

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Tuesday, 27 June 2023 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Bridget Smith (Leader of Council)

Councillors:	Henry Batchelor	Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licensing
	Bill Handley	Lead Cabinet Member for Communities
	Tumi Hawkins	Lead Cabinet Member for Planning
	Peter McDonald	Lead Cabinet Member for Economic Development
	John Williams	Lead Cabinet Member for Resources

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Peter Maddock	Head of Finance
Liz Watts	Chief Executive
Jonathan Dixon	Planning Policy Manager
John Murphy	Monitoring Officer

Officers in attendance remotely for all or part of the meeting:

Anne Ainsworth	Chief Operating Officer
Jeff Mambery	Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services
Peter Campbell	Head of Housing
Stuart Morris	Principal Policy Planner
Charlotte Morgan-Shelbourne	Policy Planner

Councillors Anna Bradnam and Heather Williams were in attendance, by invitation.

Councillors Brian Milnes and Lisa Redrup were in attendance remotely.

1. Apologies for Absence

There were apologies from Councillor John Batchelor and Brian Milnes (attended virtually).

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Cabinet authorised the Leader to sign, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 15 May 2023.

4. Announcements

There were no announcements.

5. Public Questions

There were no public questions.

6. Issues arising from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee

Cabinet noted the Scrutiny and Overview report summarising the meeting held on Thursday, 8 June 2023. Councillor Anna Bradnam was in attendance on behalf of the Committee, and advised that she would feed back at each of the following agenda items:

- South Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership - Operational Plan 2023/24
- 2022-23 Quarter Four Performance Report
- Draft Annual Equality Scheme Review

7. Response to the Huntingdonshire District Council Issues Engagement Paper

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, introduced the report.

It was noted, the consultation paper had identified key issues but did not propose specific responses, instead it sought feedback from local residents, communities, businesses and organisations on what the priorities for improving the district of Huntingdonshire should be.

It was explained there was a duty to cooperate with neighbouring councils and the document presented proposed the response of the consultation which would be jointly with Cambridge City Council.

Water supply, travelling to and from work, and transport issues were identified as key cross boundary issues which affected Greater Cambridge.

Cabinet:

- a. Agreed the proposed joint response to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Issues Engagement Paper (Regulation 18) Consultation
- b. Agreed that any subsequent material amendments be made by the Lead Member for Planning
- c. Agreed that any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes that do not materially affect the content be delegated to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning.

8. Adopted Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans 2018: Five year review of Strategic Policies

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, introduced the report.

It was explained, the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan was adopted in September 2018 and as it was coming up to being five years old a review had been carried out. As the process to replace the plan was already underway the main purpose had been to review if policies remained consistent with national planning guidance. The review had identified that there were a small number of policies that were generally consistent with national policy but did not fully reflect more recent changes to national planning policy or legislation since the adoption of the Local Plans.

It was noted, most policies remained consistent with national policy, noting, three RAG ratings of amber (S3, S12, H10).

Councillor Heather Williams, Opposition Group Leader asked when the council was aware of the environment agencies concerns, regarding the five-year housing land supply that was in amber, reminding members of the application put in, in 2018 which went to committee in 2021, still waiting a decision. It was questioned whether it was included in calculations and what the impact would be.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of Council emphasised the council had worked closely with the environment agency for a long time and continued to do so.

The Planning Policy Manager stated, the issues mentioned were considered in the housing trajectory published in April 2023 which summarised the impact moving to standard method and showed a five year land supply would still be in place. Stress testing of housing and supply had taken place in relation to applications delayed by the water issues, and applications affected were anticipated to deliver late or beyond the five-year period.

Councillor Heather Williams emphasised, full council and planning committee members would likely appreciate a briefing ahead of committee to understand what was going on and to understand repercussions.

Councillor Bridget Smith stated the water supply was the biggest limiting factor in delivering growth in the area and stated there had been numerous discussions and letters written to government that there was a problem which needed escalating. It was stated, they had worked closely with number of agencies regarding challenges with supply over a long period of time.

Dr Tumi Hawkins clarified the total number of homes on each site was the total number of homes on each site not development within the five year period.

