

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Monday, 3 June 2013 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Ray Manning (Leader of the Council)
Councillor Simon Edwards (Deputy Leader of the Council and Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder)

Councillors:	Pippa Corney	Planning Policy and Localism Portfolio Holder
	Mark Howell	Housing Portfolio Holder
	Mick Martin	Environmental Services Portfolio Holder
	David Whiteman-Downes	Corporate and Customer Services Portfolio Holder
	Tim Wotherspoon	Northstowe Portfolio Holder
	Nick Wright	Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Alex Colyer	Executive Director, Corporate Services
Jean Hunter	Chief Executive
Graham Aisthorpe-Watts	Democratic Services Team Leader
John Garnham	Head of Finance, Policy & Performance
Mike Hill	Health and Environmental Services Director
Richard May	Policy and Performance Manager
Jo Mills	Planning and New Communities Director

Councillors Alison Elcox, Sue Ellington, Sebastian Kindersley and Ben Shelton were in attendance, by invitation.

Procedural Items

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2013 were approved as a correct record for signing by the Leader of the Council.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sue Ellington declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute number 6 as a Member of the Swavesby Internal Drainage Board.

3. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Ray Manning, Leader of the Council, announced that Cambridgeshire County Council would be introducing a new online blogging facility later this month known as 'Shape Your Place'. This enabled residents to log-on to the blog and upload comments or views on issues relevant to their local areas, some of which were likely to be District Council responsibilities. The County Council had employed someone located in Cambourne to work on 'Shape Your Place' and the Leader suggested that they should be invited to be based from South Cambridgeshire Hall. More details about this new facility would be circulated to all District Councillors via the weekly bulletin.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received.

5. NORTHSTOWE: DELIVERY AND DRAINAGE REQUIREMENTS

Councillor Nick Wright declared a non-disclosable pecuniary interest in this item as he owned land that may or may not be affected by the proposed A14 Improvement Scheme. He indicated that he would therefore not vote on any aspect of this item relating to the A14.

Consideration was given to a report which provided Cabinet with an opportunity to consider the implications for the Council arising from the need to support funding for the range of community and infrastructure facilities in phase one of the Northstowe development. The report also sought endorsement of support for the A14 Improvement Scheme and requested authority to explore an appropriate mechanism to deliver the investment and development vehicle for phase two of the Northstowe development, as well as subsequent phases.

Due to the complexity of the nine recommendations contained within the report, Councillor Ray Manning, Leader of the Council, agreed that each would be debated and voted upon separately.

In presenting the aspects of the report relating to the first recommendation, regarding the A14 Improvement Scheme, Councillor Manning stated that details surrounding the financial implications of the scheme were unfortunately not available and the Council was still awaiting an announcement from Government. It was noted that detailed work had been proceeding on the basis of a tripartite funding split between central Government, the affected local authorities and income to be derived from tolling. A report on the scheme and funding details would be presented to Cabinet at a later stage, but Cabinet was being asked at this meeting to endorse the principle of the Council's support for the scheme and authorise officers to proceed to negotiate an agreement with the County Council for this purpose.

Councillor Sebastian Kindersley, Leader of the Opposition Group, referred to paragraph seven of the report which outlined that Cabinet Members were being asked to endorse the principle of the shared funding proposals and agree in principle to commit the District Council to a 25 year financial contribution. He questioned whether such a commitment should be made when the financial implications of the scheme were currently unavailable and was of the view that not providing this commitment would place the Council in a better position to negotiate in due course.

Members of Cabinet agreed that the District Council would be in a far stronger position to negotiate with Government by agreeing in principle to a financial commitment. Responding to Councillor Kindersley's concerns regarding a specific 25 year financial commitment, Cabinet agreed to retract paragraph seven from the report. It was emphasised that the Government had made it very clear that without a financial commitment from local authorities the A14 Improvement Scheme would not proceed. Councillor Simon Edwards, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, stated that this was about sending the right message to Government, with the agreement being in principle subject to a detailed scheme reported back to Cabinet and full Council in due course.

