

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Thursday, 26 July 2018 at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer (Deputy Leader) in the Chair

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| Councillors: | Philippa Hart | Customer Services and Business Improvement |
| | Dr. Tumi Hawkins | Planning |
| | Hazel Smith | Housing |
| | John Williams | Finance |

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

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| Beverly Agass | Chief Executive |
| Alex Colyer | Executive Director |
| Susan Gardner Craig | Head of People and Organisational Development |
| Caroline Hunt | Planning Policy Manager |
| Kathrin John | Democratic Services Team Leader |
| Tom Lewis | Monitoring Officer |
| Ian Senior | Democratic Services Officer |

Councillors Anna Bradnam, Sue Ellington, Brian Milnes and Heather Williams and Heather Williams were in attendance, by invitation.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Neil Gough and Bridget Smith sent Apologies for Absence. In Councillor Smith's absence, Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer took the Chair as Deputy Leader.

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 28 June 2018, subject to the finishing time of the meeting being amended to state 10.40am and not 12.40pm.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Deputy Leader did not have any announcements to make.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

6. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

In the absence of Councillor Grenville Chamberlain (Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee), Councillor Brian Milnes (Vice-Chairman) attended the Cabinet meeting by invitation.

Councillor Milnes summarised the Scrutiny and Overview Committee's revised work

programme for the next four months. He observed that, while the Authority had now adopted a pre-Scrutiny process, there remained a need to refer to documents issued, and decisions made, prior to that move. He said that Scrutiny and Overview Committee members needed as much notice as possible of issues to be considered by Cabinet. The Forward Plan could be more dynamic and informative and, following discussion with Democratic Services Officers, Councillor Milnes said that the Committee's workload would be addressed through the establishment, when appropriate, of Member-led Task and Finish Groups.

In reply, the Deputy Leader acknowledged that schedules inevitably were tight but that the new work practices would evolve given time. He accepted the comments about the Forward Plan and noted the point about Task and Finish Groups. He said that the new Administration's aim was to ensure clarity.

Councillor Philippa Hart engaged with Councillor Milnes in a brief discussion about his aspirations for the Forward Plan and undertook to find out what could be done to improve the situation.

Councillor Hazel Smith referred to measures being discussed by Housing officers to cope with decision-making where time was of the essence.

The Chief Executive welcomed the discussion and said that it demonstrated the need to evaluate support for the Scrutiny function.

7. **UPDATE TO SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S 'STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT' AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

Cabinet considered a report seeking its agreement to a partial update to the South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) 'Statement of Community Involvement' (SCI) concerning Neighbourhood Planning support. The reason was to ensure that the Council complies with new national regulations, pending the preparation of a new SCI later in 2018. The report also sought Cabinet's authority to review and update the decision-making process for Neighbourhood Planning so that the Council could in future make decisions as quickly as needed in the circumstances.

During the ensuing debate, the Planning Policy Manager made it clear that the approach adopted by officers was to guide Parish Councils rather than to provide direct help. Officers encouraged Parish Councils to take advantage of available grant funding to facilitate the engagement of planning consultants.

Cabinet

- (i) **Approved** the revised Support Offer to parish councils preparing neighbourhood plans as set out in Appendix A;
- (ii) **Approved** the addendum to the SCDC SCI 2010 as set out in Appendix B to this report;
- (iii) **Delegated** to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder, the decision making process for designating a Neighbourhood Area and how the council responds to

parish councils carrying out a pre-submission consultation on their Neighbourhood Plan; as set out in this report at paragraphs 26-33 and;

- (iv) **Delegated** to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder the making of a Neighbourhood Plan before it is referred to Full Council as set out in paragraph 34.

8. **RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT UTTLESFORD LOCAL PLAN (REG 19)**

Cabinet considered a report, amended because of its earlier consideration by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, and a short supplementary report which, together, focussed on the contents of the Pre-Submission Uttlesford Local Plan (Regulation 19) consultation as they affect South Cambridgeshire.

Councillor Brian Milnes outlined the observations made by members of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, and Councillor Anna Bradnam reminded those present about the report on this same topic in August 2017. The Deputy Leader said that any relevant aspect of the 2017 report would be incorporated into the new submission.

Cabinet said that certainty was needed in relation to transport infrastructure and the implications of development before necessary transport improvements.

