

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Thursday, 10 July 2014 at 6.00 p.m.

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

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

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

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

Councillors David Bard, Kevin Cuffley, Alison Elcox, Sue Ellington, Lynda Harford, Cicely Murfitt and John Williams were in attendance, by invitation.

Procedural Items

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 2014 were agreed as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Ray Manning, Leader of the Council, announced that the Greater Cambridge City Deal had been signed by the Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP (Deputy Prime Minister), the Rt Hon Greg Clark MP (Minister for Cities and the Constitution), Councillor Steve Count (Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council), Councillor Lewis Herbert (Leader of Cambridgeshire City Council), Jeremy Sanders (Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of Cambridge) and himself as Leader of South Cambridgeshire District Council. The Council would be asked to formally approve its commitment to the City Deal at a meeting of Full Council later in the year.

Councillor Manning also announced that the Leader of the City Council had suggested celebrating the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II with two events, one in South Cambridgeshire and one in the City of Cambridge on VE Day and VJ Day. It was

agreed that a Member working group would be established to plan these events, in partnership with the City Council.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received.

5. LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN & LONG TERM TRANSPORT STRATEGY: RESPONSE TO CONSULTATIONS

Councillor Tim Wotherspoon, Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Transportation, presented a report which set out the Council's draft response to Cambridgeshire County Council's consultation on the Local Transport Plan 2011-31 Policies and Strategies document and Long Term Transport Strategy.

In discussing the content of the report and the recommended response, Members suggested the following amendments:

- reference to the Council's disappointment at the removal of the South Cambridgeshire Community Transport Strategy should be strengthened;
- more emphasis should be placed on the value and importance of the Oxford to Cambridge railway link;
- reference to the A428 corridor as the District Council's main priority for transport planning in the near future should be refined.

Cabinet **AGREED**:

- (a) The response to Cambridgeshire County Council, as set out in paragraphs 20 – 23 and Appendix 1 of the report.
- (b) That delegated authority be given to the Director of Planning and New Communities to make further technical comments, including those put forward by Cabinet Members at the meeting, in consultation with the Strategic Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder.

6. PRIORITIES FOR 'AGEING WELL', 'CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES', 'HEALTH & WELLBEING' AND 'COMMUNITIES & LOCALISM'

Councillor Mick Martin, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, presented a report which sought agreement to adopt the Joint Portfolio Holder Task and Finish Group recommendations on corporate priorities for 'Ageing Well', 'Children, Young People and Families', 'Health and Wellbeing' and 'Communities and Localism'.

It was noted that the Sustainable Communities and Partnership teams had recently merged, saving £100,000 in efficiency savings as a direct result. Cabinet had agreed to review the new team's work priorities via a Joint Portfolio Holder Task and Finish Group under the Portfolios responsible for the service areas of Planning and New Communities and Environmental Services.

The Task and Finish Group met four times over four months with a dedicated officer working group working alongside it to develop the work and direction set by Members. A significant amount of information gathering took place as part of this piece of work and key data that informed Task and Finish Group Members' views on priorities included:

- educational attainment of South Cambridgeshire children and young people in receipt of free school meals being significantly below the all-England average. This had implications for future South Cambridgeshire District Council spend on benefits and on the development of skills needed to support economic prosperity and growth;
- the 19 – 25 age group was the most likely to be a repeat ‘victim of crime’ in South Cambridgeshire. Vulnerable young people in this age group were also at the greatest risk of being ‘lost to the system’, as they were no longer supported by Children’s Services after the age of 18;
- routine and manual workers in South Cambridgeshire continued to have higher than average rates of smoking. This group should be the target for smoking-cessation activities through ‘health and safety at work’ advice;
- having a fall was a key trigger for elderly residents accessing social care and health services. South Cambridgeshire District Council should therefore continue to focus on preventing and reducing falls, particularly amongst older tenants.

The Council’s corporate outcomes and ambitions for ‘Ageing Well’, ‘Children, Young People and Families’, ‘Health and Wellbeing’ and ‘Communities and Localism’ were set out in Appendix 1 of the report, together with outline action plans for each at Appendix 2, all of which had been developed as a result of this piece of work.

