

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 29 June 2016.

PRESENT: Councillor P L E Bucknell – Chairman.

Councillors J D Ablewhite, T D Alban, K M Baker, Mrs B E Boddington, D Brown, G J Bull, R C Carter, S Cawley, B S Chapman, Mrs S Conboy, J E Corley, S J Criswell, J W Davies, Mrs A Dickinson, Mrs A Donaldson, Mrs L A Duffy, M Francis, R Fuller, I D Gardener, L George, D A Giles, Mrs S A Giles, J A Gray, R Harrison, D Harty, T Hayward, R B Howe, B Hyland, P Kadewere, Mrs R E Mathews, D J Mead, J P Morris, J M Palmer, P D Reeve, Mrs D C Reynolds, M F Shellens, L R Swain, Mrs S L Taylor, R G Tuplin, D M Tysoe, D R Underwood, D Watt, R J West and J E White.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors E R Butler, D B Dew, S Greenall, Mrs P A Jordan, T D Sanderson, Mrs J Tavener and K D Wainwright.

13. PRAYER

The Reverend A Milton, Vicar of All Saints and St. Mary's, Huntingdon, opened the meeting with prayer.

14. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 18th May 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15. MEMBERS INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

16. MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE - RACISM, XENOPHOBIA AND HATE CRIMES

(The Chairman announced that he proposed to allow consideration of the following item as a matter of urgency in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 to give the Council an opportunity to support the condemnation of the recent spate of hate crimes in the District).

In moving the following motion, Councillor J A Gray informed

Members of his deep concerns of the recent incidents in the District and wished to draw these urgently to the attention of the Council and request the Executive Leader of the Council, Councillor R Howe, to write to our local partners such as the Police and Crime Commissioner advising them of this motion and enlisting their support in tackling racism and hate crime –

“We are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society. Racism, xenophobia and hate crimes have no place in our country. We Huntingdonshire District Council condemn racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally. We will not allow hate to become acceptable.

Huntingdonshire District Council will work to ensure local bodies and programmes have support and resources needed to fight and prevent racism and xenophobia.

We wish to reassure all people living in Huntingdonshire that they are valued members of our community”.

Councillor D A Giles duly seconded the motion. Councillors P D Reeve, P L E Bucknell and P Kadewere confirmed their support for the motion and Councillor M F Shellens proposed the insertion of the word “unanimously” after the words “Huntingdonshire District Council” in the second paragraph which was accepted by Councillor Gray.

Councillor J D Ablewhite informed Members that in his role as Police and Crime Commissioner a large amount of resources had been mobilised into local communities to support the victims, offer support and in an attempt to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

Councillor Gray requested Members to indicate their support for the motion by standing, rather than a show of hands. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Council condemn racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally and will not allow hate to become acceptable. Huntingdonshire District Council unanimously will work to ensure local bodies and programmes have support and resources needed to fight and prevent racism and xenophobia. The Council wishes to reassure all people living in Huntingdonshire that they are valued members of our community.

17. THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH DEVOLUTION PROPOSAL, GOVERNANCE REVIEW AND SCHEME

Further to Minute No. 60 of the meeting of the Council on 24th February 2016, the Council considered a report by the Managing Director and Monitoring Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached Appendices relating to the establishment of a Combined Authority across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough including the results of a Governance Review, a Devolution Deal proposal and draft Governance Scheme.

Members were acquainted with a presentation by Mr M Whiteley, Devolution Programme Manager. A copy of the PowerPoint

presentation is appended in the Minute Book and would be circulated to all Members following the meeting. Mr Whiteley provided an overview of the Devolution Deal for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and highlighted the financial package available that was substantially more than the deal in Manchester. Members attention was drawn to the substantial rewards available through income and power.

The Council were informed of the changed geography of the deal since it was last considered and now only covered Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The investment through the deal would provide infrastructure investment of £20m per annum over 30 years, although not linked to inflation and a Housing Fund of £100m over five years.

Mr Whiteley referred to a meeting of Leaders and Chief Officers on 19 January 2016, whereby discussion ensued on the major challenges faced by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough including the provision of and correct mix of housing. Other areas highlighted included investment in the transport system and the considerable skills shortages.

Members were informed of the benefits of Devolution that would enable Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to create more investment to deliver economic growth and speed up the delivery of infrastructure to support the development. The Council were also advised of the benefits to the residents and businesses in Huntingdonshire, in particular the recognition of St Neots as a growth area.

Particular attention was drawn to the provision of multi-year transport budgets that would replace budgets previously not fixed which would provide infrastructure to support housing and employment developments. Attention was also drawn to potential to input into transport franchises and development of transport solutions such as a single ticketing model.

A comparison was provided of how Devolution could enable and accelerate the delivery of infrastructure compared to the top infrastructure priorities identified by the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the additional funding through Devolution could be made available to identify infrastructure relevant to the area, as well as leveraging private sector investment.

Members were acquainted with details of a the development of a stronger role in the delivery of future housing proposals through a non-statutory Cambridgeshire and Peterborough spatial plan, plans for a suitably skilled workforce to exploit growth opportunities and the redesigning of public services through an integrated employment service delivered locally.

The Council were advised of the timetable for the establishment of a Combined Authority with a directly elected Mayor with first elections in May 2017. The Combined Authority would include representatives from each authority and the LEP, with each Member entitled to one vote at public meetings and open to full scrutiny by a Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members noted that the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would not be on the same political party as the elected Mayor and the proportionality would reflect political make-up of all of the local authorities.

In concluding, the Council were reminded that a decision had to be taken on the provision of authority to proceed to the appropriate consultation process on the establishment of a Combined Authority across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and the consultation process that would commence in July to October 2016 and would be referred back to the Council at a meeting in October 2016.

