

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on  
Thursday, 13 November 2014 at 2.00 p.m.

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

<b>Councillors:</b>	Mark Howell	Housing Portfolio Holder
	Mick Martin	Environmental Services Portfolio Holder
	Robert Turner	Planning 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
Richard May	Policy and Performance Manager
Fiona McMillan	Legal & Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer
Jo Mills	Planning and New Communities Director
Graham Watts	Democratic Services Team Leader

Councillors David Bard, Anna Bradnam, Sue Ellington, Lynda Harford, Cicely Murfitt and Buntly Waters were in attendance, by invitation.

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### **Procedural Items**

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

No apologies for absence were received.

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

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 October 2014 were signed as a correct record.

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

No declarations of interest were made at this stage of proceedings.

#### **4. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

No announcements were made.

#### **5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No public questions had been received.

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## Operational Items

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### 6. GREATER CAMBRIDGE CITY DEAL: GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Councillor Ray Manning, Leader of the Council, presented a report which set out some slight amendments to the draft Terms of Reference for the Greater Cambridge City Deal Executive Board and Assembly proposed to be established as part of the governance arrangements for the Greater Cambridge City Deal.

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED** that Full Council approves the amended Terms of Reference for the Greater Cambridge City Deal Executive Board and Assembly, as appended to the report.

### 7. CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITIES 2015-2020

Consideration was given to a report which provided Cabinet with an opportunity to consider and agree the draft Corporate Plan for 2015-2020 for consultation, comprising the Council's vision, aims and objectives.

Councillor David Whiteman-Downes, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Customer Services, presented the report and took Members through the draft Plan itself which was attached to the report. He also sought confirmation of Cabinet's support for, and participation in, a local alliance to lobby the Government to commit to early investment and improvements on the A428.

During discussion it was suggested that other key routes not specifically included in the Greater Cambridge City Deal, such as the A505, should not be overlooked. In terms of the A428, a view was put forward that the Corporate Plan should specify which part of the A428 it was referring to and whether this meant the stretch of road from the City of Cambridge to Caxton Gibbet roundabout, the Caxton Gibbet roundabout to the Black Cat roundabout, or the entire road.

Cabinet:

- (a) **AGREED** the Council's draft Corporate Plan 2015-2020, consisting of its Vision, Aims and Objectives, as the strategic planning framework for the authority for consultation and development and the preparation of draft 2015-16 service plans, as set out in Appendix A of the report.
- (b) **AUTHORISED** the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Corporate and Customer Services Portfolio Holder, to make further editing changes to the draft, which may become necessary prior to publication.
- (c) **CONFIRMED** its support for, and participation in, a consortium of key partners including neighbouring authorities, the Highways Agency and local Members of Parliament, to lobby government for early investment and improvements on the A428 to support the continued growth and prosperity of the area in pursuance of current and proposed Corporate Plan objectives, specifically the inclusion of funding for upgrade work within its forthcoming spending plans.

### 8. REVIEW OF MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2014-15

Cabinet considered a report which provided Members with an update on the Council's General Fund forecasts and underpinning assumptions, together with their impact on the authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Councillor Simon Edwards, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, presented the report and highlighted the following key points:

- the Medium Term Financial Strategy took into account further reductions in Revenue Support Grant, reflecting an assumption that it would reduce further year by year until it was removed altogether by 2019/20;
- less reliance on government grant and the balancing of the Council's budget was the main aim of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The draft was on target to hit the minimum balance by the end of the Strategy in 2019/20;
- additional income or savings identified for 2014/15 had already been achieved and further targets for 2016/17 had been identified;
- for comparative purposes, appended to the report were separate Medium Term Financial Strategies for the General Fund. One assumed a council tax increase of 2% in 2015/16 whereas the other assumed a council tax freeze in 2015/16. A council tax freeze would mean that the current additional income and savings target of £1.170 million would need to increase to £1.315 million. It was unclear at this stage, however, what the Government was prepared to offer as an incentive by way of a council tax freeze, if anything at all;
- the Medium Term Financial Strategy included a £5 million 'local contribution' towards the cost of the A14 upgrade scheme, which was reflected as coming from the New Homes Bonus infrastructure reserve;
- Cabinet had already approved the development of detailed proposals and a business case for the Northstowe Joint Delivery Vehicle. A draft timetable for the business planning cycle was set out in the report and a further report on this issue would be presented to Cabinet at the earliest opportunity;
- the planning enforcement reserve cap was considered to be too high at £1 million and would be reduced to £500,000 which, following a risk analysis, should be sufficient. Two additional officers on two-year fixed term contracts would be appointed to facilitate closer working with parishes and communities and identify sites for development. The cost of the two posts could be met from the savings arising from reducing the planning enforcement reserve. Councillor Edwards emphasised that these would be new posts on fixed term contracts;
- the Medium Term Financial Strategy included an investment of £500,000 in solar panel arrays at the South Cambridgeshire Hall car park and at the Waterbeach depot with a view to reducing energy costs and derive future income streams.

Cabinet:

- (a) **NOTED** the General Fund forecasts at Appendices A1 and A2 of the report.
- (b) **APPROVED** the assumptions underpinning the Medium Term Financial Strategy at Appendices B1 and B2 of the report;
- (c) **AUTHORISED** the Chief Executive, as head of paid service, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to implement the staffing changes identified as required in the report.
- (d) **APPROVED** the inclusion of £500,000 in the draft Capital Programme for

potential solar panel arrays at the South Cambridgeshire Hall car park and Waterbeach depot.