Cabinet AGREED:

- (a) The outcomes and ambitions and outline action plans set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report as the South Cambridgeshire District Council priorities for ‘Ageing Well’, ‘Children, Young People and Families’, ‘Health and Wellbeing’ and ‘Communities and Locality Working’, to be delivered as part of the 2014-19 Corporate Plan.
- (b) That the reorganisation of resources within the Sustainable Communities and Partnerships Team to support delivery of the recommendations in the report be delegated to the Director of Health and Environmental Services, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders.

7. SHARED SERVICES

Councillor Ray Manning, Leader of the Council, presented a report which set out progress to date on proposed shared services and next steps in relation to Building Control, ICT and Legal services. The report also sought approval to form a strategic shared services partnership with Huntingdonshire District Council, whilst continuing to work with the City Council on services where there was a business case and a shared desire to work together.

Councillor Manning felt that it was important for the three authorities to work closer together, with shared services being the best way of achieving this. He stated that regular meetings would be held between the Leaders of the respective Councils, but emphasised that the shared services proposals set out within the report did not necessarily mean that each shared service would involve all three Councils.

Referring to the proposal for ICT, it was noted that research demonstrated ICT as being one of the most significant barriers to progress on other shared services and should therefore be an early priority in any shared services programme. The direct and indirect cost of ICT services within Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Huntingdonshire District Council totalled £6.1 million. Even a 10%

reduction in the annual cost would achieve savings in excess of £600,000 per annum across the three Councils, in addition to creating more potential to unlock other savings and income.

Councillor Manning reported that both Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridge City Council had expressed a desire to work with South Cambridgeshire District Council to develop a shared Legal service. Initial work had been carried out across the three authorities with regard to current functions and responsibilities, which indicated that the collective costs of the services were in the region of £1.7 million. Members noted that further work would be required to develop proposals, given the complexity of the services.

Cabinet:

- (a) **FORMED** a strategic shared services partnership with Huntingdonshire District Council, whilst continuing to work with the City Council on services where there was a business case and shared desire to work together.
- (b) **AGREED** to the setting up of a joint informal steering group with the Leaders and/or Portfolio Holders to oversee progress and report back to the respective Cabinets and decision-making bodies.
- (c) **ENDORSED** Phase 1 of a shared services programme incorporating Legal, ICT and Building Control.
- (d) **AGREED** to initial funding of up to £50,000 for project management costs from the Council Actions budget for 2014/15, noting that it should be possible to offset this investment either from external funding or efficiency savings.

8. SHARED SERVICE: BUILDING CONTROL

Councillor Pippa Corney, Portfolio Holder for Planning, presented a report which sought approval to develop a business case for a shared Local Authority Building Control Service between Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils, including use of the South Norfolk mobile working solution, and to work towards an Eastern Region Building Control partnership arrangement.

A number of options for areas of further investigation in this respect were set out in the report. Subject to approval at this meeting, it was noted that the business cases for each option would be submitted to Cabinet later in the year for consideration.

Cabinet **AGREED**:

- (a) To the development of a business case for a shared Local Authority Building Control Service with Huntingdonshire District Council.
- (b) For this business case to include a viability assessment of the IT solution developed by South Norfolk District Council.
- (c) For the Council to work with interested local authorities from Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire to develop a proposal for a Local Authority Building Control cluster to operate within a regional network supported by South Norfolk District Council.

- (d) For the Council to work with South Norfolk District Council and other interested local authorities to develop a proposal for an Eastern Region Approved Inspector Company that will interact with the Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire Local Authority Building Control cluster.

9. CAMBRIDGE CITY & SOUTH CAMBS JOINT WASTE WORKING

Councillor Mick Martin, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, presented a report which provided an update on work to explore the creation of a single, shared waste service between South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council and sought support for continuing work to develop a final business case.

In presenting the report, Councillor Martin informed Members that the aim and vision of the proposal was to create a single waste service, wholly owned and run by the local authorities, with a single management structure and workforce located on one site using a single pool of vehicles.

Councillor Martin highlighted that the initial work undertaken suggested ongoing financial savings of around £170,000 per annum. In addition, he considered that the net cost of the service could be further reduced by:

- cross boundary optimisation of rounds. An initial study indicated a potential saving of a minimum of two rounds at a saving of £150,000 per round, however, Councillor Martin reported that further data collated by South Cambridgeshire District Council indicated that it may be possible to achieve up to three times that amount;
- improved income on trade waste activity;
- consolidation and reducing of other support costs wherever practical.