Cabinet **AGREED** in principle the Council's support for the A14 Improvement Scheme and **AUTHORISED** officers to proceed to negotiate an Agreement with the County Council for this purpose, subject to a detailed scheme to be reported to Cabinet and Council in due course.

(Note – further to his declaration of a non-disclosable pecuniary interest, Councillor Nick Wright did not take part in this vote.)

Councillor Tim Wotherspoon, Portfolio Holder for Northstowe, presented recommendations (b) and (c) of the report which both related to the first phase of the Northstowe development.

Councillor Wotherspoon explained that the Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee resolved to grant outline planning consent for phase one of the Northstowe development on 19 March 2013, subject to the successful negotiation of a Section 106 Agreement to secure required infrastructure and community facilities and the conclusion of a land transfer arrangement for the secondary school. There were areas where funding from the public, voluntary or community sector could improve a facility, either enhancing its specification or as part of a funding partnership. Councillor Wotherspoon reported that some of the items in the phase one application fell into this category and additional funding would be required, beyond the £30 million already pledged by the developers.

The estimate of additional funding for the essential infrastructure requirements for phase one, as reported to the Joint Development Control Committee in March 2013, amounted to approximately £2.3 million, together with the £30 million offered by the developer. Cabinet was therefore being asked to approve the principle of the allocation of £3 million of funding to provide the backstop for bringing forward the essential facilities at times appropriate to meet the needs of the emerging community.

Cabinet: -

- **NOTED** on-going negotiation on the Section 106 Agreement for Northstowe, including the need to meet the required funding in order to provide the essential requirements for the first phase as set out in Appendix B of the report approved by the Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee on 19 March 2013.
- **AUTHORISED** the allocation of up to £3 million funding with the County Council to cover the balance of the estimated funding required for the implementation of the first phase of community facilities, subject to a detailed report being submitted back to Cabinet.

Councillor Ray Manning presented recommendations (d), (e) and (f) of the report, all of which related to the long-term drainage solution for Northstowe, including settlements within the drainage catchment area, and the Webbs Hole sluice pump.

During discussion Members agreed that having funds provided or underwritten by the Council upfront would assist in moving this issue forward, but shared the view that the Internal Drainage Board should be seen as the body taking on this responsibility. It was noted that the District Council had the power to implement special expenses to Internal Drainage Boards in the form of a levy should this be necessary.

Recommendation (d) referred to the allocation of £780,000 for the repayment of the Local Enterprise Partnership loan and attention was drawn to the fact that this would not come from the first phase of the Northstowe development.

Cabinet: -

- **AUTHORISED** the allocation of funding of £780,000 in order to underwrite the repayment of the Local Enterprise Partnership loan for the purposes of implementing the Webbs Hole sluice pump project as part of the long-term drainage solution for Northstowe and settlements within the drainage catchment area.
- **AUTHORISED** the allocation of funding of £500,000 for the purpose of funding the maintenance of the Webbs Hole sluice pump for a period of 100 years and **NOTED** that officers would continue to seek to identify a partner to take on this maintenance responsibility.
- **AGREED** that the District Council would take on the responsibility for the operation and practical maintenance of the Webbs Hole sluice pump and related works, to be funded from Section 106 Agreement monies and/or special expenses to be applied in the Internal Drainage Board area, until such time that officers secure a management arrangement with a suitable body as a long-term solution.

Councillor Mark Howell, Portfolio Holder for Housing, presented recommendations (g) and (h) which both involved the establishment of a joint venture to invest in and develop the post phase one development of Northstowe.

Cabinet: -

- **AUTHORISED** officers to develop Heads of Terms in order to enter into an Agreement with the Homes and Communities Agency and Cambridgeshire County Council for the purposes of establishing a joint venture to invest in and develop the post phase 1 development of Northstowe, to be reported to Cabinet at a future meeting.
- **AUTHORISED** the principle of the allocation of £25 million from the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan approved by Council in February 2013 for the purposes of the District Council's investment in the Joint Venture delivery vehicle.

Councillor Nick Wright, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economic Development presented the final recommendation of the report which sought endorsement of the principle to support a thriving business community.

Cabinet **ENDORSED** the principle of supporting a thriving business community and **INSTRUCTED** officers to consider schemes to incentivise businesses to locate and develop in Northstowe from the early days of the development.

