

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on  
Tuesday, 28 June 2016 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Sue Ellington – Chairman  
Councillor David McCraith – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: David Bard, Val Barrett, Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Francis Burkitt, Tom Bygott, Nigel Cathcart, Doug Cattermole, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Simon Edwards, Andrew Fraser, Jose Hales, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Mark Howell, Peter Johnson, Sebastian Kindersley, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood, Mervyn Loynes, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, Cicely Murfitt, Charles Nightingale, Des O'Brien, Tony Orgee, Deborah Roberts, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Edd Stonham, Peter Topping, Ingrid Tregouing, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright

Officers: Alex Colyer Executive Director, Corporate Services  
Jean Hunter Chief Executive  
Simon Pugh Head of Legal, Cambridge City Council  
Graham Watts Democratic Services Team Leader

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received by Councillors Brian Burling, Simon Crocker, Neil Davies, Caroline Hunt, Alex Riley, Bunty Waters and David Whiteman-Downes.

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

No declarations of interest were received.

### **3. THE EAST ANGLIA DEVOLUTION PROPOSAL**

Council considered a report which set out the results of the governance review undertaken in relation to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area. A copy of the governance review document was appended to the report, together with the content of the proposed devolution deal and the draft governance scheme which outlined the key governance structures of a proposed Combined Authority.

Councillor Peter Topping, Leader of the Council, proposed that Council:

- (a) considered and endorsed the conclusions and outcome of the Governance Review (attached at Appendix A of the report) that the establishment of a Combined Authority with a Mayor for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area would be likely to improve the exercise of statutory functions in that area;
- (b) approved, in principle, the content of the Devolution Deal proposal (attached at Appendix B of the report) and to formally confirm that this replaces in its entirety the East Anglia Devolution Agreement signed in March 2016;
- (c) approved, in principle, the Governance Scheme (attached at Appendix C of the report) and requested the Chief Executive undertakes appropriate consultation on its content;

- (d) resolved to convene a meeting of Full Council to take place in October 2016 to consider whether to support, in principle, the granting of consent for the Secretary of State to bring forward such an Order to establish a Mayoral/Combined Authority covering that area of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Councillor Topping stated that if the motion was agreed by this Council and other authorities in the area then the matter would move to public consultation, returning to the Council for further consideration later in the year. He took this opportunity to thank officers of those authorities involved for the hard work they had undertaken within challenging deadlines on the devolution deal and paid tribute to Councillor Ray Manning as former Leader of the Council for his contribution and the negotiations he had led with the Government in respect of devolution. He also extended his thanks to all Members of the Council who had contributed through informal briefings and discussions on devolution held in the lead up to this meeting.

Councillor Topping made the following points in presenting his motion:

- the taxable revenue a prosperous Cambridge and surrounding area would bring into the exchequer was one of the reasons why the Government was seeking to devolve power;
- the proposed governance model of a Combined Authority with an elected Mayor would give power to people and take it away from Westminster;
- the elected Mayor would be accountable and would be a person who brought things together, responded to issues and worked with the Combined Authority to make things happen;
- subsequent devolution phases to this initial devolution deal could be achieved and developed further, with Manchester given as an example of a City in its fourth phase since its original devolution deal was agreed;
- the devolution deal currently included £100 million for housing to address the needs of residents in the area;
- affordable housing was something that residents desperately needed in South Cambridgeshire, so this £100 million could result in reducing the Council's waiting list;
- this devolution deal was very positive, and an opportunity to make something happen.

Councillor Simon Edwards, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, seconded the proposal.

Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer proposed an amendment to paragraph (a), removing the words 'with a Mayor' so that it read:

'That Council considered and endorsed the conclusions and outcome of the Governance Review (attached at Appendix A of the report) that the establishment of a Combined Authority for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area would be likely to improve the exercise of statutory functions in that area'.

