

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Thursday, 11 December 2008

PRESENT: Councillor RMA Manning (Leader of the Council)
Councillor SM Edwards (Deputy Leader of the Council and Housing Portfolio Holder)

Councillors: Dr DR Bard New Communities Portfolio Holder
Mrs SM Ellington Environmental Services Portfolio Holder
MP Howell Staffing Portfolio Holder
AG Orgee Finance Portfolio Holder
NIC Wright Planning Portfolio Holder

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Greg Harlock	Chief Executive
Richard May	Democratic Services Manager
Catriona Dunnett	Principal Solicitor
Keith Miles	Planning Policy Manager

Councillors JD Batchelor, Mrs CAED Murfitt and RT Summerfield were in attendance, by invitation.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor TJ Wotherspoon who was attending the national Leadership Academy for Councillors.

69. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2008 were approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

Minute 59 (Housing Futures: Developing the Council's offer to tenants)

DELETE:

'Councillor Edwards also stated that the current standard of service provided by the Council could not continue and that the DLO could only be retained if the stock was transferred.'

REPLACE WITH:

Councillor Edwards also stated that the current standard of service provided by the Council could not continue. In the event that the stock was retained, the repairs service would be exposed to competition, and there was a possibility that the Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) might not be successful in this process.

70. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

71. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

72. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE - BIDS

Councillor AG Orgee, Finance Portfolio Holder, presented a report setting out proposed new capital and revenue bids for inclusion in the budget for 2008-2009 and in estimates for 2009-2010 onwards.

Councillor Orgee drew Cabinet's attention specifically to proposals for new spending of up to £50,000 in the current year and £500,000 per year in future years. The total general fund expenditure for each year to 2012 exceeded the £500,000 available, however this would be adjusted as detailed costings in respect of each bid became available. Members were advised that the sentence in Appendix B to the report stating that bids not recommended for approval had been listed in priority order was erroneous and should be deleted.

Cabinet and other Members present asked questions and made comments on the report and recommendations. In response to specific questions, the Finance Portfolio Holder advised:

- In respect of bid R76, the doubling of expenditure related to the cost of additional refuse collection rounds, including manpower and the spot-hire of refuse vehicles.
- In respect of bid R75, that the Highways Agency had refused to take on responsibility for cleaning lay-bys on the A14 and A11 despite the Council's requests for it to do so.
- That he would clarify funding arrangements for the Section 106 Monitoring Officer to confirm whether this post would be funded directly from developer contributions.

Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

- a) That the additional spending plans for 2008/09 recommended in **Appendix A** and summarised at paragraph 6 of the report be approved;
- b) That the inclusion in the estimates of the additional spending plans for 2009/10 – 2011/12 (both General Fund and Housing Revenue Account) recommended in **Appendix A** and summarised at paragraph 6 of the report be approved;
- c) That the recommendations in **Appendix C** to the report for the General Fund Capital Programme be approved;
- d) That the plans at paragraph 11 of the report for consultation on the Council's finance and policy planning be noted;
- e) That the position at paragraph 12 of the report on the proposed meeting with the Local Government Minister be noted.

73. CAPITAL & REVENUE ESTIMATES FOR STAFFING & CENTRAL OVERHEAD ACCOUNTS

Councillor AG Orgee, Finance Portfolio Holder, presented a report recommending approval of the Capital Programme to 2011-2012 and the Revenue Estimates to 2009-10 for the Staffing and Central Overhead Accounts.

Councillor Orgee advised that the estimates had been considered and endorsed by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee at its meeting on 4 December 2008.

Concern was expressed that the inflationary figure of 2.5% was likely to fluctuate significantly due to the continuing economic uncertainty. The Portfolio Holder acknowledged this uncertainty, but advised that 2.5% was the best estimate available given the impossibility of predicting economic developments over the next 12 months.

Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

- (b) That the inflation figure of 2.5%, both for general expenditure and pay awards, on which all the estimates are being prepared, be confirmed.
- (c) That the revenue estimates and recharges set out at **Appendix A and Appendix B** to the report, be approved.
- (d) That the capital programme be approved as shown at **Appendix C** to the report.
- (e) That it be noted that the total 2008-09 revised estimates for Staffing and Central Overheads reduces the current budget by £122,450, which will offset possible additional expenditure or shortfalls of income elsewhere in the revised estimates.