Following further discussion, Cabinet **agreed**

1. That the Planning Policy Manager be requested to review and clarify the intent of the wording in revised paragraph 55 as presented to the meeting and that the Deputy Leader of the Council be authorised to confirm the wording of that paragraph having regard to the professional advice of the Planning Policy Manager;
2. That the following additional paragraph 61a be included in the response:

“Electricity Grid Capacity

61a The Council is aware that there are electricity grid capacity issues facing development in the southern part of South Cambridgeshire, which require investment from developers to facilitate grid reinforcement. It is important that Uttlesford District Council give consideration to whether energy infrastructure upgrades are required to support development in its district as part of infrastructure delivery planning, as the costs and timescales for grid reinforcement could have an impact on both development viability and delivery timescales.”; and

3. That subject to 1 and 2 above, the Council makes representations on the Uttlesford Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation consistent with the submitted report and particularly paragraphs 22 – 62.

9. **ECO HELP TO HEAT - FLEXIBLE ELIGIBILITY SCHEME (ECO FLEX)**

Cabinet considered a report proposing a process by which households could be identified as being eligible for support from suppliers under the ECO Help to Heat Flexible Eligibility scheme (ECO Flex) using agreed criteria. The report sought Cabinet's

authority for the Chief Executive to sign a joint cross-county Statement of Intent to that effect.

Councillor John Williams said that Cambridge City Council was urging more Housing Associations to sign up to the bid to increase the number of social housing tenants that could be supported.

Cabinet:

- (a) **Agreed** proposals to identify households as eligible for support from suppliers under the ECO Flex scheme; and
- (b) **Agreed** the criteria that is intended to be used to identify such households; and
- (c) **Authorised** the Chief Executive to sign a joint cross-county Statement of Intent to that effect; and
- (d) **Noted** and commented upon proposals for a bid from the Cambridgeshire Energy Partnership to the Warm Homes Fund; and
- (e) **Noted** proposals to create an 'Approved List' of installers who have been vetted by the Cambridgeshire Energy partnership.

10. ESTABLISHMENT OF BREXIT ADVISORY GROUP

Cabinet considered a report proposing the establishment of a cross-party Advisory Group to review and advise the Leader and Cabinet on the potential impact of Brexit on South Cambridgeshire.

Councillor John Williams asked whether local businesses would be involved in the Group's deliberations. In reply, the Deputy Leader said that it would be for the Brexit Advisory Group to determine the scope of its work.

Councillor Sue Ellington noted the intention to involve Cambridge City Council and suggested that that Council might want to be represented proportionately to its own membership. In reply, the Deputy Leader said that, while this was unnecessary, every effort would be made to achieve a representative composition overall.

Cabinet **agreed**

- (f) To establish a time limited Advisory Group to review and report on the potential impacts of Brexit on South Cambridgeshire and to recommend actions to mitigate those impacts where relevant and appropriate.
- (g) An advisory group comprising five Liberal Democrats, two Conservative and one Labour or Independent Member be established, together with the Leader as an additional Member and that the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader, be authorised to appoint Members on the basis of nominations from Group Leaders.
- (h) To delegate responsibility for devising the terms of reference of the Advisory Group to the Group and that these be submitted back to the September Cabinet for ratification.

- (i) To request that the Advisory Group consider the involvement of City Council Members.
- (j) That the Advisory Group operates on the basis of the procedures set out in Rule 4 of the Executive Procedure Rules.

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

Cabinet considered a report highlighting that South Cambridgeshire District Council faces an exciting but challenging future, operating in an environment with reducing resources and rising customer expectations. Officers had already begun to consider how best to meet these challenges and the report set out the next steps needed to make sure that the Authority was effectively resourced to face the future.

Cabinet noted the need to procure an independent assessment, at a cost of £50,000, to determine how the Council could best focus on delivering its priorities.

During the ensuing debate, Councillor Philippa Hart agreed with Councillor Anna Bradnam that staff should be involved in the process. Councillor Hart said that workshops would be set up to canvass the opinions of employees.

Cabinet **approved** a budget of £50,000 (fifty thousand pounds) to be sourced from the Business Efficiency Reserve so that the Head of the Paid Service could begin a procurement process.

12. PREPARING FOR 2018 AND BEYOND TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Cabinet **received and noted** the findings and recommendations of the elected member "Preparing for 2018 and Beyond" Task and Finish Group.

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