Councillor Van de Weyer did not think there were any substantial reasons in the documentation to suggest that a Mayor was the preferred option. He therefore felt that it would be a mistake to present a Mayor model as being the best choice in the public consultation.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Opposition, seconded the amendment.

Councillor Deborah Roberts referred to those areas where referendums were originally held for elected Mayors in which she said that nine out of ten areas had voted against their introduction. Councillor Roberts' view was that this demonstrated people's opinions on elected Mayors, saying that one person in control was not what the general public wanted.

Councillor John Williams was concerned that the functions devolved from the Government would be exercisable only by the Mayor, as stated in the draft governance scheme. He also referred to the overview of options in the governance review document and did not understand why a Combined Authority without a Mayor, which he felt was a more coherent approach, had not been given more consideration. Councillor Williams added that the inclusion of a Mayor was unnecessary, that this effectively added another layer and took power away from people democratically elected by communities.

Councillor Nick Wright supported the elected Mayor model, saying that the role would add value with that person leading the case for the people of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and securing further monies from the Government. He referred to the Manchester devolution deal and its fourth phase and was of the view that the Mayor would be key in leading negotiations to ensure Cambridge and Peterborough secured further phases in future years.

Councillor David Bard supported Councillor Wright's comments, adding that it was important for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to have a figure head.

Councillor Sebastian Kindersley was concerned with the relationship between the elected Mayor and planning. He referred to paragraph 2.6.4 of the draft governance scheme and the creation of Mayoral Development Corporations with planning and land assembly powers, posing the question to all Members as to how they would feel if developments were imposed on the communities they represented through such a vehicle.

Councillor Simon Edwards saw the Mayor as an ally and someone who would work with and for authorities such as South Cambridgeshire District Council. Referring to the draft governance scheme and Councillor Williams' point, he said it clearly stated that any Mayoral Development Corporation could only bring forward schemes subject to agreement of the local area. Councillor Edwards highlighted the difficulties that had been experienced with the Greater Cambridge City Deal and shared services in terms of getting partners together. He was therefore of the view that the devolution deal needed a single person who could take control and do things on their own, adding that it would not work without a Mayor.

Councillor John Batchelor reflected on what he thought was a huge bureaucracy with the Mayor sitting above a Cabinet made up of representatives of the partner authorities and a significant number of other committees and responsibilities being part of the proposed structure. He questioned who would populate these committees and how officer support would be provided, stating that the documentation did not make reference to how this aspect of the deal would be funded.

Councillor Bridget Smith could not identify within the documentation any reason why a Mayor was required as part of the deal and highlighted that recent consultation with residents of South Cambridgeshire clarified that people did not want this. She compared the role to that of the Police and Crime Commissioner, questioning the value for money and benefits that specific role had added and was deeply disappointed that the deal about to be consulted upon was not one that included a Combined Authority without an elected Mayor.

Voting on the amendment, with 22 votes in favour and 28 votes against, the amendment was lost.

Enough Members as prescribed by Council's Standing Orders requested a recorded vote. Votes were therefore cast as follows:

### **In favour**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Tom Bygott, Nigel Cathcart, Doug Cattermole, Jose Hales, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Peter Johnson, Sebastian Kindersley, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood, Cicely Murfitt, Des O'Brien, Deborah Roberts, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Edd Stonham, Ingrid Tregoing, Aidan Van de Weyer and John Williams.

### **Against**

Councillors David Bard, Val Barrett, Francis Burkitt, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Simon Edwards, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Mark Howell, Mervyn Loynes, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, David McCraith, Charles Nightingale, Tony Orgee, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Peter Topping, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

Councillor John Williams moved an amendment to paragraph (a) to remove the words 'would be likely to' and replace them with the word 'will' so that it read:

'That Council considered and endorsed the conclusions and outcome of the Governance Review (attached at Appendix A of the report) that the establishment of a Combined Authority with a Mayor for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area will improve the exercise of statutory functions in that area.'

