

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Monday, 29 June 2020 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor Bridget Smith (Leader of Council)
Councillor Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer (Deputy Leader of Council (Statutory) -
Strategic Planning and Transport)

Councillors:	Neil Gough	Deputy Leader (non statutory) - Transformation and Projects
	Bill Handley	Lead Cabinet Member for Community Resilience
	Dr. Tumi Hawkins	Lead Cabinet member for Planning Policy and Delivery
	Hazel Smith	Lead Cabinet member for Housing
	John Williams	Lead Cabinet member for Finance

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Susan Gardner Craig	Head of HR and Corporate Services
Rory McKenna	Deputy Head of Legal Practice/Monitoring Officer
Liz Watts	Chief Executive
Gareth Bell	Communications Manager
Jonathan Dixon	Principal Planning Policy Officer (Transport)
Julie Fletcher	Head of Housing Strategy
Paul Frainer	Assistant Director (Strategy & Economy)
Hana Loftus	Special Projects Officer
Sean Missin	Procurement Officer
David Ousbey	Head of Commercial Development & Investment
Jennifer Perry	Residents Involvement Team Leader

Councillors Dr. Douglas de Lacey, Brian Milnes, Anna Bradnam, Dr. Claire Daunton, Sue Ellington, Geoff Harvey, Pippa Heylings, Peter McDonald, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams and Richard Williams were in attendance, by invitation.

1. **Leader's Announcements**

No announcements were discussed during this meeting

2. **Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Grenville Chamberlain, Chair of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, sent an apology for absence.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Cabinet authorised the Leader to sign, as a correct record, the public version of the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2020, subject to the following

corrections:

Minute 1 - Announcements

It was noted that in the second paragraph, there was a missing “f” in the word “of” in the following sentence “This was the first meeting of the Cabinet”;

Minute 12 – Milton Country Park Financial Support

It was also noted that:

- In the third paragraph, the word “collapse” should be replaced with the words “terminate the lease”.; and
- In resolution (a) the words “the charitable Trust responsible for operating Milton Country Park” should be replaced with “Cambridge Sport Lakes Trust”.

5. Public Questions

Jane Philips attended the meeting and asked the following question:

"On a quarterly basis, local planning authorities are required to submit Forms PS1 and PS2 to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government providing a range of information about decisions taken on district matters planning applications. The information gathered on these forms is used, among other purposes, to calculate local authorities' performance for the purposes of designating under-performing local planning authorities under section 62A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. On Form PS2, the time from application to decision begins when a valid application and the correct fee have been received and ends on the date a decision notice is despatched.

Will the Portfolio Holder for Planning please state in clear and unambiguous terms whether the data reported on the quarterly PS1 and PS2 forms submitted since May 2018 is, in fact, accurate and free from systematic errors in the reporting of data?"

Councillor Tumi Hawkins responded:

"The data we submit in forms PS1 and PS2 returns has historically been generated automatically through the Council's "Agile" planning application software, prepared and submitted using the required standard report format. This is data that has been inputted into the system by officers throughout the planning process and is used to produce a return within MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) reporting timelines.

In February this year, the Planning Service migrated over 1 million records from the Agile system into a new Idox system "shared" database. Like the Agile system, the Idox solution provides a reporting tool to support Local Planning Authorities generate and submit the PS1 and PS2 returns.

However, we have not submitted the PS1 and PS2 returns for Q4 of 2019/20 (Jan 2020 - March 2020) yet as due to the Covid-19 pandemic the government has extended the submission date to August 2020).

Officers will be taking care to ensure that the first submissions reported through this new system, and which rely upon data that was transferred from the old to the new system, represents an accurate record of the services performance.

Recognising that some 6000 applications per year pass through the system, it would be

unwise for anyone to guarantee that there are no errors in the reported data. However, I am satisfied that the use of a recognised software solution and standardised reporting templates enable the Local Planning Authority to provide a consistent and accurate return to MHCLG.”

At the Leader’s invitation Jane Philips asked the following supplementary question:

“If the Council is provided with evidence indicating that systematic inaccuracies exist in the data reported to Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government on forms PS1 and/or PS2 since May 2018, will the Portfolio holder for Planning commit to commissioning an external audit to investigate any irregularities uncovered and prepare corrected data for resubmission by the Council please?”

Councillor Tumi Hawkins responded:

“Obviously, we will need to look at that and we will take appropriate action. I cannot commit to anything until I have seen whatever evidence it is that you have, but I am prepared to send my answer to you, both your original question and your follow up question, in writing.”

6. **Issues arising from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee**

Cabinet **received and noted** a report from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, presented by Councillor Brian Milnes, Vice-Chair, Scrutiny and Overview Committee, informing it about the discussions at, and recommendations from the Committee’s meeting held on 12 March 2020, 14 May 2020 and 9th June 2020.

