

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee held on  
Thursday, 13 June 2019 at 5.20 p.m.

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

<b>Councillors:</b>	Ruth Betson	Anna Bradnam
	Dr. Martin Cahn	Sarah Cheung Johnson
	Dr. Claire Daunton	Geoff Harvey
	Steve Hunt	Peter McDonald
	Judith Rippeth	Graham Cone
	Nigel Cathcart	

Councillors Peter Fane, Neil Gough, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Philippa Hart, Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Bridget Smith, John Williams and Nick Wright were in attendance, by invitation.

<b>Officers:</b>	Victoria Wallace	Scrutiny and Governance Adviser
	Julie Fletcher	Head of Housing Strategy
	Trevor Nicoll	Interim Assistant Director of Waste and Special Projects
	David Ousby	Delivery & Innovations Manager
	Kathryn Hawkes	Programme Manager
	Mike Hill	Interim Chief Executive
	Emma Alterton	Development Manager, 3C ICT
	Heather Jones	Head of 3C Building Control

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gavin Clayton and Douglas de Lacey. Councillor Nigel Cathcart was present as a substitute for Councillor Clayton.

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

Councillor Anna Bradnam informed the committee that she knew a member of the Stapleford group supporting the Compulsory Purchase Order of The Tree, however she had not been involved in this issue.

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

The minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019, were agreed as a correct record subject to the inclusion of Councillor Geoff Harvey in the list of those present at the meeting.

### **4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No public questions had been received.

### **5. COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER THE TREE, 9 BAR LANE, STAPLEFORD - PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS**

Mr Archie Garden was invited to make a statement to the committee on behalf of The Tree Action Group. He informed the committee of the following:

- The Action Group was passionate about supporting The Tree and had been campaigning since 2013.
- He set out the group's vision for The Tree as a community hub for Stapleford, providing a focal point and a place where the community could meet, as well as being a pub.
- The Action Group had developed a comprehensive business plan with input from local businesses and residents. Mr Garden provided an overview of the business plan, setting out the costs involved and the support for the campaign.
- Mr Garden referred to a study that had been undertaken by the Plunkett organisation, which had found that there had been no failures of community acquired pubs.
- A sensitivity analysis of the business plan had been undertaken, which met all the criteria stipulated by the national 'Pub is the Hub' initiative, which had been supporting The Tree Action Group.
- He explained the types of community activities that were envisaged for The Tree as a community hub.

All members of the committee received and noted written statements submitted by a resident regarding the Compulsory Purchase Order of The Tree, and from Carter Jonas on behalf of the owner of The Tree.

**6. COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER THE TREE, 9 BAR LANE, STAPLEFORD (EXEMPT ITEM)**

The committee moved to confidential session in order to discuss the report relating to the Compulsory Purchase Order of The Tree, which was presented by the Programme Manager.

The local members representing Shelford and Caxton and Papworth, addressed the committee.

Following a long and detailed discussion, a vote was taken on the recommendation; six members voted in support of the recommendation, four members voted against and two members abstained. The committee therefore endorsed the recommendation to Cabinet.

**7. INVESTMENT STRATEGY - INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS (EXEMPT ITEM)**

The discussion regarding this item took place in confidential session. Following a lengthy discussion, a vote was taken and the majority of the committee endorsed the recommendations to Cabinet. Two members of the committee did not support the recommendations and thought this issue should be considered and decided by full Council.

**8. INVESTMENT STRATEGY - CORE STAFFING ESTABLISHMENT (EXEMPT ITEM)**

The committee unanimously endorsed the recommendations to Cabinet.

**9. RENEWAL OF THE SHARED SERVICE AGREEMENT FOR THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY**

The Head of Housing Strategy presented the report on the progress of the

Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency (CHIA). Cabinet's agreement would be sought to renew the shared service agreement with the CHIA for a further three years, up to 31 March 2022.

The Head of Housing Strategy explained the difference between this shared service and the arrangements for the 3C Shared Services. She also explained the purpose of the CHIA and how funding worked. Officers considered that there was no reason not to continue running the CHIA as it was. The Lead Cabinet Member for Business and Customer Services highlighted that the Council struggled to get residents to take up CHIA services and asked that members promote this to residents in their wards.

