

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on  
Thursday, 13 July 2017 at 6.00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Peter Topping (Leader of the Council)  
Councillor Nick Wright (Business & Customer Services Portfolio Holder and Deputy Leader)

<b>Councillors:</b>	Simon Edwards	Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder
	Sue Ellington	Health & Wellbeing Portfolio Holder
	Lynda Harford	Housing Portfolio Holder
	Mark Howell	Environmental Services Portfolio Holder
	Robert Turner	Planning Portfolio Holder
	Tim Wotherspoon	Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Portfolio Holder

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Beverly Agass	Chief Executive
Alex Colyer	Executive Director
Stephen Kelly	Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development
Rory McKenna	Deputy Monitoring Officer
Caroline Ryba	Head of Finance
Ian Senior	Democratic Services Officer

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

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

Councillor Francis Burkitt (Greater Cambridge Partnership Portfolio Holder) sent Apologies for Absence.

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

Cabinet authorised the Leader to sign, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2017.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

### **4. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader welcomed Beverly Agass to her first South Cambridgeshire District Council Cabinet meeting as Chief Executive, a position she had taken up on 3 July 2017.

### **5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

### **6. QUARTERLY POSITION STATEMENT ON FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RISK**

Cabinet considered a report containing

- A provisional 2016-17 outturn position statement on General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital expenditure, including requests for budget rollovers from 2016-17 to 2017-18;
- A statement on the 2016-17 year-end position statement with regard to the Council's corporate objectives and performance indicators; and
- The Strategic Risk Register.

Councillor Simon Edwards (Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder) and Councillor Nick Wright (Business and Customer Services Portfolio Holder and Deputy Leader) summarised those aspects of the report for which they had responsibility.

On risk, Councillor Robert Turner (Planning Portfolio Holder) highlighted a significantly improved position following two challenging years in the planning service.

Referring to the new strategic risk matrix, and in reply to a question from Councillor Anna Bradnam, Councillor Wright confirmed that Members would still also receive the details of risks.

Councillor Bridget Smith asked about the risk held by Ermine Street Housing. Councillor Edwards reminded her that Ermine Street was an independent company, and that the Council's interest in it was purely as an investor. The Executive Director explained that the two registers held by the Council and by Ermine Street covered the same risks but approached them from different perspectives.

In response to the Leader, the Policy and Performance Manager said that officers were working towards reducing the number of Performance Indicators from 38 to 28.

Members noted the implication of paragraph 26(e) of the report from the Chief Executive.

The Business and Customer Services Portfolio Holder took the opportunity to explain the rationale behind the relocation of the Swansley Room, and reconfiguring of the access to the Monkfield Room. While work had been delayed for reasons beyond the Council's control, once completed it would improve public access to the two meeting rooms, and enhance staff security both within the office area and in the interview rooms, which would be relocated nearer to Reception.

Cabinet

- (a) **noted** the Council's provisional financial outturn position, together with the overview of Corporate Plan 2016-2021 achievements and performance against key performance indicators set out in the report and appendices A-D attached;
- (b) **Approved** budget rollovers totalling £3,149,007 as detailed in Appendices D(1) General Fund Revenue, D(2) HRA Revenue and D(3) Capital, to be carried forward into the 2017-18 financial year, and
- (c) **Approved** the Strategic Risk Register at Appendix E.

## 7. 3C SHARED SERVICES 2016/17 ANNUAL REPORT

Cabinet **received and noted** a report summarising performance of the Shared services for Legal, Building Control and ICT during 2016-17.

Councillor Nick Wright (Business and Customer Services Portfolio Holder and Deputy

Leader) accepted that savings targets for Year 1 had been too ambitious, but stressed that the strong leadership now in place for each of the shared services in question provided the kind of consistency and stability that bode well for the future. Lessons had been learned, and Councillor Wright endorsed the report, and expressed confidence in shared services.

Councillor Peter Topping (Leader) stated that the report had been discussed extensively at the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on 6 July 2017, where he had answered Members' questions in Councillor Wright's absence.

Councillor Sue Ellington (Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder) welcomed the growth in joint working.

Councillor Bridget Smith asked why the projected Year 1 savings were not realised. Councillor Wright attributed this in part to unforeseen staffing costs, but was confident that, with more robust structures now in place, the savings would still be made, albeit in the longer term. The Executive Director added that rationalisation of equipment across South Cambridgeshire District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridge City Council, coupled with the better control of staffing costs, meant that the projected savings were very much deliverable.

Councillor Simon Edwards (Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder) said that, while savings were important, the key reasons for shared services were to achieve greater resilience and capacity, and encourage more specialisation.

