

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Wednesday, 2 October 2019 at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Bridget Smith (Leader of Council)
Councillor Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer (Deputy Leader of Council (Statutory))

Councillors:	Neil Gough	Deputy Leader
	Dr. Tumi Hawkins	Lead Cabinet member for Planning
	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	Interim Director of Corporate Services
Mike Hill	Director of Housing and Environmental Services
Caroline Hunt	Strategy and Economy Manager
Stephen Kelly	Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development
Rory McKenna	Deputy Head of Legal Practice
David Roberts	Principal Planning Policy Officer
Ian Senior	Democratic Services Officer
Liz Watts	Chief Executive

Councillors Anna Bradnam, Dr. Douglas de Lacey, Jose Hales, Brian Milnes and Peter Topping were in attendance, by invitation.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Bill Handley sent Apologies for Absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 11 (Bourn Airfield Supplementary Planning Document) as the elected Member for Caldecote Ward, in which the site of the proposed new village was located. Councillor Hawkins also declared that she lives on West Drive in Highfields Caldecote, which lies directly east of, and next to, the new village, meaning that her property is one of those closest to the boundary of the new village. Following concerns raised by Bourn Airfield site developers, arising because of Councillor Hawkins' previous participation in the campaign to stop the inclusion of the airfield in the Local Plan, and having sought and received legal advice from South Cambridgeshire District Council's Monitoring Officer, Councillor Hawkins stated that she would make a statement as the Ward Member to represent the views of her residents in both Highfields Caldecote and Bourn, because such was her duty to do so in their best interests. Having done so, Councillor Hawkins said that she would withdraw to the public gallery, take no part in the debate and would not vote.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Cabinet authorised the Leader to sign, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2019.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

6. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Cabinet received and noted a report on the discussions and recommendations agreed by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee at its meeting on 10 September 2019.

The report related to

- Bourn Airfield New Village Supplementary Planning Document
- Corporate Asset Plan
- Investment Strategy Update

Councillor Brian Milnes (Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee) commended the report to Cabinet and said that he would make further comments, where deemed necessary, when Cabinet considered the three issues previously reviewed by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

7. CORPORATE ASSET PLAN

Cabinet considered a report on the Corporate Asset Plan for non-Housing Revenue Account assets in pursuance of key Business Plan priorities.

The Leader reminded those present that the Corporate Asset Plan was a national requirement.

Councillor Brian Milnes said that the Scrutiny and Overview Committee had welcomed the report and its potential benefit for Small and Medium Enterprises.

Cabinet approved and adopted the Corporate Asset Plan 2020-2024 attached as Appendix A attached to the report from the Interim Director of Finance.

8. INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Cabinet considered a report on the Investment Strategy.

The Leader paid tribute to those officers who had been involved in its development.

Councillor Brian Milnes reported that the Scrutiny and Overview Committee had welcomed the commitment to observing ethical standards. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee had also seen some merit in recognising that the value of the Council's investments could go down as well as up. Councillor John Williams (Lead Cabinet Member for Finance) referred those present to the Investment Criteria Definitions, saying that the Strategy itself could impose new ones. On the point about fluctuating value, this should largely be mitigated by the practice of investing in the medium and long term rather than short term.

Councillor Peter Topping emphasised the importance of putting in place a system of checks and balances. To this end he welcomed the procurement of external advisers. The Leader assured him that she was confident that the Strategy was robust, and

reminded those present that it had been scrutinised by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). Councillor John Williams commended this latest Strategy saying that the first version had been put together quickly in order to facilitate the purchase of property on Cambridge Science Park.

Officers undertook to review paragraph 6.4 of the Investment Strategy to address the risk of misinterpretation.

Cabinet recommended to Full Council:

- (a) The updated Investment Strategy attached at Appendix A to the report from the Interim Director of Finance, which includes
 - (i) a range of investment indicators to comply with the Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments and
 - (ii) the governance arrangements that enable the Council to seek approval for priority investments in a timely manner in response to market conditions.
- (b) The consequent changes to the Scheme of Delegation to enable the Head of Commercial Development & Investment to progress investment opportunities, including due diligence checks, and to authorise the Section 151 Officer to submit non-binding offers in line with market practice.