The report related to:

- North East Cambridge Area Action Plan
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Resident Involvement Strategy
- New Build Council Housing Strategy

7. **North East Cambridge Area Action Plan**

Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer, Deputy Leader of Council (Statutory), introduced the report, noting the balance between the sustainability, and housing and jobs required in the district, while also mentioning the estimated time scale of the project. Councillor Brian Milnes, Vice Chair of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee said that the committee supported the plan.

Positive comments surrounding the variety of transport options included within the plan were shared, although Councillor Douglas de Lacey commented on the shared routes and importance of dedicated cycling lanes, noting particularly the differing requirements between commuting cycling and recreational cycling. He also highlighted concerns about shared use of routes by horse riders and cyclists and asked that further consideration be given to provision for horse riders.

After Members had commented on the clarity of the report, and having thanked officers for their hard work, Councillor Bridget Smith closed the discussion, and by affirmation, Cabinet,

- a) **Agreed** the name of the Area Action Plan (AAP) be formally changed to the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan;
- b) **Agreed** the draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (Appendix A); the draft North East Cambridge Policies Map (including amended boundary) (Appendix B) and Topic Papers (Appendix C) for a ten-week period of public consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and that this consultation will also include the evidence documents (listed in the draft AAP with relevant policy and published on the shared planning service website);
- c) **Agreed** the Statement of Consultation (Appendix D) including responses to comments received to the Issues & Options (February 2019);
- d) **Noted** the findings of the updated Joint Equalities Impact Assessment, Draft Sustainability Appraisal, Draft Habitats Regulation Assessment; and Duty to Cooperate Statement (Appendices E, F, G and H respectively);
- e) **Delegated** authority to the Deputy Leader (Statutory) of South Cambridgeshire District Council and the Cambridge Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces to agree the further Topic Papers as set out at paragraph 4.17 ahead of public consultation.
- f) **Delegated** authority to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, in liaison with the Deputy Leader (Statutory) of South Cambridgeshire District Council and the Cambridge Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces, to make editorial changes to the Draft NEC AAP consultation report (including graphics) and supporting documents (prior to the commencement of the consultation period) to comprise minor amendments and factual updates and clarifications.
- g) **Noted** the update on the Fen Road access issues at paragraphs 4.19 and 4.20 in the report. A separate report will be provided on this matter in due course.

8. Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Issues and Options Feedback and Next Steps

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, introduced this item, updating Cabinet on the public consultation, highlighting the complexity of the process and thanking officers for their hard work. She explained how the project had addressed the concerns on climate change, and the ongoing challenges of consulting with the Parish Councils and local members every stage of the project. Councillor Neil Gough welcomed the high level of response to the engagement exercise and referred to the importance of collating any common themes emerging. Cllr Dr. Claire Daunton recognised the complexity of the consultation process, asked that acronyms be explained in the document and thanked officers for their continuing hard work with the larger project.

After a further short discussion, the Leader closed the discussion, and Cabinet, by affirmation:

- a) **Noted** the report on Initial Feedback from the First Conversation consultation included at Appendix 1;
- b) **Agreed** additional informal member and stakeholder engagement and Preferred Options stages be added to the Local Plan making process;
- c) **Agreed** the approach to addressing the Duty to Cooperate included as Appendix 3 to the report, subject to any material changes necessary as a result of consultation with Duty to Cooperate bodies.

9. Update of Greater Cambridge Local Development Scheme

Councillor Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, introduced the report

which provided an update on the position with the Local Development Scheme.

Cabinet, by affirmation:

- a) **Agreed** to adopt the updated Local Development Scheme for Greater Cambridge included at Appendix 1 of the report, to take effect from 13 July 2020.
- b) **Agreed** to grant delegated authority to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, in liaison with the South Cambridgeshire Lead Cabinet member for Planning and the Cambridge City Council Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces, to make any minor editing changes and corrections identified prior to publication.

10. Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, introduced the item, noting its importance with post Covid-19 recovery of the District, and to the expectation that the strategy would need to continually adapt to reflect that ongoing recovery. After a very short discussion, Councillor Bridget Smith concluded by thanking officers for their work on this project, and by affirmation, Cabinet:

Approved and **adopted** this Health & Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan.

11. Establishment of Additional Liaison Meetings

Councillor Neil Gough, Deputy Leader, introduced the item, highlighting the success of the liaison meeting in Cottenham, and the importance of the planned expansion across certain villages within the district. Councillor Brian Milnes and Councillor Anna Bradnam both suggested that this would help with community cohesion and allow local communities to engage with developers and key stakeholders .

After a short discussion, the Leader concluded the discussion, and Cabinet, by affirmation:

Approved the introduction of 5 new liaison meetings in Barrington, Caldecote, Hardwick, Swavesey and Sawston, bringing the total number of concurrent active liaison meetings to 6.