Councillor Martin referred to paragraph 12 of the report which set out the anticipated approach to governance. He made it clear that both the District Council and City Council recognised the importance of effective and transparent governance, stating that this was an important piece of work that was still left to do. Both Councils would also make the quality of service the number one priority and Councillor Martin said that the level of service to customers would not be diminished as a result of this shared waste service.

Discussion ensued on the content of the report and the following comments were noted:

- it was important that the shared service arrangement maintained the same level of first class service to customers;
- it was good that, in effect, local authority boundaries were being removed with regard to waste collection as there were some instances whereby one side of a street's bins was emptied by the City Council, with the other side emptied by South Cambridgeshire District Council because of the way the boundary-line sat. This new proposed way of working would make much more sense from the customer perspective;
- a new European Union directive meant that the recycling target for local authorities had been increased to 70%. The Portfolio Holders of both Councils as part of the shared service arrangement would be accountable for ensuring that this target was met;
- the disparity for trade waste between the two Councils would be confirmed and included as part of the final business case;

- building a common culture between the workforces of the two Councils and bringing ways of working together, including the amalgamation of good practice from the two authorities, could take some time. This would be supported via a stage by stage approach, but Councillor Martin was not underestimating how long it may take to blend these things together.

Councillor Manning, Leader of the Council, invited Simon Payne, Director of Environment at Cambridge City Council, to address the meeting. Mr Payne said that this was an extremely exciting opportunity for the two authorities and that the proposal would really deliver savings, improve income and hopefully improve service quality. He added that the two Councils had worked very well together through the Strategic Board.

It was noted that the proposals contained within the report had been supported by the Council's Partnerships Review Committee, as well as the City Council's Environment Scrutiny Committee.

Cabinet **AGREED**:

- (a) To work with officers at the City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council to prepare a final business case for co-location of current services and the creation of a Single Shared Waste Service based at Waterbeach and that this be reported back to both authorities for a final decision in October 2014.
- (b) That the organisational model to be explored in the final business case for the Single Shared Waste Service is a single management structure, employed by one single Council, with staff on separate terms and conditions linked to either the City Council or South Cambridgeshire District Council, leading to a single organisation wholly run and managed by the two Councils.

10. NORTHSTOWE: INVESTMENT AND DELIVERY

Councillor Tim Wotherspoon, Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Transportation, presented a report which set out the emerging options for the future delivery of Northstowe, including a Joint Venture with the Homes and Communities Agency and Cambridgeshire County Council. The report also sought approval for guidelines on the use of shared branding for Northstowe, as well as endorsement for work on public service and town centre proposals.

Councillor Wotherspoon reminded Cabinet that approval was given in June 2013 for officers to work with the Homes and Communities Agency and Cambridgeshire County Council to develop Heads of Terms for a joint venture to invest in and develop Northstowe. A principle investment of £25 million from the Housing Revenue Account in the joint venture vehicle was also approved at that time. The Homes and Communities Agency had asked both South Cambridgeshire District Council and the County Council to confirm support in principle for investment in a proposed Northstowe Joint Venture. Cabinet noted the Council's two main objectives for investing in Northstowe, as follows:

- to facilitate and influence the deliverability and quality of development at Northstowe, at the same time as bringing forward much needed housing;
- to make a return on the money invested.

Discussions with the Homes and Communities Agency and the County Council about the form that a joint venture could take had resulted in the following two options:

- a contractual joint venture. This would not be a true joint venture but would be governed by a Memorandum of Understanding between the partners. Individual contracts would be entered into between partners relating to use of land and buildings in discrete development projects. The Councils would have first refusal of investment but would be under no obligation to invest;
- a corporate joint venture. This would establish a separate legal entity with all three parties transferring their land and assets into the joint venture. Each partner would be represented on the Joint Venture Board with voting rights and profit share proportional to the investment of land and other assets.