9. **GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2018/19**

Cabinet considered a report detailing the General Fund and Capital outturn position for the financial year 2018-2019 with Reserve balances as at 31 March 2019, and proposed changes to the Capital Programme.

Councillor Peter Topping referred to the underspend of the grant of £130,000 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in respect of Built and Natural Environment Village Design. The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development reported that good progress was being made with the project, and that he was confident that the MHCLG would not seek refund of the unused balance.

Cabinet

- (a) **Acknowledged** the 2018/2019 General Fund revenue outturn position and the net overspend on day to day services in the year of £0.541 million and the explanations provided for the variances compared to the approved 2018/2019 revenue budget;
- (b) **Acknowledged** the additional surplus primarily from Business Rates and related Grants of £6.519 million and how this has occurred;
- (c) **Acknowledged** the consequent increase in the General Fund Balance as at 31 March 2019 of £5.978 million to £17.446 million;
- (d) **Recommended** to Council that the Business Efficiency Reserve be re-designated to the Transformation Reserve and that the sum of £3 million be appropriated from unallocated General Fund Reserve to enable the service transformation and organisational change programme to be resourced, noting that the General Fund unallocated reserve would then

be £14.446 million;

- (e) **Recommended to Council** the General Fund Revenue Carry Forwards in the sum of £1.227 million as outlined in Appendix A;
- (f) In relation to the Capital Programme:
 - (i) **Noted** the 2018/2019 capital budget outturn of £27,190 million;
 - (ii) **Recommended to Council** the carry forwards of £6.464 million in relation to General Fund capital projects due mainly to slippage as outlined in the report;
 - (iii) **Noted** that a full review of the Capital Programme will be submitted to Cabinet at its November 2019 meeting to include re-phasing of the existing programme and new Capital bids for the next budget cycle.

10. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) REVENUE AND CAPITAL PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2018/19

Cabinet considered a report detailing the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue and Capital outturn position for the financial year 2018-2019 with Reserve balances as at 31 March 2019, and proposed changes to the Capital Programme.

The Leader thanked the Deputy Head of Finance for his role in finalising the accounts.

Cabinet

- (a) **Acknowledged** the 2018/2019 revenue outturn position and the net underspend in the year of £2.042 million, and the explanations provided for the variances compared to the approved 2018/2019 revenue budget;
- (b) **Acknowledged** the consequent increase in the Housing Revenue Account balance as at 31 March 2019 of £1.051million to £11.148 million;
- (c) **Recommended** to Council the Housing Revenue Account Revenue Budget Carry Forwards in the sum of £0.739 million, identified at Appendix A;
- (d) In relation to the Capital Programme:
 - (i) **Noted** the 2018/2019 capital budget outturn of £15,625 million;
 - (ii) **Recommended** to Council the carry forwards of £1.124 million in relation to HRA capital projects due mainly to slippage.
 - (iii) **Noted** that a full review of the Capital Programme will be submitted to Cabinet at its November 2019 meeting to include re-phasing of the existing programme and new Capital bids for the next budget cycle.

11. BOURN AIRFIELD SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins addressed Cabinet as the local Ward Member for

Caldecote. She acknowledged the work undertaken by officers since the meeting in June 2019. However, some issues remained outstanding. These included

- Access to and from the A428:
- Traffic calming in local villages
- Noise
- Land use

Councillor Hawkins expressed frustration with the view that a vehicular access from the A428 dual carriageway to the Bourn Airfield site was inconsistent with Highways England policy. Traffic calming in nearby villages was an acknowledgement that rat-running was a serious possibility. Councillor Hawkins said that sites like Bourn Airfield were not necessarily going to be self-sufficient: people would still need to travel, including by private cars. Vehicular access to the Broadway was of concern to the residents of Bourn village: that road was simply not capable of carrying the anticipated amount of extra traffic. There was ongoing concern about the extent of the separation between Bourn Airfield and Caldecote, which should be enough to dispel fears about coalescence. Councillor Hawkins concluded by saying that the preservation or enhancement of the quality of life must be of paramount importance. Following her statement, Councillor Hawkins withdrew to the public gallery, took no part in the debate and did not vote.

The Deputy Leader (Statutory) introduced the debate.

