

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee held on
Tuesday, 11 February 2014 at 4.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Roger Hickford – Chairman
Councillor Sue Ellington – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: David Bard Kevin Cuffley
Alison Elcox Douglas de Lacey
Aidan Van de Weyer

Councillors Simon Edwards, David Whiteman-Downes and Nick Wright were in attendance, by invitation.

Officers: Graham Aisthorpe-Watts Democratic Services Team Leader
Alex Colyer Executive Director, Corporate Services
John Garnham Head of Finance, Policy & Performance
Jane Green Head of New Communities
Jean Hunter Chief Executive
Richard May Policy and Performance Manager
Jo Mills Planning and New Communities Director
Victoria Wallace Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrew Fraser, Jose Hales, Lynda Harford, Bridget Smith and Bunty Waters. Councillor Aiden Van De Weyer was in attendance as a substitute for Councillor Smith and Councillor Kevin Cuffley was in attendance as a substitute for Councillor Harford.

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

45. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2014 were **AGREED**, subject to the attendance of Councillor Mick Martin at the meeting by invitation being recorded in the minutes, and the amendment of the name Martin Howell to Mark Howell.

46. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received.

47. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2014/15 INCLUDING COUNCIL TAX SETTING), HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (INCLUDING HOUSING RENTS), CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2014/15-2018/19 AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (REVISED 2013/14 AND 2014/15)

Councillor Simon Edwards, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, presented the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Councillor Edwards gave an overview of the report, around which discussion ensued as follows:

- A proposal regarding St Denis Church in East Hatley was discussed, as set out in the report.

- Members were informed that it was hoped that Local Plan costs would be kept to a minimum through joint working with Cambridge City Council and developer contributions.
- The key risks outlined within the report were discussed.
- Councillor Edwards informed the Committee that any additional funding for Parish Councils would have to come from cuts elsewhere in the Council, or Council Tax increases, both of which would burden Parish Councils.
- Councillor Edwards confirmed that the cost of the Local Plan to South Cambridgeshire District Council, was in addition to the Development Team that was already in place at the Council.
- Councillor Edwards informed Members that the City Deal would deliver many benefits to South Cambridgeshire in terms of infrastructure if it were to go ahead.
- Councillor Edwards confirmed that the Council Tax base was fixed.

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee **SUPPORTED** the recommendations contained within the report, due for consideration by Cabinet on 13 February 2014.

48. CORPORATE PLAN

Councillor David Whiteman-Downes, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Customer Services, presented the Council's draft Corporate Plan for 2014-2019.

Councillor Whiteman-Downes gave an overview of the report and discussion ensued as follows:

- Concern was raised regarding the delivery of community transport, and how County Council cuts might have affected the achievement of this objective. Members were informed that this objective was introduced at the request of the Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy and Localism, and that the Council participated in 25 community transport initiatives. Exact details of any County Council cuts to community transport initiatives were not known at the time of the meeting. Councillor Whiteman-Downes offered to research this further.
- Members were informed that participation in the Green Deal was still an objective and a Green Deal champion would be sought.
- The inclusion of Key Project Indicators against each objective within the draft Corporate Plan was discussed. Members were informed that these would be included in the plan, in order to provide a measurement for success. Project milestones were for relevant Portfolio Holders to add to the plan, and there would be detailed business cases and project plans for each element of the Corporate Plan.

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee **SUPPORTED** the recommendations contained within the report, due for consideration by Cabinet on 13 February 2014.

49. POSITION STATEMENT ON FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RISK

Councillor David Whiteman-Downes, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Customer Services, and Councillor Simon Edwards, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, presented the position statement on finance, performance and risk.

Discussion ensued, with some areas of performance highlighted:

- Members were informed that the 10 days average time taken to process new benefit claims was a significant achievement, and was largely attributable to the Council's Contact Centre.

- In order to better understand the figures, it was noted that the average and standard deviation or range would have been a helpful inclusion in the position statement.
- Invoice processing performance was highlighted as an area of concern. Members were informed that staff absence and staff turnover were contributing factors to this.

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee **NOTED** the report.

50. CONSERVATION REVIEW

Councillor Nick Wright, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economic Development, presented an update on the Conservation and Urban Design Service Review, to help guide implementation of a new structure and associated processes and procedures to be in place by 5 May 2014.

Members were informed that the Council was currently in phase one of implementation of the new service, and that there were three phases of implementation.

There was support for retaining an in-house service and concerns were raised that expertise could be lost. The need to retain standards and expertise was specifically highlighted by Members.

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee **NOTED** the report, and **REQUESTED** a further update on the Conservation Service Review in April 2014.

51. WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee's Work Programme was discussed. Members' contributions were sought to undertake scoping of proposed areas for future investigation by the Committee.

Discussion ensued and it was **AGREED** that the Democratic Services Team Leader would liaise with Members outside the meeting, regarding scoping.

52. MONITORING THE EXECUTIVE

Councillor Sue Ellington provided a verbal update from the Northstowe Development Committee:

- Members were informed that this was the first meeting to take place in nine months, that all planning conditions were worked through during the meeting and that the plan for Northstowe was moving forward.

53. TO NOTE THE DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted next scheduled meeting date was 3 April 2014, at 6pm.

Future meeting dates were discussed. These dates were based on the pattern of meeting dates of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee in 2013-14, and took into account other South Cambridgeshire District Council and County Council meetings.

Proposed meeting dates were:

- Thursday 3 July 2014
- Thursday 4 September 2014
- Thursday 6 November 2014
- Thursday 8 January 2015
- Thursday 10 February 2015
- Thursday 26 March 2015
- Thursday 30 April 2015

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee **AGREED** these meeting dates and that all future meetings of the Committee would take place at 6pm, with a pre-meeting at 5pm.

The Meeting ended at 6.30 p.m.
