

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Thursday, 12 February 2015 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)

Councillors:	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
John Garnham	Head of Finance, Policy & Performance
Jean Hunter	Chief Executive
Fiona McMillan	Legal & Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer
Graham Watts	Democratic Services Team Leader

Councillors David Bard, Kevin Cuffley, Cicely Murfitt and Bridget Smith were in attendance, by invitation.

Procedural Items

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence had been received.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 November 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.

**Recommendations to
Council**

6. CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITIES 2015-2020

Cabinet considered a report which proposed changes to the Council's Corporate Plan.

Councillor David Whiteman-Downes, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Customer Services, presented the report and outlined that the draft version of the Plan had gone through a public consultation process between 1 December 2014 and 31 January 2015. Feedback received had been broadly supportive of the Council's identification of key objectives, with concerns raised around transport and housing which endorsed the high priority given to these items within the Plan.

A suggestion was made that the Plan should include, under the wellbeing section, reference to the impact of exploitation, trafficking and domestic abuse. It was noted that the Council did already work with partners to support victims of these crimes, but that they were not necessarily issues that the authority had direct influence over. It would therefore be difficult to include them as corporate priorities, but reassurance was given that the Council took such issues extremely seriously and would continue to work with partners where necessary.

Discussion ensued on the Green Deal initiative and the fact that this no longer featured in the Council's Corporate Plan. It was noted that the Green Deal was an ongoing piece of work that the Council would continue to be involved in, but it was no longer considered a corporate priority. Progress on the Green Deal would be reported through the Leader's Portfolio Holder meetings.

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED** to Council that the Corporate Plan setting out the Council's vision, objectives and actions for 2015-2020, and incorporating key performance measures under each aim, be approved as set out at Appendix 1 of the report.

7. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2015-16 INCLUDING COUNCIL TAX SETTING), HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (INCLUDING HOUSING RENTS), CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015/16-2019/20, LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL SETTLEMENT AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (REVISED 2014/15 AND 2015/16)

NOTE – Councillor Nick Wright declared a non-disclosable pecuniary interest in this item with regard to the A14 upgrade as he owned land that the new A14 would potentially go through.

Cabinet considered a report which set out the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Councillor Simon Edwards, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, in presenting the report, circulated the following documents at the meeting:

- a revised section of the report to correct typographical errors in the amounts quoted in paragraphs 21 and 25 of Appendix B;
- a revised version of Appendix B1, consistent with the correct values in paragraph 25 of the revised version of Appendix B;

- a table outlining more information regarding the New Homes Bonus and Infrastructure Reserve Fund, in addition to paragraph 17 of Appendix B in the report.

Councillor Edwards highlighted that the Medium Term Financial Strategy had been considered in some detail by Cabinet on 14 November 2014, but reported the following updates:

- further reductions in government grant funding would mean the Council receiving £830,000 less in 2015/16 than it did in the previous year;
- the Medium Term Financial Strategy's savings target had been reduced to £670,000, as £400,000 had already been saved as a result of the restructure of waste services and the introduction of new waste collection rounds. In addition, more modelling had taken place since November on business rates which had indicated a slightly more favourable position than originally anticipated;
- the Strategy included an increase in Council Tax of 1.99%, which equated to an annual increase of £2.45 per band D home;
- £5 million had been allocated in the Infrastructure Reserve Fund as a contribution to the A14 improvement scheme. This was funded via New Homes Bonus and the first £1.8 million of receipts in each year would be used to offset expenditure previously covered by the Housing Planning Delivery Grant. It was also proposed that a proportion of New Homes Bonus receipts in each year would be contributed towards the Greater Cambridge City Deal;
- in terms of the capital programme, it was proposed to invest £500,000 in solar panels for the car park at South Cambridgeshire Hall and at the Waterbeach Depot. The £500,000 should be recovered within seven years of their introduction, subject to the detailed business case currently being worked up.

Councillor Mark Howell, Portfolio Holder for Housing, presented the Housing Revenue Account and emphasised that the 2.2% inflationary figure to be applied in this year's rent was in line with revised government guidelines and also reflected the September 2014 Consumer Price Index, which now had to be used instead of the Retail Price Index. The average rent per week would therefore be £103.95.

Councillor Robert Turner, Portfolio Holder for Planning, referred to the proposed increase in fees and charges relating to the planning pre-application service. He considered this issue at his Portfolio Holder meeting on 3 February 2015 and stated that he was determined to deliver the level of service expected by those using and paying for it, and that officers were fully behind this.

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED** to Council:

- (a) Approval of the Capital Programme and the associated funding up to the year ending 31 March 2020 as set out in Appendix A1 of the report.
- (b) Approval of the revenue estimates for 2015-16 in the General Fund summary as set out in the revised version of Appendix B1 included as part of the supplementary agenda and circulated at the meeting.
- (c) Approval of the precautionary items for the General Fund, as set out in Appendix B2 of the report.