74. REVIEW OF CITY/DISTRICT BOUNDARY

Councillor RMA Manning, Leader of the Council, presented a report notifying Cabinet of the response from the Government Office for the East of England (GO-East) giving its views on future treatment of housing allocation targets for South Cambridgeshire. As a result of this response, which was considered by Council to represent as good an assurance as could realistically be secured in respect of future housing allocations, the Leader felt able to recommend that the request for a review of the administrative boundary between the Council and Cambridge City Council proceed. Cabinet acknowledged that there remained an element of risk attached to this approach, but that this could be partially offset by a joint submission by the two authorities working in partnership. The Planning Inspector, when determining future housing allocations, would take the results of the review into account.

Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

- (a) That the letter from the Government Office for the East of England, set out at Agenda pages 45-46, be relied upon as the best assurance that can be obtained in all the circumstances to mitigate the risk identified on the implications for the Regional Housing Targets within the RSS (East of England Plan) should the boundary proposals identified be implemented, and,
- (b) That, as a consequence of (a) above, the Chief Executive be authorised to submit a request for a review of the administrative boundary between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council on the basis of the proposals referred to in paragraph (7) of the report and the Resolution of the Council on 17 July 2008 set out at Minute 32(d).

75. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (LDF) ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

Councillor Dr DR Bard, New Communities Portfolio Holder, presented a report

recommending agreement of the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report for submission to Communities and Local Government (CLG).

Cabinet was advised that the figures in the report were correct to 31 March 2008, therefore economic changes since this date would not be reflected. It could be anticipated that the level of housing completions would be lower for 2008-2009, although it was significant that the overall net level of completions had risen above the projection during 2007-2008. Cabinet was advised that only five permanent traveller pitches had been granted during the year, however several temporary permissions had been granted during this period.

Cabinet **RESOLVED** that the contents of the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), set out with the electronic version of the Agenda, be agreed for submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government, and that the New Communities Portfolio Holder be authorised to make any further minor editing changes prior to submission.

76. RESPONSE TO LOCAL AUTHORITY FINANCE SETTLEMENT 2009/10

Councillor AG Orgee, Finance Portfolio Holder, presented a report seeking agreement of the Council's response to the provisional local authority financial settlement. Councillor Orgee considered that it was important to continue to lobby government for the Council to receive a fair and equitable settlement, given that, for 2009-2010, it had received the minimum cash increase of 0.5% compared to the average national increase of 4.2%.

The Chief Executive circulated copies of a letter received from the Secretary of State advising authorities that average increases in Council Tax should be substantially below 5%. Notwithstanding the contents of this letter, it was considered that the Council had a solid case for proposing an increase of 4.9%.

Members were advised that the response to government would be copied to local MPs and MEPs.

Cabinet **RESOLVED** that the Council's response to the provisional local authority finance settlement be agreed as set out in Appendix A to the report.

77. NORTH WEST CAMBRIDGE AREA ACTION PLAN

Councillor Dr DR Bard presented a report advising Members of a request by the Inspectors holding the North West Cambridge Area Action Plan Examination to carry out additional work relating to their proposal to increase the area of land allocated for University development. This item had not been published with the Agenda and was for information only; however, the Leader of the Council had agreed to its inclusion to allow Members to comment on the Inspector's request in a public forum.

Councillor Bard advised that the Council had been asked to consider a maximum development site option which moved development significantly down the site escarpment and provided for a narrower gap between the northern and southern sections of the development. The site proposed would be subject to sustainability appraisal and public consultation prior to its formal assessment by the Council.

Members expressed concern that the long and detailed work to identify a preferred site, previously undertaken to bring forward the draft Area Action Plan for submission to the Secretary of State, had been compromised by the Inspector's request. As with other recent development plan documents, the Inspector had power to impose binding

changes to the action plan on the Council, which might be against the wishes of its elected Members and therefore contrary to the principles of local democracy.

Cabinet thanked officers for bringing forward a report at such short notice, endorsed the decision to comply with the Inspector's request and requested further that site density be taken into consideration during forthcoming discussions with the Inspectors.

78. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

There were no issues arising from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

79. UPDATES FROM CABINET MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no updates from Cabinet Members appointed to outside bodies.

**The Meeting ended at 3.10
p.m.**