6. CITY DEAL: UPDATE

Cabinet considered a report which informed Members of the progress of work to date on a Greater Cambridge City Deal and sought approval for continuing negotiations with local partners and Government.

Councillor Ray Manning, Leader of the Council, presented the report and stated that the timeframes reported to Cabinet in January 2013 still applied, with implementation plans scheduled for agreement and signing off in September or November 2013. He had anticipated more details being available at this stage, but unfortunately this had not

proved possible. The next step would be to develop a Negotiation Document ready for presenting to a Ministerial meeting currently due to take place on 4 July 2013.

It was noted that the City Deal board consisted of the Chairman of the Local Enterprise Partnership, the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University and the Leaders of Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Cabinet: -

- (a) **DELEGATED** to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to continue to work on a full City Deal with the Government and partners, bringing core aspects of the negotiating position to a future meeting of Cabinet, and any final City Deal to full Council for approval.
- (b) **NOTED** progress on work taken place to date on the City Deal.

Information Item

7. CORPORATE PLAN 2012/2013: REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE

Cabinet considered a report which summarised performance against the Council's key actions for 2012/13 as set out in the Corporate Plan 2012-17.

Councillor David Whiteman-Downes, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Customer Services, in presenting the report stated that it demonstrated the significant progress the Council had made against the majority of its actions during 2012/13. He made specific reference to the following: -

- the Council's Web Team successfully launched the authority's new website, under difficult circumstances, and had significantly increased the uptake of mobile users due to the way in which it had been designed. The website sought to make the Council's services as accessible as possible to everyone, with work currently taking place on a number of projects such as the introduction of 'smart' e-forms;
- the return of the in-house Contact Centre was one of the Council's major successes last year and had saved the authority a huge amount of money whilst performing well.

Councillor Whiteman-Downes acknowledged that particular areas for improvement remained and said it was important not to become complacent. For example, there were issues with the Call Centre in respect of call waiting times and the length of time it sometimes took for callers to get through. One explanation for this, however, was that the Call Centre acted as the first point of contact for the Council with calls being resolved at that stage rather than being transferred through to the back office.

Councillor Simon Edwards, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, referred to the reduction in staff sickness absence rates, which the Council had been working very hard to address through its policies and strategies, and congratulated management and staff for putting those initiatives in place. He also reported that the Council's Business Rate collection rate was 99.5% as opposed to the 99.2% stated in the report, which he said was a fantastic achievement. Councillor Edwards anticipated

that the year ahead would be difficult from a rate collection perspective due to changes such as welfare reform and accepted that performance levels may drop. He did consider altering the performance target to reflect this, but instead agreed to maintain the current target for twelve months so that performance against 2012/13 could be accurately measured. The District Council had also featured in the national press as an exemplar authority for rate collection and Cabinet expressed its thanks to the team.

Cabinet **NOTED** the report.

Standing Items

8. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Councillor Ben Shelton, in his capacity as the former Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, referred Members to minute number 74 of the previous meeting of Cabinet and provided an update on two pieces of work relating to Information Communications Technology.

An informal working group, chaired by Councillor Douglas de Lacey, undertook a piece of work on tendering and procurement processes with regard to the Council's website, intranet and other Information Technology systems, which had produced some very useful outcomes.

A second group was yet to meet to consider what the Council did with its redundant Information Technology equipment. The newly elected Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee had indicated that this piece of work would be reconsidered at the committee's next meeting.

9. UPDATES FROM CABINET MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

No updates were reported.

10. REPORTS FROM CABINET MEMBERS ATTENDING PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Councillor Pippa Corney, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy and Localism, reported that she had recently attended a meeting of Waterbeach Parish Council.

11. REPORTS FROM MEMBER CHAMPIONS

Councillor Ben Shelton, Member Champion for Policing, informed Cabinet that there would be more input from the District Council and Neighbourhood Watch schemes at future meetings of the Neighbourhood Policing Panel, which would be changing its format in September 2013. The Panel was also considering the use of Survey Monkey to facilitate more feedback from members of the public on crime and disorder related matters.

The Meeting ended at 7.35 p.m.
