

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Wednesday, 6 March 2019 at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT:

Councillors:	Aidan Van de Weyer	Deputy Leader of Council in the Chair
	Neil Gough	Lead Cabinet member for Environmental Services and Licensing
	Philippa Hart	Lead Cabinet member for Customer Service and Business Improvement
	Dr. Tumi Hawkins	Lead Cabinet member for Planning
	Hazel Smith	Lead Cabinet member for Housing
	John Williams	Lead Cabinet member for Finance

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Johanna Davies	Economic Development Officer
Jonathan Dixon	Principal Planning Policy Officer (Transport)
Susan Gardner Craig	Head of People and Organisational Development
Mike Hill	Director of Housing and Environmental Services
Rory McKenna	Deputy Head of Legal Practice
Sean Missin	Procurement Officer
Stuart Morris	Principal Planning Policy Officer
Bob Palmer	Interim Executive Director
Ian Senior	Democratic Services Officer

Councillors Anna Bradnam, Nigel Cathcart, Dr. Claire Daunton, Dr. Douglas de Lacey, Brian Milnes, Peter Topping, Heather Williams and Nick Wright were in attendance, by invitation.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Bridget Smith sent Apologies for Absence. Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer took the Chair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Cabinet authorised the Deputy Leader to sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2019, subject to the correction of typographical errors.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

6. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Councillor Brian Milned (Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee) addressed Cabinet.

He summarised the latest observations by the ICT Task and Finish Group about 3C ICT. In particular, he reported

- Disappointment with the level of access to requested documentation
- frustration with the apparent lack of an effective management structure
- concern about business continuity
- the apparent ineffectiveness of partnership working
- discussion about the Exit Strategy
- concern at the lack of clarity about the ownership of new equipment
- comments about the Business Plan

Councillor Milnes said that the Chief Executive Officers of South Cambridgeshire District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridge City Council had been invited to attend the next meeting of South Cambridgeshire District Council's Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

Councillor Philippa Hart (Lead Cabinet Member with responsibility for ICT) informed Cabinet about meetings she was engaging in with a view to improving the situation.

7. 2018-19 QUARTER 3 POSITION STATEMENT: PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE

Cabinet considered a report setting out the Council's Quarter 3 position regarding its General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital budgets, and performance indicators (by exception). The report also provided an update on the Council's current (in-flight) projects.

Such integrated reporting gave Officers and Members the opportunity to examine any areas of concern and decide on the appropriate action.

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee had received the report, and expressed satisfaction, especially with the in-flight tracking.

Following a brief Question and Answer session, Cabinet **agreed** the provisional forecast outturn position, the performance indicator results, and in-flight project updates in the report from the Head of Finance, and the appendices attached thereto.

8. BARRIERS TO COUNCIL PROCUREMENT FOR SMES TASK AND FINISH GROUP FINDINGS

Cabinet considered a report outlining the findings of the Barriers to Council Procurement from Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) Task and Finish Group.

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee had expressed satisfaction with the recommendations, although Councillor Brian Milnes (Vice-Chairman, Scrutiny and Overview Committee) remained frustrated that the constraints of local government prevented South Cambridgeshire District Council from doing more to help the situation.

Cabinet

1. **approved**, without amendments, the following recommendations from the Task and Finish Group, as set out in greater detail in paragraphs 11 to 34 of the report from the Interim Executive Director, namely
 - (a) to review and simplify the tendering documentation for council contracts below the EU Procurement Thresholds (Supply, Services and Design Contracts £181,302, Works £4,551,413);
 - (b) To develop, promote and run a minimum of two procurement workshops for local SMEs during 2019;
 - (c) To investigate how SCDC could increase awareness of contract opportunities locally whilst complying with the UK Regulations;
 - (d) To review and update the council's procurement web pages to ensure that they are 'SME friendly';
 - (e) To work with the Sustainable Communities and Wellbeing team to develop a series of potential 'social value' examples;
 - (f) To review the late payment of invoices with the South Cambridgeshire District Council's accountancy team; and
 - (g) To hold a Member Briefing on the changes that are being made to the council's procurement process; and
2. **requested** that progress against any agreed recommendations be reviewed in 12 months' time.

9. **BREXIT ADVISORY GROUP - PRIORITIES FOR ACTION**

Cabinet considered a report on the priorities for action identified by the Brexit Advisory Group.

