managing Director, in conjunction with the Executive Councillor for Customer Services, to make decisions and to take steps which are necessary, conducive or incidental to the establishment of the shared service in accordance with the detailed business case.

There are strategic and financial benefits to all three partners in creating a ICT shared service and the report includes a detailed financial model showing how savings will be achieved against the baseline budget. It is expected that savings beyond those contained within the report will be achieved.

Each Authority will be the Lead Authority for a shared service and HDC is acting as the Lead Authority for the ICT shared service.

The Cabinet has noted that one of the key assumptions and pre-requisites of the business case for the ICT shared service is based upon the need to increase resilience, improve the quality of service to clients, become more efficient and increase capacity within the service to drive innovation and technology enabled change across all three Councils.

During discussions the Cabinet has been interested to note that 50% of the savings generated via the shared ICT service will not be as a result of staffing but other sources such as shared cost of licences.

14. BUILDING CONTROL SHARED SERVICES BUSINESS CASE

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) (Item No. 9 of their report refers) the Cabinet has approved the business case and delegated authority to the Managing Director, in conjunction with the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing, to make decisions and to take steps which are necessary, conducive or incidental to the establishment of the shared service in accordance with the detailed business case.

There are strategic and financial benefits to all three partners creating a Building Control shared service and the report includes a detailed financial model showing how savings will be achieved against the baseline budget.

The Cabinet has been informed that due to changes in EU Procurement Rules it is possible that an advert may be required in the Official Journal of the European Union. Further legal advice is currently being sought and if this is the case the Cabinet will be informed.

15. BUDGET MONITORING 2015/2016 (REVENUE AND CAPITAL)

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Item No. 11 of their report refers) the Cabinet has been acquainted with the revenue and capital forecast outturn for 2015/16 based on information available at the end of May 2015.

The Cabinet were not surprised to note, given the current difficulties in the housing market, that at the end of May 2015 there were 374 new homes which is 186 down on the target of 560 for the same period.

As at the end of May, the year-end forecast outturn is £0.681m less than planned and to date little has been spent from the capital programme.

16. REPRESENTATION ON ORGANISATIONS 2015/16

The Cabinet has made appointments/nominations in relation to representation on a variety of organisations/partnerships and has authorised the Corporate Team Manager, after consultation with the Deputy Executive Leader of the Council, to make any changes that may be required throughout the year.

17. REVIEW OF BENEFITS RISK BASED VERIFICATION POLICY

(The following item was considered as a confidential item under paragraph 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) (Item No. 6 of their report refers) the Cabinet has approved the revised Risk Based Verification Policy.

The Cabinet has previously approved a Benefits Risk Based Verification Policy which is applied to new claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support. The Policy has been revised and will now extend to changes of circumstance in addition to new claims.

Since the introduction of the Risk Based Verification Policy it has proved successful in focusing resources at claims for benefit most likely to contain fraud and/or error.

The Cabinet has been pleased to note that the fraud and error detected by the Council is exceeding the baseline established by the Department for Work and Pensions.

J D Ablewhite
Chairman