The Executive Leader, Councillor R Howe, reminded members of the background to Devolution, in particular the guaranteed revenue stream for up to 30 years to support capital projects and increasing the ability to attract match funding from private investors. Attention was drawn to the potential for further land to be released for housing and becoming more active with working with the LEP.

Members noted that a Combined Authority would increase the availability of growth opportunities for development and allow greater control over housing and infrastructure in the area. In outlining his support for the proposals, Councillor Howe moved the recommendations which were duly seconded by Councillor J A Gray.

In response to a question by Councillor D A Giles on the economic problems experienced in St Neots, Members were advised that the Devolution programme had already identified the economic importance of St Neots and would be developing infrastructure and transport solutions to enable further growth in this area.

Councillor B S Chapman referred to the pockets of deprivation in the area, specifically in Eynesbury and Priory Park in St Neots that had low educational attainment and limited employment opportunities. Whereby attention was drawn to the Enterprise Zones that had been established in Alconbury and Cambridge Compass and concern expressed that St Neots may not benefit from similar opportunities. In response Councillor Howe explained that he had met with St Neots Town Council and had made an undertaking that a master plan would be developed for St Neots through the Devolution Deal.

Clarification was sought by Councillors Mrs S J Conboy and Councillor P Reeve of the representation of Members on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, whereby Councillor Howe reminded Members that the representation would be pro-rata to the political proportionality of the other local authorities in the Devolution Deal.

Councillor M F Shellens outlined his support for the Devolution Deal, with the provision of more funding and power for the area, but expressed his concern for an elected Mayor to support the process and requested that this be re-considered in the light of how the nationwide economy may be affected in the future with the recent decision on the EU Referendum and the potential for the funding for the Combined Authority being removed. In response, Councillor Howe explained the difficulties of predicting how the economy may change in the light of this decision but had reaffirmed his commitment to the Devolution Deal.

In referring to a question from Councillor P Kadewere on the Cambridgeshire Peterborough Spatial Plan, Councillor Howe outlined the benefits that the Plan would work alongside the Council's Local Plan and potentially decisions could be taken quicker, to be overseen

by the Council representatives.

Councillor P Reeve referred to his support for Devolution in the past but outlined his concerns that the Combined Authority may allow less powers for the Council with the potential for the Leader of the Council to be out-voted in the decision making process and concern for the Council being asked to make a decision on two Devolution Deals. Councillor Howe reassured Councillor Reeve that although Members had been presented with a deal previously that had incorporated Norfolk and Suffolk, it had been concluded that such a Deal would not be acceptable to all local authorities in the area and explained that the new Deal was far superior.

In response to a question from Councillor R G Tuplin on the availability of funding year on year, Mr Whiteley explained that funding would be issued in advance each year incrementally and in response to a further question from Councillor J P Morris on the type of funding, Members noted that existing budgets would not be reduced to account for the new funding. Councillor Howe further reassured Members that this would provide greater control to Members on the allocation of funding to projects.

Councillor J D Ablewhite acquainted Members with his involvement in the previous versions of the Devolution Deal and reminded Members of the potential benefits that may arise through improvements to infrastructure and business opportunities that will evolve as a result.

In concluding, Councillor Gray thanked the Executive Leader and Mr Whiteley for their presentation and referred to the improvements in the Deal with more local focus compared with the tri-county Deal. Members were also reminded of the importance of the democratic process with an elected Mayor and provision for Overview and Scrutiny.

The Chairman moved and it was duly seconded and

RESOLVED

that a recorded vote be taken on this item.

It having been previously moved and seconded, upon being put to the vote it was further

RESOLVED

- i) that the outcome of the Governance Review (attached at Appendix A) and the draft Scheme (attached at Appendix B) be endorsed;
- ii) that the conclusions and the outcome of the Governance Review be endorsed for submission to the Cabinet (attached at Appendix A) that the establishment of a Combined Authority with a Mayor for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area would be likely to improve the exercise of statutory functions in that area;
- iii) that the content of the Devolution Deal proposal be approved in principle (attached at Appendix C) and

formally confirmed that this replaced in its entirety the East Anglia Devolution Agreement signed in March 2016;

- iv) that the draft Governance Scheme be endorsed for submission to the Cabinet (attached at Appendix B) under Section 109 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and recommend that the Cabinet authorises the Scheme for publication;
- v) that the Managing Director be authorised to make any appropriate revisions to the draft Scheme before publication as considered appropriate, in consultation with the Executive Leader and in liaison with the other Chief Executives of constituent authorities and to take all necessary actions to progress any non-executive functions arising from the recommendations;
- vi) that the arrangements for public consultation on the proposals in the Governance Scheme be endorsed for submission to the Cabinet and the Managing Director be authorised, in consultation with the Leader of Council, to provide the Secretary of State with a summary of the consultation responses in due course; and
- vii) that a further meeting of the Council be convened to take place in October 2016 to consider whether to give consent for the Secretary of State to bring forward such an Order establishing a Mayoral Combined Authority for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The following Members voted for, against or abstained from the Motion –

For the Motion – Ablewhite, Alban, Baker, Boddington, Brown, Bucknell, Bull, Carter, Cawley, Chapman, Criswell, Davies, Dickinson, Donaldson, Francis, Fuller, Gardener, George, Gray, Harrison, Harty, Howe, Kadewere, Mathews, Mead, Palmer, Reynolds, Swain, Tuplin, Tysoe, Underwood, Watt, West and White.

For the Motion – Duffy, Hyland, Morris, Reeve and Taylor (against resolutions 1 to 5), Hayward (against resolutions 1 to 6) and Shellens (against resolutions 2 to 4).

Abstentions - None

Chairman