Councillor Brian Milnes (Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee) said that South Cambridgeshire District Council had to accept that there was no prospect of an A428 access for the foreseeable future. Accordingly, he said, it was crucial that a high-quality public transport system be in place from the outset. Councillor Milnes drew attention to the summary of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee's deliberation forming part of the report at agenda item 6. The Leader endorsed the need for public transport.

Referring to the issue of direct access to the A428, the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development said that the two principal considerations were safety and capacity. While the Supplementary Planning Document was constrained by policies contained within the Local Plan, he told those present that our consideration of the planning application for the new village will be informed by a dedicated transport assessment, which will test the access assumptions in much more detail and which will be carefully scrutinised by officers including by Cambridgeshire County Council and Highways England.

The Strategy and Economy Manager said that the Local Plan process had been very robust in relation to transport. The Supplementary Planning Document had been consistent in establishing mitigation measures to address the danger of rat-running as it was required to do by Local Plan policy.

The Leader commended efforts being made by South Cambridgeshire District Council in partnership with other stakeholders, including the Greater Cambridge Partnership and the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority.

Councillor Peter Topping said that South Cambridgeshire District Council should be more proactive in demanding direct access from Bourn Airfield to the A428. This would help to buy goodwill from local villages otherwise threatened with rat-running.

Regarding rat-running the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development said that an appropriate Design Scheme should help to shape driving behaviour.

The Deputy Leader (Statutory) concluded that there was no realistic possibility of a junction but said that the delivery of a high quality public transport system was essential to make the new village as sustainable as possible.

The Leader thanked local groups and residents for their engagement with the planning of the new village at Bourn Airfield, and emphasised that transport would be a key consideration for testing through the planning application process. Public safety would be very important in this work. This Council would continue to work with the Combined Authority and the Greater Cambridge Partnership on the delivery of high quality public transport to serve the new village.

Cabinet:

- (a) **considered** the main issues raised in the public consultation, and the comments of Scrutiny and Overview Committee;
- (b) **agreed** responses to the representations received and agreed consequential proposed changes to the SPD as set out in the Consultation Statement and Schedule of SPD Changes (attached as Appendices A and B to the report from the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development);
- (c) subject to (a), **adopted** the amended Bourn Airfield New Village SPD; and
- (d) **delegated** to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development in liaison with the Deputy Leader, the authority to make any necessary editing changes to the SPD prior to publication including to the figures and spatial framework diagram to ensure consistency with the agreed text of the SPD.

12. **COUNCILLOR APPOINTMENT TO THE A505 ROYSTON TO GRANTA PARK STRATEGIC GROWTH AND TRANSPORT STUDY STEERING GROUP**

Cabinet considered a report on the recommendation that Cambridgeshire County Council establishes an A505 Royston to Granta Park Study Member Steering Group and the recommendation that South Cambridgeshire District Council appoints to that Group three District Councillors.

The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development reported that Hertfordshire County Council was also being invited to appoint a Member.

Councillor Peter Topping expressed disappointment that Cambridgeshire County Council had decided that the Steering Group should be politically proportionate. He said that it ought instead to consist of Members whose wards were directly affected by the A505. Councillor Topping concluded by saying that, while he himself would serve as a member, the South Cambridgeshire District Council Conservative Group would not be appointing a substitute: if for any reason Councillor Topping could not attend a meeting, he would liaise with Councillor Jose Hales, who represented Melbourn.

Councillor Hales reminded officers that Terms of Reference would be needed.

Cabinet:

- a. appointed Councillors Peter McDonald (Liberal Democrat), Peter Topping (Conservative) and Aidan Van de Weyer (Liberal Democrat) to the A505

Royston to Granta Park Strategic Growth and Transport Study Member Steering Group and:

- b. appointed Councillors Henry Batchelor and Brian Milnes (both Liberal Democrats) as substitutes;
- c. at Councillor Peter Topping's request, declined to appoint a Conservative substitute; and
- d. requested that officers ask Cambridgeshire County Council whether meetings of the Steering Group would be held in public, and to remind lead officers to present draft Terms of Reference to the inaugural meeting.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Those present noted that the next scheduled meeting of Cabinet would be on 6 November 2019 starting at 9.30am.

**The Meeting ended at 10.35
a.m.**