- (e) **INSTRUCTED** the Head of Finance, Policy and Performance to bring forward detailed draft estimates for 2015-16 based on the assumptions and issues contained in the report for consideration by Cabinet in the New Year.

## 9. **POSITION STATEMENT: FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RISK 2014/15 Q2**

Consideration was given to a report which provided Cabinet with a statement on the Council's position with regard to its General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital budgets, together with progress on corporate objectives, performance indicators and strategic risks.

Councillor Simon Edwards, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, presented the financial elements of the report and took Members through the projected outturn compared to original estimates for the General Fund. He reported that the General Fund was projected to have a deficit for 2014/15 of £792,400, however, £1,746,000 related to prior year items that had an accounting effect on the General Fund for this financial year. This meant that the working position was a £953,600 favourable variance. The General Fund variance was mainly due to additional planning application income, above what was originally expected, in respect of solar farms.

Councillor David Whiteman-Downes, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Customer Services, presented the performance and strategic risk elements of the report to Cabinet, specifically highlighting that the Strategic Risk Register had been amended to take into account shared service initiatives with other Councils.

It was noted that the determination of planning applications fell below target in all categories during the second quarter of 2014/15. Councillor Robert Turner, Portfolio Holder for Planning, explained that there were a number of contributory factors including a focus on the way in which the Council handled pre-applications. Two additional experienced Planning Officers and a new post of Business Excellence Manager were in the process of being recruited and it was expected that these staff would help to ensure improved performance during the latter part of the year. Councillor Turner also highlighted that the Council had determined more applications this year than in previous years.

Cabinet:

- (a) **NOTED** the Council's provisional financial outturn position, together with the performance and risk matters and contextual information set out in the report and Appendices A – C.
- (b) **APPROVED** the Strategic Risk Register and Matrix set out in Appendices D to E of the report.

## 10. **SHARED SERVICE: BUILDING CONTROL**

Councillor Robert Turner, Portfolio Holder for Planning, presented a report which outlined recommendations for consideration by Cabinet following work that had taken place on the business case for a Building Control shared service between South Cambridgeshire District Council and Huntingdonshire District Council. Attached to the covering report as an appendix was a joint report from the Leaders of

both Councils setting out a number of options to consider, including:

- developing a business case for a shared local authority Building Control service between South Cambridgeshire District Council and Huntingdonshire District Council;
- for the business case to include a viability assessment of the ICT solution developed by South Norfolk District 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;
- to work with South Norfolk District Council and other interested local authorities to develop a proposal for an Eastern Region Approved Inspector Company, that would interact with the Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire local authority Building Control cluster.

Councillor Turner expressed his excitement at the prospect of developing this shared Building Control service with Huntingdonshire District Council. He reported that he had recently attended a meeting of the Agents' Forum which had provided significant challenge but was extremely useful.

In answer to a question about potential branding for the shared service, it was noted that the Building Control teams from both Councils had recently held a joint meeting where staff themselves asked when work could commence on a marketing strategy. The marketing strategy, including any potential branding, was therefore already being looking into in conjunction with officers from the two Building Control teams.

Cabinet:

- (a) **AGREED** to the formation of a Shared Building Control Service with Huntingdonshire District Council and that South Cambridgeshire District Council should be the Lead Authority for this phase of implementation.
- (b) **DELEGATED** authority to the Director of Planning and New Communities, in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder, to implement a Building Control Shared Service between South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Councils.
- (c) **NOTED** the intended use of the Transformation Challenge Award to fund short term costs necessary to implement the Shared Building Control Service as determined by the Shared Service Board.
- (d) **AGREED** the approach set out in paragraphs 8 to 13 of the report, to underpin the further development of a Building Control Shared Service between South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Councils.
- (e) **AGREED** to progress a business case with Cambridge City Council to move towards a Shared Building Control Service involving all three Councils, which would be reported to the three Councils in Spring 2015.
- (f) **AGREED** that South Cambridgeshire District Council, as lead authority,

attend the Shadow Regional Board for Building Control, on behalf of Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridge City Council, in order to explore potential for a regional partnership, with any further such organisational arrangements being made by mutual agreement of both South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Councils and Cambridge City Council if it is involved in the Shared Service.

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### **Standing Items**

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#### **11. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

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

#### **12. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE PARTNERSHIPS REVIEW COMMITTEE**

No issues arising from the Partnerships Review Committee were reported.

#### **13. UPDATES FROM CABINET MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

Councillor Robert Turner, Portfolio Holder for Planning, reported that he had recently attended a meeting of the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership Board, where the Partnership's nominations for the proposed Greater Cambridge City Deal Assembly were announced.

#### **14. REPORTS FROM CABINET MEMBERS ATTENDING PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS**

No reports from Cabinet Members attending Parish Council meetings were received.

#### **15. REPORTS FROM MEMBER CHAMPIONS**

Councillor Tim Wotherspoon, Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Transportation, reported that he attended the English Heritage Conference on 12 November 2014.

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**The Meeting ended at 3.30 p.m.**

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