Councillor John Williams felt that if this was the best deal that could be achieved then the Council should be saying it would definitely improve the exercise of statutory functions, rather than being likely to improve it.

Councillor Philippa Hart seconded the amendment.

Councillor Peter Topping questioned Members refusing to accept the elected Mayor aspect of the devolution deal and subsequently asking the Council to commit to say that the model would definitely make a positive difference.

Councillor Bridget Smith said this was about demonstrating a courage of convictions and that if it did not work the fact the Council only said it was likely to work, in her view, was a get out clause which she did not want to see. Councillor Deborah Roberts supported this view.

Councillor Anna Bradnam reiterated the point made by Councillor John Batchelor earlier in the meeting in respect of the required infrastructure that this governance arrangement consisted of and questioned how it would be funded.

Councillor Simon Edwards took this opportunity to highlight the benefits of an elected Mayor Combined Authority, as set out in paragraph 97 of the statutory governance review.

The Council unanimously supported the amendment.

Councillor Bridget Smith proposed an amendment to include a new paragraph, as follows:

‘That Council works with the constituent bodies of the proposed Combined Authority to examine ways in which the representation of the constituent bodies can be made to better reflect their political proportionality.’

Councillor John Williams seconded the amendment.

Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer was concerned with the voting arrangements for the elected Mayor and representation on the Combined Authority, with the danger that the authority could be represented by a single political party.

Councillor Hazel Smith supported Councillor Van de Weyer’s view, with the current political makeup of the Councils involved in the proposed devolution deal consisting of six Conservative authorities and one Labour authority, meaning that there would be no Liberal Democrat representation on the Combined Authority. She therefore felt that a huge number of people across the area would feel disenfranchised and that the model proposed was undemocratic. Councillor Smith added that the Combined Authority’s Scrutiny Committee would be established in the same way and questioned how this was an acceptable form of governance, seeking an increase in the size of the Combined Authority to accommodate fairer political proportionality.

Councillor Sebastian Kindersley reiterated the undemocratic nature of the governance proposal but made the point, however, that political control at local authorities could change.

Councillor Bridget Smith added that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough as an area consisted of a very large and diverse population which deserved representation.

Councillor John Williams was of the opinion that the structure being proposed completely removed the role of an opposition and said that political proportionality ensured everyone in the community was represented.

Voting on the amendment, with 19 votes in favour, 30 votes against and 1 abstention, the amendment was lost.

Councillor Tumi Hawkins proposed an amendment to include a new paragraph, as follows:

‘That Council requests that the Civic Affairs Committee examines and makes recommendations on the methods for this Council to be able to scrutinise the decisions taken by the Combined Authority and the actions of the Council’s representative(s) on the Combined Authority.’

Councillor Anna Bradnam seconded the amendment.

Council unanimously agreed the amendment.

Discussion ensued on the substantive motion, further to which the following points against the motion were noted:

- there was no indication as to how much the Combined Authority would cost, how many officers were required to run it or how it would be fundamentally beneficial to the area;

- the devolution deal added another level of bureaucracy;
- residents would be against devolution as it actually took power away from them;
- further clarity was required as to who would actually benefit from the devolution deal, especially in respect of affordable housing;
- no consideration had been given to the risk implications of entering into this devolution deal;
- the turnout for the Police and Crime Commissioner election was extremely low and it was anticipated that the turnout for an elected Mayor would be similar, given initial responses to the consultation from South Cambridgeshire residents that they were not supportive of an elected Mayor;
- it was assumed that once the devolution deal was agreed and set up it was a done deal, but the documentation set out commitments that would have to be reached in order to release further levels of funding, which would be on the basis of £20 million per year and had to be signed off by the Government. The deal would still therefore see the Combined Authority being tied to the Government and was not therefore a true devolution of power;
- it was concerning that local Councils may not have any power over Mayoral Development Corporation arrangements;
- the devolution deal was not the only solution. South Cambridgeshire District Council had prided itself on the management of its finances, service performance and its ability to negotiate with partners and the Government, so devolution was not the only option;
- the deal was undemocratic and placed too much power in too few people.