- (d) Approval of the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the General Fund, as set out in Appendix B3(A) of the report, based on the assumptions contained within the report.
- (e) Approval of the fees and charges proposed for 2015-16 as set out in Appendix B4 , including those relating to the planning pre-application service.
- (f) That the Executive Management Team be instructed to identify additional income or savings of £670,000 from 2015-16.
- (g) That the Council Tax requirement for 2015-16 is £7,478,550.
- (h) That the Council sets the amount of Council Tax for each of the relevant categories of dwelling in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 on the basis of a District Council Tax for general expenses on a Band D property of £125.31 plus the relevant amounts required by the precepts of Parish Councils, Cambridgeshire County Council, the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Cambridgeshire Fire Authority, details of those precepts and their effect to be circulated with the formal resolution required at the Council meeting.
- (i) Approval of the Housing Revenue Account estimates and the rent increase for the financial year ending 31 March 2016, as set out in Appendices C and C1 of the report, with the rent increase being in accordance with rent restructuring guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government.
- (j) Approval of the service and other charges for housing services for the financial year ending 31 March 2016 as set out in Appendix C2 of the report.
- (k) Approval of the Housing Revenue Account business plan summary for the next 30 years to 31 March 2045 as set out in Appendix C3 of the report.
- (l) Approval of the Borrowing and Investment Strategy for the year to 31 March 2016 as set out in Appendix D1 of the report.
- (m) Approval of the prudential indicators required by the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities for the year to 31 March 2016 as set out in Appendix D2 of the report.
- (n) That the Executive Director (Corporate Services) be given delegated authority to issue the final version of the Estimates Book, incorporating the amendments required from the Council's decisions.

8. NORTHSTOWE PHASE 2: PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY AND REQUIREMENTS

Cabinet **AGREED** to exclude the public and press from the meeting during consideration of this item in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act).

Consideration was given to a report which provided Cabinet with an opportunity to consider the range of requirements needed to bring forward and deliver the physical and community infrastructure needed to support the new communities and housing delivery in Northstowe.

Appended to the report was a proposed draft list of requirements to be included in the Section 106 Agreement should the Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee be minded to grant outline consent for the Phase 2 planning application.

A number of comments were made during discussion on the list of requirements from both the County Council's and District Council's perspective which Councillor Tim Wotherspoon, Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Transportation, agreed to take into consideration going forward.

9. CABINET MEETING SCHEDULE 2015/16

Cabinet **AGREED** its schedule of meetings for 2015/16 as follows:

- 9 July 2015 – 6pm
- 10 September 2015 – 6pm
- 12 November 2015 – 2pm
- 14 January 2016 – 2pm
- 11 February 2016 – 2pm
- 14 April 2016 – 6pm

Information Item

10. POSITION STATEMENT: FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RISK 2014/15 Q3

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

Councillor Simon Edwards, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, presented the report and highlighted that the General Fund's working position was a £1,168,500 favourable variance, equating to 7.33% of the net District Council General Fund expenditure. The General Fund variance was mostly due to additional planning application income, above what was originally estimated, in relation to solar farms. In view of this favourable position, Councillor Edwards proposed a virement of £20,000 to the Council's Community Chest, with the understanding that if this was not spent by the end of the 2014/15 financial year it would be rolled over to 2015/16. This proposal was seconded and unanimously supported.

Councillor David Whiteman-Downes, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Customer Services, presented the performance and risk management aspects of the report and reported that the Council's Customer Contact Centre had improved its performance, primarily in terms of reducing call waiting times and reducing the number of abandoned calls. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee had considered a report on this issue at its meeting on 10 February 2015 and was very satisfied with the improved performance.

Councillor Simon Edwards suggested that the Customer Contact Centre should be aiming for a 5% abandoned calls rate, but acknowledged that the current position was a significant improvement from where it had previously been and said that officers should be congratulated.

Councillor Ray Manning, Leader of the Council, took this opportunity to praise officers for the fantastic work they had done with regard to managing the Council's finances.

Cabinet:

- (a) Noted the Council's provisional outturn position, together with the performance and risk matters set out in the report, and **APPROVED** the virement of £20,000 to the Community Chest.
- (b) **APPROVED** the Strategic Risk Register and Matrix set out in Appendices D to E of the report.

Standing Items

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 Nick Wright reported that he had attended a Local Enterprise Partnership meeting on 11 February 2015 on behalf of the Leader. The main agenda item considered at the meeting was the outcome of the Growth Deal 2 bid, for which the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership had received £38 million.

14. REPORTS FROM CABINET MEMBERS ATTENDING PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Councillor Robert Turner reported that he had attended a meeting of Landbeach Parish Council to discuss enforcement action scheduled to be undertaken against an unauthorised gypsy and traveller site in the area.

Councillor Turner had also visited Orchard Park following a question submitted to a meeting of Full Council recently regarding the lack of road maintenance by Persimmon Homes on the development. Enforcement action would be taken on this issue, and the necessary paperwork was currently being prepared by the Council's legal department.

15. REPORTS FROM MEMBER CHAMPIONS

No reports from Member Champions were received.

The Meeting ended at 4.00 p.m.
