

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on  
Thursday, 14 January 2016 at 2.00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Ray Manning (Leader of the Council)  
Councillor Simon Edwards (Deputy Leader of the Council & Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder)

**Councillors:** Mick Martin Environmental Services Portfolio Holder  
Peter Topping Corporate and Customer Services Portfolio Holder  
Tim Wotherspoon Strategic Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder  
Nick Wright Economic Development Portfolio Holder

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Gemma Barron	Sustainable Communities & Partnerships Manager
Myles Bebbington	Head of Service - Environmental Services & Licensing
Alex Colyer	Executive Director, Corporate Services
Edward Durrant	Principal Planning Officer / Team Leader (Development Management)
Jean Hunter	Chief Executive
Fiona McMillan	Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer
Jo Mills	Planning and New Communities Director
Caroline Ryba	Head of Finance
Graham Watts	Democratic Services Team Leader

Councillors David Bard, Anna Bradnam, Kevin Cuffley, Sue Ellington, Lynda Harford, Cicely Murfitt, Bridget Smith, Ben Shelton and Bunty Waters were in attendance, by invitation.

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mark Howell and Robert Turner.

### **2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 November 2015 were confirmed and signed by the Leader as a correct record, subject to:

- the amendment of Councillor Turner's and Councillor Wright's declaration of interest under minute number 3 to reflect that he owned rented properties in South Cambridgeshire;
- the amendment of a bullet point under minute number 8 to reflect that the Council's savings or additional income target had increased 'from' £670,000;
- the amendment of the final paragraph to reflect that the Council had to find an additional £770,000 in savings or additional income.

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

### **4. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

No announcements were made.

## 5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received.

## 6. FINANCE SHARED SERVICES

Cabinet considered a report which provided an update on plans to create a shared finance service between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Councillor Simon Edwards, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, presented the report and said that the shared service proposal had taken a slightly different focus to what was originally anticipated, explaining that it would be essential to implement the new Financial Management System in the first instance. It was noted that Huntingdonshire District Council would consider sharing certain aspects of the service once the system was implemented.

Councillor Edwards reflected on posts that were already being shared between the City and District Council which had been put in place on a temporary basis using Service Level Agreements. He reported that the proposal was to now make these shared posts permanent ahead of developing the business case for the shared service, which would be submitted to Cabinet at the appropriate time following implementation of the new Financial Management System.

Councillor Peter Topping, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Customer Services, asked whether any analysis had been done between the different Councils to understand their strengths and weaknesses in order that there was a baseline. Councillor Edwards reminded Cabinet that there was still a lot to do in embedding the new Financial Management System and developing the business case. He referred to the report submitted to Cabinet on 9 July 2015 which set out a number of risks and weaknesses associated with the proposal to share these services across the three Councils.

In answer to a question regarding the original proposals for staffing and savings as part of the shared service, Councillor Edwards referred Cabinet to paragraph 7 of the report which set out current staffing levels. He said that it was too early to suggest if staffing levels would increase or decrease as a result of the shared service, but confirmed that he would expect a general saving from overall costs of at least 10% to 15% as a result of entering into a shared service. This would be in addition to an improved way of working, as the principal objective.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Opposition, asked whether this Council should be concerned by the perceived lack of commitment from Huntingdonshire District Council and whether it was worth including that authority if it was only interested in certain aspects of the shared service. Councillor Smith also supported making posts permanent but thought this should have been a decision that featured in the business case.

Councillor Simon Edwards responded by saying that the comments in relation to Huntingdonshire District Council were unfair and that this Council was working very well with the authority as part of other shared services. Huntingdonshire District Council was in the process of introducing its own new Financial Management System, which was the same as the system proposed as part of the shared service, with a lot of work necessary to get that put in place. He did not wish to criticise the Council for being cautious at this stage and it was noted that Huntingdonshire District Council was part of the Financial Management Service project going forward. Councillor Edwards explained that the

current system was extremely bureaucratic and the necessary infrastructure was not in place to enable the efficiency removal of the current system. He also clarified that the temporary posts were only contracted until the end of February 2016, so a decision was required at this meeting as to whether or not they should be made permanent.

Cabinet:

- (a) **NOTED** the success of the current interim arrangements to share the Head of Finance and other housing finance staff and **AGREED** to make these permanent to support the development of the shared service.
- (b) **SUPPORTED** further work to develop the finance shared service, as outlined in the report, noting that the final structure of the service will be determined after the implementation of the replacement financial management system.
- (c) **NOTED** that a further report, including a business case, will be brought back to Cabinet in due course.

## 7. REVIEW OF LESSONS LEARNED FROM ORCHARD PARK

Consideration was given to a report which outlined the findings of the Scrutiny Working Group set up to review the lessons learned from the Orchard Park development.