Whilst the Council was not committed to enter into either joint venture option at this stage, the three partner organisations were all working to a shared timetable, with the Homes and Communities Agency scheduled to present a new Northstowe business case to its Investment Board on 10 July 2014 and the County Council having already presented a report to its General Purposes Committee on 1 July 2014.

In respect of delivery options going forward, the Directors from the County and District Councils had worked with the Homes and Communities Agency to identify options for the joint delivery vehicle. They had suggested that the Council could invest in either type from the following three sources:

- the Housing Revenue Account;
- the Housing Company;
- prudential borrowing.

Councillor Wotherspoon outlined that Northstowe provided a unique opportunity to both relocate and redesign public services for a new town centre. The town centre would be developed during the second phase with the planning application for this phase due for submission in July 2014 and determination by July 2015. Over the next six months a strategy for the delivery of public services would be developed by the District and County Councils, together with the NHS and other parties and this would consider proposals for relocating services to Northstowe and reshaping services.

Cabinet also noted the guidelines in relation to the proposed branding for Northstowe, which would sit alongside a wider Communications Strategy for the new town.

Cabinet:

- (a) **APPROVED** the development of detailed proposals and a business case for the proposed Northstowe Joint Delivery Vehicle, subject to the decision of the Homes and Communities Agency Investment Board at its meeting on 10 July 2014, and the Cambridgeshire County Council General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 1 July 2014.
- (b) **NOTED** the delivery and disposal options for Northstowe that will be presented to the Homes and Communities Agency Investment Board on 10 July 2014.
- (c) **ENDORSED** work to develop options for the design and delivery of services in Northstowe town centre, to be the subject of a further report in January 2015.
- (d) **APPROVED** the use of shared branding for Northstowe, subject to the guidelines set out in paragraph 31(a) of the report.

11. SUBSCRIPTION TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION'S BONDS AGENCY

Councillor Simon Edwards, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, presented a report to consider whether the Council should participate in the Local Government Association's Bond Agency as a founder member.

Councillor Edwards reported that the broad principle of the Local Government Association's Bonds Agency was that it would raise capital on the financial markets through the sale of bonds and on-lend the proceeds to eligible councils at a lower rate than the Public Works Loan Board or than if the councils were to issue their own bonds. The revised business case summary for the Bonds Agency was appended to the report.

South Cambridgeshire District Council had an opportunity to invest as a founder member by subscribing to the initial Equity Offering. The minimum subscription was £10,000, but Councillor Edwards proposed investing up to £50,000 to this offer. In accordance with the Council's Constitution and Financial Regulations, Cabinet could invest a maximum of £50,000 at this stage without having to seek further approval by Full Council.

Cabinet:

- (a) **APPROVED** the investment of up to £50,000 in shares in the Local Government Association's Bonds Agency.
- (b) **DELEGATED** the final decision on investment to the Executive Director (Corporate Services) in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

12. POSITION STATEMENT: FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE 2013/14 - Q4

Cabinet considered a report which set out a statement on the Council's position with regard to its General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, capital expenditure and requests for budget rollovers from 2013-14 to 2014-15. The report also presented the Council's year-end position with regard to its corporate objectives and performance indicators.

Councillor Simon Edwards, Deputy Leader and Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder, presented the financial elements of the report, specifically highlighting the following:

- vacancies and other in-year changes to staffing budgets had resulted in savings of £218,100;
- improved economic conditions had resulted in lower payments than anticipated to benefits claimants. With recovery of amounts previously paid, to which there was no entitlement, and other income, a saving of £295,200 had been achieved which demonstrated that the Council had implemented benefits reform smoothly and effectively;
- the refuse collection and recycling service as a result of reduced staffing and fuel costs, through managing staff numbers and flexible working and increased trade refuse income, provided savings of £60,500;
- planning income was £746,800 more than originally estimated due to a number of large fees relating to planning permission for solar panel developments;
- the effect of the new retained non-domestic rates system, the operation of which had been devolved to councils for the first time in 2013-14, had been £550,000 more than estimated mainly due to refunds to ratepayers as agreed by the Valuation Officer relating to previous years. It was emphasised that this was money being paid out by the Council, not received.