Councillor Bridget Smith thanked the Planning Policy Manager and their team for the work put in.

Cabinet:

a) **Agreed** the Local Plan Five Year Review Covering Report and appendix regarding the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018

b) **Agreed** that any subsequent material amendments be made by the Lead Member for Planning.

c) **Agreed** that any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes that do not materially affect the content be delegated to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning.

9. **South Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership**

Councillor Bill Handley introduced the report.

It was explained, the South Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership was a statutory partnership made up of representatives from Police, Health, Probation, South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC), Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Authority, Cambridgeshire County Council and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector. It was noted, as the accountable body for the CSP, the council must have oversight of, and agree with, the Plan.

Councillor Anna Bradnam, Scrutiny and Overview Committee member stated the CSP was an extremely useful gathering forum in which views from all parties were brought together.

It was requested that the incorporation into the Operational Plan of relevant lessons learned from previous new communities such as Northstowe was created, a glossary to clarify terms and an assurance from the Lead Cabinet Member for Resources that the existing allocated sum of £15,000 in South Cambridgeshire District Council's budget would continue to be available for community safety and asked that Cabinet formally confirmed that said sum would be inflation proofed.

It was noted that various questions were asked, and overall, Scrutiny and Overview were pleased with the work that was done.

Councillor Bridget Smith thanked officers for their work.

Cabinet:

a) Agreed the content of the Operational Plan for 2023-24, considering the lead role the Council takes in its delivery and the resources committed to it.

10. **Quarter Four Performance Report**

Councillor John Williams introduced the report and thanked Scrutiny and Overview for the input and were looking at ways to improve the chart to reflect results.

It was explained, the report covered the view of the three-month trial of the four-day week. It was noted that performance had improved in several areas.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of Council recommended repeating the Mystery Shopper exercise in future.

Councillor Anna Bradnam stressed a lot of questions were asked and satisfactory answers were received. In regard to the Mystery Shopper exercise, questions were asked whether staff knew it was taking place, if there was customer access in the evening and if calls were answered late at night.

A range of questions were asked including, benchmarking, costs, recycling bins, waste service, council tax, concentration on staff and provision for those unable to use online services as well as questions regarding assistance to Parish Councils when applying for grants, and around the Electric vehicles charging scheme.

Jeff Membery, Head of Transformation clarified the cost of the Mystery Shopper exercise was £8,800

Councillor Heather Williams stated although the results were good, believed the contact centre were singled out and other departments could have been part of the exercise.

Councillor Bridget Smith clarified that KPI's monitor performance in other departments.

Councillor John Williams reminded the committee that members had asked for the Mystery Shopper exercise due to criticism on way calls had been handled to understand whether complaints were justified, it was emphasised it would have been done regardless of the four-day week trial and it was worthwhile to make it an annual occurrence.

Jeff Membery stated that there was recognition for the positive feedback and was celebrated with the staff.

Cabinet:

a) Reviewed the KPI results and comments, the overview of results from the Contact Centre's recent mystery shopper exercise, and the progress against Business Plan actions.

b) Recommend, where appropriate, any actions required to address issues identified within appendices.

11. Annual Equality Scheme Review

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins introduced the report and thanked Scrutiny and Overview for their input.

It was emphasised that South Cambridgeshire District Council was a modern and caring council, therefore it was important to ensure that it had an Equality Scheme that provided a current and effective framework for the ongoing completion of activities to progress Equality, Diversity and Inclusion with the organisation and the wider district.

Councillor Anna Bradnam stated they were reassured that procedures were in place to avoid unconscious bias and arrangements for disabled access during work at the council were in place.

Councillor Bridget Smith thanked officers for their work.

Cabinet:

- a) Reviewed and approved the Equality Scheme revision for 2023-24.
- b) Reviewed the 2022-23 Equality Scheme action plan progress report.

12. Exclusion of Press and Public

13. Affordable Housing Acquisition - 10no. New Homes - Cottenham

Cabinet:

Approved the property acquisition as specified in paragraphs 6-7 of the exempt report.

14. Affordable Housing Acquisition - 13no. New Homes - Barrington

Cabinet:

Approved the property acquisition as specified in paragraphs 6-7 of the exempt report.

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