

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, 21 June 2018.

PRESENT: Councillor G J Bull – Chairman.
Councillors J M Palmer, J A Gray, R Fuller and D M Tysoe.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs M L Beuttell.

10. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 23rd May 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary or other interests received at the meeting.

12. REPLACEMENT OF EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR

The Leader informed the Cabinet that following the resignation of Cllr White from the Cabinet, the position had been accepted by Cllr Mrs Beuttell, where it was

RESOLVED

that the executive responsibility for Operations and Regulation for the remainder of the Municipal Year be allocated to Councillor Mrs M L Beuttell.

13. AUTHORISATION OF MODIFICATIONS TO THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL PLAN TO 2036

The Cabinet considered a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) by the Planning Services Manager (Policy, Implementation and Strategic Development) which was presented by Cllr R Fuller, in his capacity as Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Economic Development.

The report set out the options available to the Council in order to progress the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 through the Local Plan examination stages. Specifically the decision-making process regarding the agreement of any future proposed modifications to the Local Plan and the production and agreement of supplementary documents and evidence that might be required as part of the Local Plan examination process.

Following endorsement of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 2036 by Council in December 2017, the Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission and its supporting documents were submitted for independent examination to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (via the Planning Inspectorate) in March 2018. Subsequently the Secretary of State appointed a Planning Inspectorate to conduct the examination of the Local Plan.

It was explained that the report proposed a decision-making procedure regarding any future main and additional modifications to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036. The procedure was required to facilitate efficient progress of the Plan enabling the expedition of decisions during the course of its examination.

The report recommended that where changes would be of such significance as to substantially alter the meaning of a policy or allocation proposed, modifications would be agreed by the Managing Director and Executive Leader, in consultation with the Head of Development, Housing and Planning, Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Economic Development and the Chairman of the Development Plan Policy Advisory Group.

Other changes known as additional modifications, provided that they did not materially affect the policies in the Plan would be delegated to the Head of Development, Corporate Director (Delivery), Planning Service Manager (Policy Implementation and Strategic Development) and Planning Policy Team Leader. Examples of additional modifications were the correction of minor errors, responses to representations made, or to provide an update in relation to any new circumstances that had arisen since the submission Local Plan was prepared.

In considering the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) which had been circulated subsequent to the agenda dispatch, it was noted that Members would receive a weekly email during the examination of any modifications made to the Plan.

Having agreed with the proposed decision-making process regarding modifications to the Local Plan during the examination, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

to consider and note the decision-making procedure for modifications to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, supplementary documents and evidence that may be required as part of the Local Plan examination process.

14. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017/2018 - QUARTER 4

Having welcomed the Finance Manager to his first Cabinet meeting since commencing employment with the authority, the Cabinet considered a report by the Corporate Team Manager and Finance Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) and commented on progress against the Key Activities and Corporate Indicators listed in the Council's Corporate Plan for 2016/18 for the period 1 January to 31 March 2018. The report also incorporated

progress on the current projects being undertaken at the Council and financial performance information as at the end of March.

One particular 'red' indicator that the Executive Councillor for Resources referred the Cabinet to related to the average time between referral of Disabled Facilities Grants to practical completion for minor jobs up to £10,000. It was noted that the service was gradually improving and the time taken to the completion of the job had reduced in Quarter 4. It was hoped that in the next financial year the service would be operating within target.

The Finance Manager explained that the Financial Performance information provided the provisional position prior to the final audit of the accounts. Regarding Revenue, the provisional outturn identified an overspend of £0.5m. The provisional outturn for the Capital programme identified an underspend of £3.1m.

The Cabinet were referred to the impact of the Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB) savings on the forecast outturn which had subsequently been overturned and the Red, Amber, Green ratings that had been awarded to the £1.9m of approved ZBB and Line by Line Review savings.

The Cabinet acknowledged the significant impact on the budget, having not delivered some of the ZBB savings.

The report also included the total variances for each Service and the main reasons where variances were greater than £50,000. The Cabinet were informed that overspend within the Operations Service was substantial, one reason being the costs incurred to collect recyclable material. Overall the financial position was that the forthcoming budget setting process would be challenging. However, continued progress with the Commercial Investment Strategy presented material returns of between 6 – 9%.

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth), circulated separate to the agenda, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- i. to note the progress made against Key Activities and Corporate Indicators in the Corporate Plan and current projects, as summarised in Appendix A and detailed in Appendices B and C of the Officer's report;
- ii. to note the Council's financial performance at the end of March, as detailed in the Financial Performance Monitoring Suite in Appendix D and the register of reviews of Commercial Investment Strategy propositions as detailed in Appendix E of the Officer's report.

15. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

A report by the Head of Resources was presented to the Cabinet (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which reviewed the performance of the Treasury Management activity over the 2017/2018 financial year.

The Treasury Management Code by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy required the Council to report on the performance of the treasury management function twice a year; the first report being the mid-year review (reported to the Cabinet in November 2017) and the annual report after the financial year end.

