

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Thursday, 19 January 2017 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Peter Topping (Leader of the Council)

Councillors:	Simon Edwards	Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder
	Lynda Harford	Housing Portfolio Holder
	Mark Howell	Environmental Services Portfolio Holder
	Nick Wright	Corporate & Customer Services Portfolio Holder and Deputy Leader

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Patrick Adams	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Alex Colyer	Interim Chief Executive
Susan Gardner Craig	Head of People and Organisational Development
Mike Hill	Health and Environmental Services Director
Richard May	Policy and Performance Manager
Rory McKenna	Deputy Monitoring Officer
Caroline Ryba	Head of Finance
Alison Talkington	Senior Planning Policy Officer

Councillors Anna Bradnam, Cicely Murfitt and Bridget Smith were in attendance, by invitation.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Robert Turner and Councillor Tim Wotherspoon.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting which commenced at 8:57pm on Thursday 17 November and then reconvened on Monday 21 November were agreed as a correct record.

It was noted that the minutes held on Thursday 17 November at 2pm would be received at the next meeting of Cabinet on 9 February.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

6. LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT UPDATE

Councillor Simon Edwards presented this item, which updated Cabinet regarding the

Local Government Finance Settlement and its implications for the authority for the financial years 2017-18 to 2019-20.

New Homes Bonus

Councillor Simon Edwards explained that under the Government's new rules the Council would not receive any New Homes Bonus until it had exceeded 0.4% of growth, which was an increase from the baseline figure of 0.25%. Cabinet agreed that the amount of New Homes Bonus funds going to the General Fund nor the A14 upgrade contribution should be affected by the Government's increase in the baseline figure and so the contribution to the City Deal Investment and Delivery fund would be reduced from an estimated 50% to 40% of the original estimated total.

Councillor Edwards explained that the Council were regularly liaising with the City Deal team, along with the City Council and the County Council, about the funding of the City Deal project and he was confident that the capacity was there for the proposed reduction in New Homes Bonus funding to be absorbed.

It was noted that future reductions in New Homes Bonus could be applied if the Council did not have an agreed Local Plan. The Interim Chief Executive explained that the exact details were still expected from the Government.

Cabinet

NOTED the Local Government Finance Settlement.

AGREED to guide the Head of Finance regarding options to be modelled in the Medium Term Financial Strategy reports to Cabinet and Council in February 2017, including the recommendation that if the Government reduces the New Homes Bonus, the planned allocation to the General Fund and the A14 upgrade contribution should be unaffected and the contribution to the City Deal Investment and Delivery fund should be reduced.

7. SHARED INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE

Councillor Nick Wright presented this item, which invited Cabinet to agree to the formation of a Shared Internal Audit Service with Cambridge City Council. He explained that Huntingdonshire District Council had deferred making a decision on whether to join the Shared Internal Audit Service. The Director of Health and Environmental Services explained that joint savings would be achieved if Huntingdonshire District Council decided to join.

Councillor Wright explained that whilst the Council would be required to contribute a one-off £4,200 payment for transitional costs, it should be noted that Council had reduced its overall Internal Audit costs by 23% since 2012/13. He also explained that being in a shared service arrangement benefitted both authorities by providing greater service resilience and information sharing.

Cabinet

AGREED to approve the Business Case and delegate authority to the Director Health and Environmental Services to make decisions and to take steps which are necessary, conducive or incidental to the establishment of the Shared Internal Audit Service in accordance with the business case.

8. NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA DESIGNATING - UPDATING THE PROCESS

Councillor Lynda Harford presented this item, which invited Cabinet to update the process to follow when designating a Neighbourhood Area within the District and set out the decision making process to be followed once a draft Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to the Council. It was noted that changes were necessary due to new national regulations that came into force on 1 October 2016.

Councillor Harford confirmed that there was a separate consultation process that had to be carried out by residents who wished to alter a parish boundary.

Councillor Harford stated that the authority was responsible for providing support to allow parish councils and residents to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan and she was confident that the Council had the resources to facilitate this process, although this would be monitored. The Senior Planning Policy Officer reported that the Council could apply to grant money from the Government to cover the costs to this authority of the examination and the referendum.

Councillor Harford confirmed that parish councils that had a Neighbourhood Plan were only required to provide a three-year land supply instead of five.

Cabinet **AGREED**

- A) To approve the process for designation Neighbourhood Areas as set out in paragraphs 12 and 13 of the report.
- B) To approve the decision making process once a Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to the Council as set out in paragraphs 14 and 15 of the report.

9. CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE: FEEDBACK REPORT

The Leader presented this item, which updated Cabinet on the feedback report and recommendations from the Corporate Peer Challenge that was undertaken between 15-18 November 2016. The Leader welcomed the report and highlighted the Council's strengths identified by the Review Team. He stated that the Council was being asked to consider where it wanted to be in five years' time and he invited Cabinet to agree priorities to form the basis of action plans to address the recommendations of the Peer Team and enable the Council to redefine its place-shaping role.

Councillor Simon Edwards welcomed the findings of the Review Team, which had added real value. He drew particular attention to the team's recommendation in respect of commercialisation, which emphasised the importance of putting in place a corporate strategy to assess options for investment and income generation.

Councillor Harford stated that the Council had a duty to honestly explain the consequences of land supply and future developments to parish councils and residents.

Councillor Cicely Murfitt requested that any consultation exercise with residents should be in plain English and not be carried out in August, as had been the case with devolution, as it was too late for inclusion in South Cambs magazine and parish councils did not meet in August.

The Interim Chief Executive stated that staff welcomed the findings of the peer review report and the Council was ready to meet the challenge of successfully implementing its recommendations.

Cabinet **AGREED**

- A) To receive the Feedback Report from the Corporate Peer Challenge, welcoming the independent external validation of the Council's strengths and achievements it has provided (see Appendix A);
- B) To the Key recommendations set out in Section 2 of the Feedback Report;
- C) To the priorities for the future leadership of place, as set out in paragraph 10 of the report, as the basis for the Council's response to the report; and
- D) To authorise the Interim Chief Executive to prepare action plans to address the priorities identified in recommendation (iii) above, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

**The Meeting ended at 3.15
p.m.**