Councillor Lynda Harford, Chairman of the Working Group, reported that interim recommendations were endorsed by Cabinet on 9 July 2015 and had been subsequently presented to the Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee for consideration and endorsement prior to its meeting on 29 July 2015. Additional recommendations had been made following further work by the Group, which Councillor Harford presented to Cabinet, as set out in the report.

Councillor Harford said that the scrutiny review had highlighted the need and value of collaboration between stakeholders and confirmed that it had demonstrated excellent work ongoing in South Cambridgeshire. She added that these efforts would benefit communities and make effective use of shrinking revenues, but was of the opinion that lots more needed to be done to bring the National Health Service into the fold.

Councillor Tim Wotherspoon, Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Transportation, referred to the recommendations from the original Scrutiny Task and Finish Group in 2007. Appendix 1 of the report set these out, together with comments from the 2015 scrutiny review, and he was pleased to see how many of the original recommendations had been met. He reported that Councillor Ian Bates, Chairman of Cambridgeshire County Council's Economy and Environment Committee, had outlined the County Council's support of the 2015 Working Group's recommendations and that they should apply to other districts in the county.

Councillor Lynda Harford thanked those Members on the Working Group for their time and valuable contributions, together with Gemma Barron, Sustainable Communities and Partnerships Manager, and Victoria Wallace, Democratic Services Officer, who had supported the work of the group.

Cabinet congratulated the Working Group on an excellent piece of work.

Cabinet **ENDORSED** the final recommendations of the Working Group, as set out in the report.

## 8. **GAMBLING ACT STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES**

Consideration was given to a report which sought approval for the revised Gambling Act Licensing statement of Policy, in line with the requirements of the Gambling Act 2005.

Councillor Mick Martin, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, presented the report and said that it was a statutory requirement for the statement of Policy to be reviewed and published every three years. He informed Cabinet that, for the area of South Cambridgeshire, the statement of Policy was relevant to six betting shops and one gaming arcade, as well as any other Occasional Use Notices that were issued in instances such as onsite bookmakers for specific events.

Councillor Anna Bradnam referred to Parishes Councils and asked whether they could be included under the list of organisations set out in the statement of Policy as 'interested parties'. Cabinet agreed with this amendment.

Councillor Martin made reference to the formatting and size of the statement of Policy and proposed that the Director of Health and Environmental Services be asked to review this aspect of the document, from a presentation perspective and not the substance of its content. This was agreed by Cabinet and it was noted that officers would take it to the countywide licensing group in order that its format was consistent with neighbouring authorities.

Cabinet:

- (a) **APPROVED** the Gambling Act 2005 statement of Policy, as appended to the report, for ratification and adoption by the Leader of the Council, subject to the inclusion of Parish Councils under section 5 of the Policy entitled 'interested parties'.
- (b) **DELEGATED** the Director of Health and Environmental Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, to review the format of the statement of Policy.

## 9. **WING: COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY AND REQUIREMENTS**

Cabinet considered a report which provided Members with an opportunity to endorse the draft requirements for a Section 106 Agreement in respect of the Wing outline planning application prior to a final decision on the planning application and overall Section 106 package being made by the Joint Development Control Committee.

Councillor Tim Wotherspoon, Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Transportation, presented the report on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Planning and provided background information relating to the Wing development as set out in the report. He presented the draft Section 106 Agreement Heads of Terms schedule, as appended to the report, and highlighted that education accounted for approximately half of the Section 106 Agreement package which was consistent with other Cambridge Fringes developments at about £22,000 per dwelling.

Councillor Simon Edwards, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, was very pleased to see that household receptacles had been included, together with fibre optic broadband to the home.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Opposition, was concerned that 40% affordable housing was referred to as a starting point for negotiations for the Wing development, rather than being referred to as the Council's policy. She referred to the review mechanism built into the 20% affordable housing allocation agreed at Northstowe, should there be any changes to viability or markets, and asked whether a similar mechanism could be added for this development. She perceived the developers of the Wing development as presenting a threat for a less attractive affordable housing allocation, as referred to in paragraph 35, so thought that a review mechanism was important.

Councillor Wotherspoon reminded Cabinet that the Council's policy in relation to affordable housing was 40%, subject to viability, and emphasised the point that this was subject to viability. He did not see the developer's position on the matter as a threat and thought that paragraph 33 of the report set out the reasons why the affordable housing provision was at the level proposed. He also reminded Cabinet that this was a brownfield site and that there were significant costs associated with making such a site ready for development. Some Members of Cabinet said that they felt reassured by the report that officers had undertaken very good negotiations with the developers in respect of affordable housing.

Cabinet:

- (a) **ENDORSED** the draft requirements of the Section 106 Agreement for the Wing outline planning application, which will be considered and a final determination made by the Joint Development Control Committee (Cambridge Fringes), including the list of items and triggers.
- (b) **DELEGATED** to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, in consultation with the Director of Planning and New Communities, the authority to make any minor changes to the draft requirements prior to inclusion in the committee report for the Wing development.