Regarding investments it was explained that current interest rates allowed the Council to borrow at low rates both for short-term cash flow purposes and for longer term borrowing. However, there was evidence that rates could start to rise.

The continued low interest rates resulted in few opportunities to make significant returns from investments, particularly in comparison to the returns generated through the Commercial Investment Strategy (CIS). To illustrate the Cabinet were referred to Appendix E of the submitted report, where the percentage return on the purchase costs relating to CIS assets was listed. The Executive Councillor Resources explained that it was necessary to continue to progress and develop the CIS.

In response to a question in regards to the transformation agenda and the A14 improvements would have on the District, it was confirmed that these issues were considered with any potential CIS acquisitions.

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) which were circulated separate to the agenda, the Cabinet,

RESOLVED

that the Treasury Management Annual Report 2017/18 be received and noted.

16. ASSISTANT CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet received a report by the Managing Director (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding the creation of Assistant Cabinet Members.

In presenting the report the Executive Leader explained that, given the size of the Cabinet and the wide remit of the Portfolios, Assistant Cabinet Members, if considered necessary and appropriate, could be appointed as non-executive Members to advise and support Cabinet Members in their roles.

The Cabinet,

RESOLVED

to approve the appointment of Assistant Cabinet Members as considered necessary and appropriate, in accordance with the role description attached as an Appendix to the submitted report; and

RECOMMENDS THAT THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:

amend Article 7 of the Council's Constitution to reflect the incorporation of Assistant Cabinet Members.

17. HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL VENTURES LTD - SHAREHOLDER REPRESENTATIVES AND REFERENCE GROUP

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report by the Managing Director (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding a mechanism for decisions to be taken by the Council as Shareholder of its Local Authority Trading Company, HDC Ventures Ltd.

The Council had established a Local Authority Trading Company, HDC Ventures, its purpose being to enable the Council to participate in commercial trading activities.

The day-to-day operation of the company was the responsibility of the Directors and the Council was the sole Shareholder. It was therefore necessary to establish a mechanism for decisions to be taken on behalf of the Council as the Shareholder, to allow decisions to be made in a timely and expedient manner, reflecting the needs of the trading company to be responsive to its commercial environment. Whereupon the Cabinet resolved to,

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:

- 1. To appoint a Shareholder Representative to act on behalf of the Council as Shareholder of the Council's Local Authority Trading Company;**
- 2. To approve the Shareholder Representative's Terms of Reference appended to the report now submitted, and**
- 3. To approve the establishment of a Shareholder Reference Group comprising four Councillors to be politically balanced.**

18. REPRESENTATION ON ORGANISATIONS

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report by the Democratic Services Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding the Council's representation on a variety of organisations/partnerships.

It was explained that this had previously been reviewed annually. However, given that all District, Town and Parish Council seats in Huntingdonshire were contested at the same time this year, it was proposed that representation would normally only be reviewed within the four year period between elections where there was a change of circumstances, a Member resigned, or there was a vacancy on a body. This would further provide the organisations/partnerships to which the Council appointed to a degree of certainty as to the representative.

In the event that a change or new appointment was required to the District Council's representation during the course of the four year term, it was proposed that delegation be given to the Corporate Team Manager, after consultation with the Deputy Executive Leader, to

nominate and authorise alternative representatives as necessary.

To improve the monitoring of how the organisations and partnerships contributed to the Council and its Corporate Objectives, the Cabinet agreed in 2016 that appointed Members should be required to report on a quarterly basis, in writing, to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Due to the varied responses to requests for this information, in 2017 the Cabinet resolved at the request of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels, that appointed Members be required to report on an annual basis, on the understanding that Members provide updates should any significant issues occur. It was proposed that the annual reporting to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels continued. However, there remained some difficulties in obtaining this information which was reflected in the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel as contained within the submitted report.

Listed in Appendix 1 to the submitted report were those organisations/partnerships to which it was proposed that the Council appointed representatives to. Those that the Cabinet were requested to no longer appoint to were indicated as 'Do Not Appoint' within the Appendix.

It was agreed by the Cabinet that in the event that changes or new appointments were required to the District Council's representation during the course of the four year term, that consultation would be with either the Executive Leader or Deputy Executive Leader, to nominate and authorise alternative representatives as necessary.

Having considered the schedule of organisations/partnerships, the
Cabinet

RESOLVED

- i. To appoint to the organisations and partnerships referred to in Appendix 1 of the submitted report for the period 2018 - 2022;
- ii. Agrees to not appoint to those organisations and partnerships as indicated in Appendix 1 of the submitted report;
- iii. Considered the comments/recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels contained in paragraph 3.1 of the submitted report;
- iv. Request that appointed Members report on an annual basis, in writing, to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel; and
- v. In the event that changes or new appointments are required to the District Council's representation during the course of the four year term, the Corporate Team Manager be delegated, after consultation with the Executive Leader or Deputy Executive Leader, to nominate and authorise alternative representatives as necessary.

Chairman