During the debate on the substantive motion, the following comments in support of the motion were noted:

- affordable housing was the key issue that residents contacted local Members about in South Cambridgeshire and the money on offer as part of the devolution deal to address that and reduce the Council's waiting lists was very significant;
- the City Deal demonstrated how powerful different bodies coming together could be in terms of attracting significant sums of money from the Government. The Combined Authority with an elected Mayor to lead negotiations would be another way of doing that;
- the elected Mayor was a single element of the deal;
- local Councils were not losing any of their powers as a result of devolution, other than the County Council which was being asked to give up one element of its powers;
- the deal would provide £20 million of funding for 30 years for infrastructure and £100 million for affordable housing;
- this deal was the first deal in the country to include an element to fund housing;
- the turnout for Police and Crime Commissioner elections could not be compared to an election for an elected Mayor of a significant Combined Authority;
- upon signing the initial deal there would be opportunities for further deals, attracting even more funding into the area, therefore significantly benefitting residents;
- raising the profile of the elected Mayor would assist in increasing elector turnout;
- this was the only deal that the area was likely to achieve with the Government and it reflected the best deal that any area in the country had been offered;
- the key issue with the devolution deal was not necessarily what it included at this stage, but what it could develop into;
- the District Council currently collected £73 million to £75 million of business rates per annum, with approximately 50% sent directly to the Treasury, 10% to other precepting authorities and the remaining 40% being subject to a tariff, leaving in

the region of £3.5 million retained by the Council. South Cambridgeshire District Council therefore saw very little benefit considering the large sums of money it collected through business rates. The devolution document stated that the Government would work with local authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to shape and influence the design of the new Local Government finance system based on the localisation of business rates in advance of its universal introduction in 2020. It was a very exciting prospect to be able to shape 100% retention of business rates returning to the area, together with the economic growth that the deal would bring;

- the District Council would remain as the statutory planning authority, so responsibilities for planning and development control would remain with South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Voting on the substantive motion, with 30 votes in favour and 20 votes against, Council:

- (a) Considered and **ENDORSED** the conclusions and outcome of the Governance Review (attached at Appendix A of the report) that the establishment of a Combined Authority with a Mayor for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area will improve the exercise of statutory functions in that area.
- (b) **APPROVED**, in principle, the content of the Devolution Deal proposal (attached at Appendix B of the report) and formally confirmed that this replaces in its entirety the East Anglia Devolution Agreement signed in March 2016.
- (c) **APPROVED**, in principle, the Governance Scheme (attached at Appendix C of the report) and requested the Chief Executive undertakes appropriate consultation on its content.
- (d) **RESOLVED** to convene a meeting of Full Council to take place in October 2016 to consider whether to support, in principle, the granting of consent for the Secretary of State to bring forward such an Order to establish a Mayoral/Combined Authority covering that area of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- (e) **REQUESTED** that the Civic Affairs Committee examines and makes recommendations on the methods for this Council to be able to scrutinise the decisions taken by the Combined Authority and the actions of the Council's representative(s) on the Combined Authority.

Enough Members as prescribed by Council's Standing Orders requested a recorded vote. Votes were therefore cast as follows:

#### **In favour**

Councillors David Bard, Val Barrett, Francis Burkitt, Tom Bygott, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Simon Edwards, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Mark Howell, Mervyn Loynes, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, David McCraith, Charles Nightingale, Des O'Brien, Tony Orgee, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Peter Topping, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

**Against**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Nigel Cathcart, Doug Cattermole, Jose Hales, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Peter Johnson, Sebastian Kindersley, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood, Cicely Murfitt, Deborah Roberts, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Edd Stonham, Ingrid Tregoing, Aidan Van de Weyer and John Williams.

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**The Meeting ended at 9.03 p.m.**

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