

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee held on  
Thursday, 22 November 2018 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Grenville Chamberlain – Chairman  
Councillor Brian Milnes – Vice-Chairman

Councillors:	Ruth Betson	Anna Bradnam
	Dr. Martin Cahn	Sarah Cheung Johnson
	Gavin Clayton	Graham Cone
	Dr. Claire Daunton	Dr. Douglas de Lacey
	Bill Handley	Peter McDonald
	Geoff Harvey	Steve Hunt

Councillor Neil Gough was in attendance, by invitation.

Officers:	Victoria Wallace	Democratic Services Officer
	Suzy Brandes	Principal Accountant (General Fund & Projects)
	Alex Colyer	Executive Director
	Dawn Graham	Benefits Manager
	Kathrin John	Democratic Services Team Leader

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Judith Rippeth. Councillor Geoff Harvey was present as a substitute.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2018, were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

### **4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No public questions had been received.

### **5. CAMBRIDGE ICE ARENA: LOAN TO CAMBRIDGE LEISURE AND ICE CENTRE (CLIC)**

The press and public were excluded during consideration of this agenda 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(as amended) of the Act). Paragraph 3 relates to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The committee considered a report seeking the provision from the Council of an additional loan facility to enable the Cambridge Ice Arena development to be completed. A representative from Cool Venues Ltd was present to answer detailed questions from the committee.

Following a detailed discussion, the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, by 13 votes in favour and one abstention (Cllr Betson), **APPROVED** the recommendations to Council, as detailed in the report, and **RECOMMENDED** additional actions.

## 6. **LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT (LCTS) SCHEME 2019-20**

The Benefits Manager presented the report which set out the proposed Localised Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS) for 2019-2020.

The committee was informed that a public consultation had been undertaken, which had followed advice from the Consultation Institute regarding the questions to ask. As well as the consultation being online, 3000 residents had been written to and residents had been spoken to when they visited the Council's reception desk. A good response had been received to the public consultation, with over 300 responses having been received.

Members were informed that the number of council tax bills had increased significantly, however there was a reduction in collection rates. Although 51% of residents who responded to the public consultation expressed that they were happy with the current LCTS, the scheme would be very hard for the Council to manage going forward. Officers had looked at other councils where Universal Credit had been live for a year, to see what they had been doing regarding their LCTS.

The Council's preferred option was an income banded scheme. 49% of residents who responded to the consultation, thought that change to the scheme was needed and of these, the majority thought that an income banded scheme was the best option. Officers had looked at other councils with income banded schemes. The Council was looking at having two bands within the scheme. Officers advised that the preferred option was achievable and had longevity.

Members were informed that:

- The bands would be made more generous, ensuring residents would not be worse off. Cambridgeshire County Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council would share the burden of the cost for this; provision for this had already been made in budgets for this.
- The Council's scheme was much better funded than in other areas of the country.
- Many people claiming the benefit were either disabled or carers.
- The scheme could only be changed once a year so it was important to get it right. Officers used a modelling tool to develop the scheme.

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee, by 13 votes in favour and one abstention (Cllr Gavin Clayton), **SUPPORTED** the recommendation to introduce a banded discount LCTS scheme for 2019-2020.

## 7. **2018-19 QUARTER 2 POSITION STATEMENT: PERFORMANCE, FINANCE AND RISK**

The Scrutiny and Overview committee considered the 2018-19 Quarter Two Position Statement, which provided a statement on the Council's quarter two position with regard to its General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA), capital budgets and performance indicators by exception. The following comments were made:

- The standard deviation was needed for performance against Key Performance

- Indicators (KPIs), to understand the performance against the targets.
- Members requested numbers as well as percentages in relation to performance against KPIs.
  - The Executive Director would liaise with the Scrutiny and Overview Committee Chairman regarding the information the committee wanted to see in these reports.
  - Members were informed that the variances presented compared the original budget for the year 2018-19 set in February 2018, to the latest forecast for the full year.
  - Members were informed that the most important figure was the forecast outturn against the budget.
  - The committee was informed that a report would be presented to the Employment and Staffing Committee, regarding the measures that were proposed to address the problems in recruiting officers to the organisation. Incentives such as housing allowances and a 'golden hello' were among measures being considered.

## **8. WORK PROGRAMME**

The committee was informed that:

- Extra Scrutiny resource was being sought for the Democratic Services Team. Councillor de Lacey thanked Democratic Services officers for their support to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, given current heavy workloads.
- Councillors Milnes and Handley would be going on an LGA Scrutiny Course in early 2019.
- The Chairman and Vice Chairman were considering whether task and finish groups would be set up to share the workload of agendas, with agenda items being split between groups.

## **9. MONITORING THE EXECUTIVE**

There were no updates from Scrutiny Monitors.

## **10. TO NOTE THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The committee noted that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2018 at 6pm.

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**The Meeting ended at 8.25 p.m.**

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