12. Zero Carbon Communities Grant Scheme

Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the report, highlighting that the Council's Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme was unique compared to other local authorities. Councillor Anna Bradnam expressed support for the report, noting its' clarity, and asked when the workshop would be held in relation to the new scheme. In reply, the Leader said this had been scheduled to take place in July 2020, and finally concluded the discussion.

By affirmation, Cabinet:

- a) **Approved** the changes to the Zero Carbon Communities Grant Scheme, as outlined in paragraph 11, which will result in a more focussed scheme providing funding to projects under three themes:
 - Cycling
 - Community buildings
 - Tree-planting and other nature-based solutions

- b) **Delegated** to the Head of Shared Waste Services and Environment the authority to make minor changes to the scheme documents in Appendices A and B (Information for Applicants for applications from questions) as necessary for clarity.

13. Resident Involvement Strategy

Councillor Hazel Smith, Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced this item, stating its' importance, and confirmed that elections to the housing board would take place between March and May 2021. Councillor Brian Milnes, Vice Chair of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, reported on the support of the committee for the strategy and was pleased to note that the committee's comments had been incorporated into the document. Councillor Claire Daunton expressed her support for the project, which was close to completion.

After a short debate, the Leader thanked officers for their work, and Cabinet, by affirmation:

Approved the Draft Resident Involvement Strategy 2020-2023 (Appendix 1) to go out to wider tenant consultation. Cabinet also **agreed** to delegate authority to the Lead Member for Housing to approve the final Strategy subject to any minor amendments arising from this consultation, from any new guidance issued by the Regulator for Social Housing or from guidance issued by Government if/when the issues within the Green Paper become law.

14. New Build Housing Strategy 2020 - 2025

Councillor Hazel Smith, Lead Cabinet member for Housing, introduced the report, highlighting the need for more Council built houses. Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins referred to housing need in the District and emphasised the importance of the Council delivering new build houses. Councillor Brian Milnes, Vice Chair of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, noted the support of the committee for the strategy and highlighted certain comments raised by the committee during its consideration of the document.

The Leader concluded the discussion and thanked the Officers for their work on this project. Cabinet, by affirmation:

Approved the New Build Council Housing Strategy, and **recommended** that it proceed to full Council for adoption.

15. Quarter 4 Performance Report

Councillor Neil Gough, Deputy Leader, introduced the report, highlighting the data related to the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Councillor Anna Bradnam noted that the figures for waste collection had reduced. The Head of Environment and Waste explained this had resulted from fewer green bin collections being made, owing to the Covid-19 restrictions.

After a further discussion, the Leader thanked all Officers for their ongoing hard work since the beginning of the pandemic, and by affirmation, Cabinet:

Reviewed and **noted** the Operational Key Performance Indicator (OKPI) results and comments in the report at Appendix A.

16. Review of Barriers to Council Procurement for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Task and Finish Group

Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the report, addressing the need for certain barriers to procurement to be removed for small and medium sized businesses.

Councillor Brian Milnes indicated support for the project, discussing its importance during this period of recovery. Councillor Peter McDonald, the Council's Business Champion, noted the introduction of the business support team would assist with more local businesses applying for Council projects, along with working with the local Members.

The Leader concluded the discussion, and thanked the officers for their hard work, Cabinet, by affirmation:

Reviewed and **noted** the actions that had been undertaken over the past 12 months to reduce the barriers to council procurement for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) prior to the report going to Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

17. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

Cabinet **agreed** by affirmation that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of item numbers 18, 19 and 20 in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) (exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act). Paragraph 3 refers to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

18. **Confidential issues arising from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee**

Cabinet **received** and **noted** a report from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, informing it about the discussions at, and recommendations from the committee's meeting held on 12 March and 9 June 2020.

19. **Potential Property Acquisition**

Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the item and updated Cabinet on some incorrect figures contained within Appendix A of the report. Councillor Brian Milnes, Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, provided feedback on the comments expressed by the committee when it had considered the proposal.

Councillor John Williams responded to comments made by those present.

After further debate, the Leader of the Council, thanked the Officers for their work on this report, and Cabinet, by affirmation:

Approved the investment detailed in the exempt report of the Head of Finance as a single-let commercial investment in accordance with the approved Investment Strategy.

20. **Potential Property Investment**

Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the item. Councillor Brian Milnes, the Vice Chair of Scrutiny and Overview Committee, reported on the comments made by the committee in respect of the proposed investment. It was

noted that the report had been updated to reflect some of the questions raised by the committee.

During the ensuing discussion Councillor John Williams responded to comments made by those present.

Councillor Bridget Smith concluded the discussion and thanked Officers for their continuing work within the investment projects. Cabinet, by affirmation:

Approved the investment detailed in the exempt report of the Head of Finance as a multi-let commercial investment in accordance with the approved Investment Strategy.

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