## 10. LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT UPDATE

Cabinet gave consideration to a report which updated Members regarding the Local Government Finance Settlement and its implications for the authority for the financial years 2015-16 to 2019-20. It also sought approval for various other matters affecting the Council's revenue and capital budgets and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Councillor Simon Edwards, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, presented the report and made the following points in respect of the Local Government Finance Settlement:

- the Settlement forecasted the Revenue Support Grant reducing by 49% from 2015-16 to 2016-17, by 75% from 2016-17 to 2017-18 and to £0 thereafter, as set out in the table and graph at paragraph 9 of the report;
- the New Homes Bonus scheme would remain in place, but as a four year scheme, rather than over six years, so the Council would still receive income as part of it which it was using towards an infrastructure fund and its contributions to the Greater Cambridge City Deal. The Government was also consulting on other reforms to New Homes Bonus, including:
  - withholding new New Homes Bonus allocations in areas where no Local Plan had been produced or submitted for inspection;
  - reducing payments for homes built on appeal;
  - only making payments for delivery above baseline representing 'deadweight';

- the Settlement retained the basic principles of the Retained Business Rates system, including:
  - the proportions passed onto central Government and to local precepting authorities;
  - tariffs and baseline funding levels (uprated in line with the small business non-domestic rating multiplier for 2016-17);
  - levy rate and safety net arrangements, also uprated as above.
- in terms of Retained Business Rates, an adjustment to the tariff deduction for 2018-19 and 2019-20 would be made as set out in paragraph 19 of the report.

Councillor Edwards said that all of the relevant factors that featured in the Local Government Finance Settlement would be included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy scheduled for consideration in February. Other areas of additional funding were reported as follows:

- the refurbishment of General Fund equity share properties, with a budget of £200,000 sought to start the project off and allow time for completion and resale. The investment cost would be returned to the capital programme on resale, with any surplus generated being a contribution to the General Fund;
- additional resources required for the Local Development Plan, as considered at the extraordinary meeting of Council in June 2015;
- the creation of the new Neighbourhood Plans Project Officer post;
- the purchase and upkeep of scaffolding at Sawston Tannery and related insurance in the Capital Programme, the cost of which would be met from a grant awarded by Historic England.

In terms of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, Councillor Edwards proposed that officers be asked to produce the following models for Council Tax for inclusion in the report due for submission to Cabinet and Council in February:

- a 2% increase in Council Tax year on year;
- a £5 increase for 2016/17 followed by a 2% increase year on year;
- a £5 increase for every year of the current Parliament.

Cabinet supported this proposal.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Opposition, supported the proposal for a new Neighbourhood Plan Project Officer post as a designated position to assist parishes in the production of their Plans. She asked whether any other Councils were proposing to freeze their Council Tax and, if so, why they would do that. Councillor Edwards understood that Huntingdonshire District Council and East Cambridgeshire District Council were proposing Council Tax freezes, but made the point that they charged higher rates of Council Tax than South Cambridgeshire District Council. It was also noted that the assumptions of the two Councils were different, as was their strategy for use of the New Homes Bonus.

Cabinet:

- (a) **NOTED** the Local Government Finance Settlement.
- (b) **REQUESTED** that the following options be modelled in the Medium Term Financial Strategy reports to Cabinet and Council in February 2016:

- a 2% increase in Council Tax year on year;
  - a £5 increase for 2016/17 followed by a 2% increase year on year;
  - a £5 increase for every year of the current Parliament.
- (c) **APPROVED** the inclusion of £200,000 in the authority's Capital Programme, as a fund to finance the refurbishment of General Fund Equity Share properties;
- (d) **APPROVED** the inclusion of an additional £160,000 in the authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy and revenue budgets to meet anticipated additional costs in respect of the Local Plan, to be funded from New Homes Bonus receipts;
- (e) **APPROVED** the creation of a new Neighbourhood Plans Project Officer post;
- (f) **APPROVED** the inclusion of works at Sawston Tannery in the Capital Programme, to be funded by grants from external organisations.

#### **11. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

No issues arising from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee were reported.

#### **12. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE PARTNERSHIPS REVIEW COMMITTEE**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Partnerships Review Committee would be an extraordinary meeting on 18 February 2016 at 10.30am, to scrutinise Cambridgeshire County Council's budget.

#### **13. UPDATES FROM CABINET MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

Councillor Tim Wotherspoon, Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Transportation, reported that he had recently attended a meeting of the West Anglia Task Force.

Councillor Nick Wright, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, reported that the Chief Executive of Papworth Hospital was retiring.

#### **14. REPORTS FROM CABINET MEMBERS ATTENDING PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS**

No reports from Cabinet Members attending Parish Council meetings were received.

#### **15. REPORTS FROM MEMBER CHAMPIONS**

No reports from Member Champions were received.

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**The Meeting ended at 3.40 p.m.**

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