

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Wednesday, 5 September 2018 at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Bridget Smith (Leader)
Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer (Deputy Leader)

Councillors:	Neil Gough	Environmental Health and Licensing
	Philippa Hart	Community Services and Business Improvement
	Dr. Tumi Hawkins	Planning
	Hazel Smith	Housing
	John Williams	Finance

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Gill Anderton	Head of Housing (New Build)
Gemma Barron	Head of Sustainable Communities and Wellbeing
Alex Colyer	Executive Director
Dawn Graham	Benefits Manager
Mike Hill	Director of Health and Environmental Services
Stephen Kelly	Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development
Rory McKenna	Deputy Head of Legal Practice
Caroline Ryba	Head of Finance
Ian Senior	Democratic Services Officer

Councillors Anna Bradnam, Grenville Chamberlain and Heather Williams were in attendance, by invitation.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no Apologies for Absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Cabinet authorised the Leader to sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2018, subject to the following:

Attendance list

Specify that Councillor Anna Bradnam is a local Member for Waterbeach, and delete the repeated words "and Heather Williams".

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Daniel Fulton attended the meeting to make, and ask, the following statement and question:

“Over the years, the public has come to know and trust the Leader for her unceasing commitment to transparent, open, and responsive local government. During their years in opposition, both the Leader and the Cabinet rightfully earned a public reputation as proponents of openness and accountability, and the public’s trust in each of you was certainly confirmed by the results of this May’s election.

In her address to the annual meeting of the council in May 2017, the Leader argued forcefully for the importance of taking decisions in public, in an open and transparent manner that provides residents with opportunities to question and challenge the decisions made by councillors, even going so far as to state, “I would respectfully suggest that in order to earn their allowances from the public purse that the very least pfhs can do is to take whatever decision they do take in public”.

As everyone here is aware, the overwhelming majority of planning decisions made by this council are made under delegated powers by planning officers, who are unelected and completely unaccountable to the residents of this district for their decisions. The one and only moment when the vast majority of planning applications are in any way considered by an accountable public official is at meeting where a decision is made as to whether or not an application will be delegated or not.

Is the Leader aware that it is the present policy of this council is to exclude members of the public from observing the meetings where the vast majority of planning applications receive their one and only decision by an accountable elected official, and furthermore, is the Leader aware that the public is refused access to any and all records pertaining to these decisions, including any meeting agendas, any minutes or other records pertaining to the meetings, and any recommendations or reports and the accompanying background papers that are considered as part of each decision?

If so, will the Leader commit now to taking action to bring the council’s policies in regards to public access to planning delegation decision meetings and documents in line with the principles of transparent, open, and responsive local government, for which she has always advocated?”

In reply, the Leader made it clear that, while Cabinet could not discuss the details of a specific planning application, she shared concerns about the process for determining whether applications in general were presented to Planning Committee or dealt with by officers under delegation. South Cambridgeshire District Council sought to be pragmatic and flexible, and officers always consulted the Committee Chairman and Vice-chairman. The Leader agreed to look again at that process and to make any changes necessary to ensure transparency. She said that, while the Council would be reviewing its Scheme of Delegation, she was unable to ask for additional public meetings. However, officers would consider whether the process could be improved. The Leader was sympathetic to Mr. Fulton’s suggestion that documents at least considered at the delegation meeting should be publicly available.

The Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development reminded those present about the need to guard against the risk of pre-determination.

The Council would write to Mr. Fulton once the review had been concluded.

6. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Councillor Grenville Chamberlain (Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee) expressed concern at the time-frame for reviewing reports and other papers. He had requested a meeting with the Leader and Chief Executive to discuss process. It was reported that the Executive Management Team would be considering options for a filtering system.

7. WATERBEACH NEW TOWN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Cabinet considered a report seeking its agreement for the draft Waterbeach New Town Supplementary Planning Document to be published for consultation.

Following a summary of comments from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, and further discussion, Cabinet

- (a) **Approved** the draft Supplementary Planning Documentary (SPD) for Regulation 13 public consultation in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 for a period of six weeks;
- (b) **Approved** the consultation arrangements set out in the Consultation Statement (Appendix 2);
- (c) **delegated** authority to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development in consultation with the Deputy Leader, to make editorial changes to the draft Waterbeach New Town SPD and supporting documents prior to the commencement of the consultation period (to comprise minor amendments and factual updates and clarifications); and
- (d) **agreed** amendments to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan entry on page 125 and 126 of the draft SPD in respect of the foul water network as set out in Appendix 2.

8. COMMUNITY CHEST CRITERIA

Cabinet considered a report on changes to the criteria for the Community Chest grant scheme.

The Lead Cabinet member for Finance expressed his appreciation for the work carried out by the Grants Advisory Committee, and asked Cabinet, under the heading 'When can groups apply?' to delete the final sentence, namely "Grants are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis."

Following a brief discussion about the extent of access to the scheme, Cabinet **agreed** the proposed changes to the Community Chest guidance notes, which include the criteria, as set out at Appendix A, and as recommended by the Grants Advisory Committee, subject to, under the heading 'When can groups apply?' deletion of the final sentence namely "Grants are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis."

9. 3 YEAR SERVICE SUPPORT GRANTS CRITERIA

Cabinet considered a report examining the justification and scope for a further three-year programme (2019-20 to 2021-22) of Service Support Grant funding of the voluntary and community sector.

Cabinet

1. **approved** a further three year programme of Service Support Grants (subject to annual funding agreements) to run from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022;
2. **approved** continuation of current themes and allocations for the Service Support Grant fund; and
3. **accepted** the proposed schedule for operation of the scheme.

10. LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

Cabinet considered a report on Local Council Tax Support proposals for 2019-20.

Cabinet **agreed** to submit both Option 1 and Option 2 to public consultation, as set out in the report from the Executive Director at paragraphs 23 and 24 and consider responses at the meeting in December.

11. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Cabinet resolved that the Press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items 12 (Additional Housing Revenue Account Borrowing Programme Bid) and 13 (Ice Rink Funding Agreement Update) 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 refers to Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information).

12. ADDITIONAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BORROWING PROGRAMME BID

Cabinet considered a report from the Executive Director.

By virtue of Scrutiny and Overview Procedure Rule 12.19 Chairman of the Council and Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee are required to agree both that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances and to it being treated as a matter of urgency. As Cabinet has been requested to give its authority to submit a bid by the deadline of 7th September, the decision is manifestly urgent and the consent of the Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee to an exemption from call in on the grounds of urgency has been sought.

Cabinet gave **approval** in line with paragraph 3 of the report from the Executive Director.

13. ICE RINK FUNDING AGREEMENT UPDATE

Cabinet considered a report providing an update from Cambridge Leisure and Ice Centre (CLIC) about progress relating to the development of the ice rink on the outskirts

of Cambridge.

Members reviewed the financial and legal issues involved, and accepted that the project remained robust subject to regular monitoring of measures designed to safeguard South Cambridgeshire District Council's position.

Cabinet

1. **Requested** that officers
 - (a) Undertake further due diligence in order to protect the Council's interests; and
 - (b) Formulate revised terms to secure the Council's interests as far as possible.
2. **Recommended** that Council consider the issue set out in paragraph 3 (a) of the report in the light of the outcome of the further due diligence as referred to at 1 (a) above.

**The Meeting ended at 11.25
a.m.**

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