## **8. FORMATION OF A NEW PLANNING SERVICE FOR SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL AND CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL**

Cabinet considered a report on proposals for a new, transformed Planning Service between South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council, and seeking approval of the Business Case in line with the principles approved by this Council in April 2017.

Councillor Robert Turner (Planning Portfolio Holder) referred Members to paragraph 11 of the report, highlighting some of the benefits of creating a shared service, and the opportunities it would create for both Councils, and for those individuals seeking to further their careers in the planning profession. For South Cambridgeshire District Council, a principle objective would be to maintain and improve performance. In the context of ICT, it was recognised that the two authorities currently operated different systems, and procurement of a suitable system to support the new planning service and enable the alignment of processes and procedures was accepted as being of paramount importance. Referring to paragraph 15 of the report, Councillor Turner said that Option 1 was not an option, and he commended to Cabinet the creation of a Greater Cambridge Planning Service as being good for both employees and residents.

Councillor Sue Ellington (Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder) expressed concern at the potential workload that would fall on officers given the proposal to continue with just three area teams. In response, Councillor Turner said that those areas had been carefully identified to ensure that workload was evenly spread. He drew attention to the fact that Cambridge City had been split between Areas 2 and 3 in order to emphasise the joint nature of the proposed service.

The Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development explained the rationale behind the proposed team structure. He said that the overriding aim was to support and enhance existing strategies, and improve opportunities for staff. Achieving a greater

locus was a key objective.

Councillor Nick Wright (Business and Customer Services Portfolio Holder and Deputy Leader) noted that Cambridge City Council had already approved the Business Case, and said this represented a huge vote of confidence in the concept of a shared planning service.

Referring to Appendix 5, Councillor Hazel Smith noted that the major new development in Greater Cambridge seemed to be concentrated on Area 2. In reply, the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development pointed out that, in terms of geographical spread, Area 2 was smaller than each of the others. He said that Northstowe was now in delivery mode, and that a balance would be struck by resourcing each team to reflect the difference in requirements.

Councillor Cicely Murfitt mentioned a potential conflict between urban and rural approaches to planning. In response to her concerns, the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development confirmed that Parish Councils would continue to play an essential role in determining planning applications in South Cambridgeshire, and that officer site visits would continue to take place.

Councillor Bridget Smith referred to the major risks identified in Section 5 of the Business Case. In particular, she expressed concern about the 'recruitment challenges' highlighted by Risk R3. The Planning Portfolio Holder said that a shared planning service would meet these challenges through being better placed to offer development opportunities for staff. While recognising that one of the difficulties faced in attracting staff was the cost of living in the Greater Cambridge area, Councillor Turner pointed out that the new service would benefit from having several experienced officers, who already lived in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. The Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development added that a shared service was so compelling as to be attractive. He commended the prospect of enhancing the status of Greater Cambridge nationally to reflect its global reputation. The shared planning service would provide an opportunity to invest in people in what would be the biggest planning service in the UK, and thus provide the best chance to deliver against the scale of economic growth envisaged during the coming years.

Cabinet

1. **Approved** the Business Case for the new Planning Service attached (see Appendix 1)
2. **Agreed** that South Cambridgeshire District Council is agreed to be the Employing Authority for this shared service.
3. **Agreed** that Delegated authority be given to the Director of Planning and Economic Development, in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder, to deliver the phases of the proposal as set out in the Business Case.

**9. CAMBRIDGE ICE ARENA: LOAN TO CAMBRIDGE LEISURE AND ICE CENTRE (CLIC)**

Councillor Simon Edwards (Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder) introduced a report containing information that would help Cabinet reach a final decision relating to South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) providing a loan to Cambridge Leisure and Ice Centre (CLIC) to support the development of an ice rink on the outskirts of Cambridge.

Restricted information made available to the Cabinet set out key factors to be considered, and the options available.

After years of SCDC having been unable to fund similar projects to anything like this extent, Councillor Edwards commended the ice rink project as exciting and positive.

Councillor Robert Turner (Planning Portfolio Holder) described the project as fantastic.

In response to concern raised by Councillor Anna Bradnam that the U.K.'s decision to leave the European Union might result in financial consequences, the Head of Finance said that the respective parties involved in the project had already made allowances for this in making their calculations.

Cabinet

- (d) **Recognised** the issues identified, and **approved** the measures taken to address them, including matters to be included in legal documents prior to drawdown of the loan; and
- (e) **Confirmed approval** for the loan, and **authorises** the Executive Director, in consultation with the Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder, to approve the loan agreement and drawdowns subject to satisfactory completion of all outstanding matters.

#### 10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Cabinet noted that its next scheduled meeting was on Thursday 14 September 2017, starting at 6.00pm.

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**The Meeting ended at 7.25  
p.m.**

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