The Head of Housing Strategy informed the committee that:

- The Better Care Fund had been increased significantly over the last four years as the importance of preventative measures had been recognised. There was no indication that these grants would slow, however if the Better Care Fund was reduced, the Council would have to find the money for the grants. This funding was ring-fenced so it could not be used for anything else.
- Inefficiencies in ways of working and systems in the CHIA had been rectified.
- A survey was ongoing of areas of deprivation and fuel poverty; the results of this would be used by the service to target certain areas.

The Leader of the Council pointed out that this service was an example of officer driven improvements, putting the customer at the centre of the service.

Members of the committee praised staff for making the improvements that had been made to the service and felt this was a template for how other shared services could work.

It was suggested that a service objective be added that modifications to properties bear the Council's objective of being green to the core in mind. Subject to the inclusion of this, the Scrutiny and Overview Committee endorsed the recommendation to Cabinet that it approved the renewal of the CHIA shared service agreement for a further three years.

## **10. SHARED SERVICES - ANNUAL REPORTS**

The Lead Cabinet Member for Business and Customer Services presented the report which presented the annual reports for the services delivered in partnership with Cambridge City Council and Huntingdonshire District Council. She informed the committee that with the exception of 3C ICT, the shared services were meeting the Council's needs. She informed the committee that in relation to the management of the ICT shared service, there was a lack of clarity regarding the meetings that were called and there was still no mechanism for including members in the decision making process; this was still being looked at.

The Interim Assistant Director of Waste and Special Projects informed the committee that he had been asked to take on the director position representing the council on the Shared Service Board. Agreements, Memoranda of Understanding and recharges were works in progress; the former Interim Executive Director had done a lot of work on this but there was still work to be done. He informed the committee that each of the shared services produced quarterly performance reports that went to the Directors Board and then the Chief Executives Board; the Scrutiny and Overview Committee requested sight of these reports on an ongoing basis once they had been presented to the shared services boards.

The committee discussed the annual reports and shared services in general, raising the following points during its discussion:

- Committee members found the euphemistic language used in the annual reports unhelpful and members commented on the lack of use of plain English.
- Outstanding issues with the ICT shared service were raised, such as the lack of a service level agreement and legal entity.
- The committee was concerned about the lack of opportunity for members to feed into some shared services governance processes.
- The committee suggested there should be member involvement in the setting of service level agreements for the shared services.
- Concern was raised regarding the legal shared service, which had failed in getting Lexcel accreditation; it was highlighted that gaining this accreditation was a major reason for having moved to a shared legal service.
- The committee requested to see shared services quarterly performance monitoring reports on an ongoing basis.

The Lead Cabinet Member informed the committee that the following issues needed to be sorted out:

- Recharging
- Documentation, including an exit strategy
- Member involvement in the governance of all the shared services.

In response to a surplus in spending in the Planning service having been highlighted, The Lead Cabinet Member for Planning informed the committee that there was an underspend on staffing, which was unintentional and had been a result of the council continuing to have difficulty recruiting Planning officers. There were also ongoing recharging issues with the City Council.

The Interim Assistant Director of Waste and Special Projects summarised the discussion:

- Members wanted clear agreements for each of the shared services, which was being looked at.
- Overarching agreements and an exit strategy was needed for the shared services, as well as individual agreements and strategies for each service.
- Recharges work was in progress.
- Clear representation for each of the shared services and overview of the shared services as a whole was needed.

All of this needed to be in place by September 2019 and if it was not, there at least needed to be a clear plan for having this in place.

The 3C ICT Development Manager explained the status of negotiations on the Council's contract with Virgin Media, about which committee members had raised concerns. She explained that the Council was only a small part of this contract which amongst other public sector organisations involved schools, the fire service and the Police. The County Council was leading on these negotiations.

The committee endorsed the recommendations to Cabinet, subject to the following amendment (highlighted in bold text) to recommendation (d), which was proposed by the Lead Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Business Improvement:

- d) Agree, as part of the discussion identified in (c)...that prompt attention be given to the outstanding milestones and actions identified in the original 3C Shared Services Partnership Agreement and to ensuring that the quality standards, performance levels and

benefits from the integrated services are defined, understood and clearly documented, **measured and monitored**.

The committee agreed the following additional recommendations to Cabinet:

- e) That there was shared scrutiny of all the shared services.
- f) That shared services governance meetings were properly held.

## **11. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

Councillor Ruth Betson requested that a report on performance and staffing of the Planning service, be brought to a future committee meeting.

## **12. TO NOTE THE DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was agreed that the next meeting would start at 5pm to accommodate the attendance of the Head of 3C ICT.

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**The Meeting ended at 8.05 p.m.**

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