In respect of the Housing Revenue Account, payments to tenants for moving to enable re-development were £191,700 less than estimated. Additional income of £207,300 had been received due to a combination of better void turn-around and rental amounts for re-let properties being higher. £1,378,000 of capital expenditure did not have to be funded from revenue due to 'right to buy' sales being greater than anticipated. These factors had enabled £1,500,000 to be transferred to the Investment Reserve.

Regarding capital, Councillor Edwards reported that the new homes programme was scheduled to take place over several years and continued to be developed. The Linton scheme had been completed in-year and other schemes were being prepared, with a further new scheme having been identified for 2014-15. It was also noted that some ICT projects had been postponed due to awareness that the vendor was making changes to products and services, making it more viable to defer and buy updated versions when available.

Details of proposed budget rollovers from 2013-14 to 2014-15 were set out in Appendix C to the report.

Councillor Whiteman-Downes, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Customer Services, presented the performance elements of the report, further to which the following points were noted:

- the Council had progressed key actions within its Corporate Plan for 2013-18, with detailed commentary on achievements against each action set out in Appendix D to the report;
- in monitoring a suite of key performance indicators to assist in maintaining a strategic overview of organisational health, the Council had performed strongly, meeting and surpassing targets, in the following areas:
 - rent collection;
 - Council Tax collection;
 - benefits processing;
 - customer contact service first time call resolution;
 - determining 'other' (householder) planning applications;
 - helping households avoid homelessness;
 - reducing staff sickness absence;
 - missed bins per 100,000;
 - number of affordable homes delivered;
 - average days to re-let general needs housing;
- performance was below target and intervention levels in respect of the following areas:
 - staff turnover;
 - households in temporary accommodation;
 - percentage of household waste for reuse, recycling and composting.

Commentaries on those areas of underperformance were included as part of the report.

Discussion ensued on the staff survey, further to a request put forward by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee to be involved in its development. Councillor Simon Edwards reported that he was keen to involve Members of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee as much as he could in the development of the survey, but that this would be undertaken on an informal basis.

Cabinet:

- (a) **NOTED** the provisional 2013-14 outturn position statement, together with performance information.
- (b) **APPROVED** the capital and revenue budget rollovers totalling £1,020,110, as listed in Appendix C of the report, to be carried forward into the 2014-15 financial year.

13. CORPORATE FORWARD LOOK AND STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

Councillor David Whiteman-Downes, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Customer Services, presented a report which set the scene for the refresh of the Council's Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy and sought approval of the Strategic Risk Register.

In terms of the financial and policy context, the refresh would bring together an assessment of the national picture, updated profiles of the district's population, health, qualifications and economy, an updated Strategic Risk Register and Matrix together with local priorities set out in the Corporate Plan for 2015-2020. The review of the corporate cycle would provide a timetable for the preparation of, and consultation on, the refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy and Corporate Plan, linking in with the service planning process.

Cabinet:

- (a) **NOTED** the policy and financial context for the annual refresh of the Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- (b) **ENDORSED** the provisional priority areas identified in paragraph 21 of the report.
- (c) **AGREED** the corporate cycle as referred to in paragraphs 22 – 27 and Appendix F of the report.
- (d) **APPROVED** the Strategic Risk Register and Matrix set out in Appendices D and E of the report.

Standing Items

14. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

No issues arising from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee were reported.

15. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE PARTNERSHIPS REVIEW COMMITTEE

No issues arising from the Partnerships Review Committee were reported.

16. UPDATES FROM CABINET MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Tim Wotherspoon, Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Transportation, reported that he had recently attended the very successful London-Stansted-Cambridge-Consortium Conference 2014. He had been invited, on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council, as a speaker and also chaired one of the sessions as part of the Conference.

17. REPORTS FROM CABINET MEMBERS ATTENDING PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Councillor Mark Howell, Portfolio Holder for Housing, reported that he had recently attended a meeting of Bourn Parish Council.

18. REPORTS FROM MEMBER CHAMPIONS

No reports from Member Champions were received.

19. FUTURE MEETING DATES

Future meeting dates were **AGREED** as follows:

- 11 September 2014 – 6pm
- 16 October 2014 – 6pm
- 13 November 2014 – 2pm
- 15 January 2015 – 2pm
- 12 February 2015 – 2pm
- 9 April 2015 – 6pm

The Meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.