The Lead Cabinet Member for Finance commented that the Group might have more work to do in the event of a 'No Deal' Brexit.

Those present engaged in a short debate before Cabinet

1. **Approved** the following priorities for action agreed by the Brexit Advisory Group, as detailed in paragraphs 16 to 25 of the report from the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, namely
 - Priority 1: Improving the flow of information and advice to business
 - Priority 2: Establish Greater Cambridge internationally as a great place to work and do business.
 - Priority 3: Ensuring that the importance of Greater Cambridge to the national economy is recognised and that its funding needs are addressed
 - Priority 4: Supporting agricultural businesses
 - Priority 5: (continue to) Manage Brexit Impact upon Council

2. **Directed** officers to develop the priorities into detailed actions to be agreed with the Leader of the Council and implemented during 2019 or to be incorporated into the Council's developing plan, as outlined in the Council's Business Plan, to support the South Cambridgeshire economy and local businesses.

10. EAST-WEST RAIL BEDFORD TO CAMBRIDGE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Cabinet considered a report seeking its agreement to the Council's proposed response to the current East-West Rail Bedford to Cambridge consultation.

Cabinet heard that representatives from 52 most affected Parish Councils in South Cambridgeshire had been invited to participate in a series of workshops. Comments included

- Broad agreement with the concept and recognition of the benefit of an the east west rail connection
- a perception that this project lacked a joined-up approach with the various other transport infrastructure initiatives in progress in the area
- concern about the visual and ecological impact of the line, and the minimal detail in the consultation documents about these issues
- The line would be designed with gradients to allow freight, so there was concern over what this could mean for villages in terms of potential noise impacts overnight
- concerns about parking associated with any station at Cambourne or Bassingbourn, and its potential impact to the surrounding areas.
- On a positive note, the Parishes welcomed the engagement, and encouraged further quarterly meetings to be kept up to date and allow ongoing input as the project continues.

Councillor Hazel Smith highlighted the proposal's potential implications for the development of new housing, but regretted that it did little to improve local transport.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart (local Member for Bassingbourn) was concerned about the scale of growth that might be located around a new railway station in South Cambridgeshire. The Cambourne route appeared to be the better option, but timescale was an issue.

In response to an email query as to the Council's opinion on whether the railway required Strategic Environmental Assessment, officers provided a verbal update that this was a matter between the applicant – East West Rail Company – and those raising the question. However, the Council's draft response did refer to the need to integrate the project with environmental and planning issues.

Following further discussion, and on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cabinet **approved** the draft consultation response to the East-West Rail Bedford to Cambridge consultation, attached as Appendix 1 to the report from the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, subject to

1. amendments to reflect the following:
 - On the approach to Cambridge section, removal of an expression of a preference, and focus instead on issues that should be taken into account,

including emphasise the importance of connectivity, to the east of Cambridge, to the proposed Cambridge South railway station, and to other transport links;

- an assessment of the impact on the amenity of communities located along the chosen route
 - an expression of the Council's disappointment that trains using the route at least at the outset would be diesel rather than electric,
 - highlighting the necessity for measures to minimise any adverse impact on the environment and on heritage assets, and to explore opportunities for environmental enhancement, including to address flood risk.
2. delegation to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, in consultation with the Deputy Leader of South Cambridgeshire District Council, to finalise the wording of the response.

11. SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL - AN ORGANISATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Cabinet considered a report updating it about progress with the organisational review being undertaken by Castlerigg.

The report outlined the next phase, including briefings for councillors and staff, and feedback to partners and other stakeholders. It also considered the activity and resources required to take forward the findings and recommendations outlined within the consultants' report into a programme plan for implementation.

After a brief discussion among those present, Cabinet

- a) **Noted** the progress of the organisational review to date;
- b) **Agreed** the proposed approach to communicating the findings and recommendations of the consultant's report;
- c) **Approved** a budget of £40,000 to enable the organisational review to progress to the next phase of developing a programme plan;
- d) **Approved** the Leader as Programme Sponsor; and
- e) **delegated** further decisions relating to the next phase to the Leader, in consultation with the Cabinet, Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Cabinet noted that its next scheduled meeting would be on Wednesday 3 April 2019, starting at 9.30am.

**The Meeting ended at 10.50
a.m.**
