

Minutes of a meeting of the **CABINET** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 20 November 2012 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

G A Porter (Leader of the Council)

C N Worth (Deputy Leader of the Council)	R Gambba-Jones	G J Taylor
P S Przyszlak (Deputy Leader)	H R Johnson	
M G Chandler	C J Lawton	

Junior Portfolio Holders: R Grocock and A R Woolf

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Assistant Director Democratic Services, Assistant Director Finance (S151) and Member Services Officer.

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Ladey Adey (South Lincolnshire Community Voluntary Service), Reginald William George Boot (Parish Councils) and Maureen Scantlebury (Welland Seniors Forum).

In Attendance: Councillor B Alcock (Chairman Performance Monitoring Panel), Councillor G R Aley, Councillor A Harrison (Chairman Policy Development Panel), Councillor A M Newton (Independent Group Leader), Member Services Officer, Housing Manager, Assistant Housing Manager, Business Development Manager and Reporter/Copywriter.

Community Representatives: Councillor R Perkins (South Holland Citizens Advice Bureau), Harry Drury (Chamber of Commerce) and Jim Tyner (Lincolnshire Police).

32. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2012 were signed by the Leader as a correct record, subject to amending the attendance details as Ladey Adey was a representative of the South Lincolnshire Community Voluntary Service and not the Citizens Advice Bureau as stated.

33. **MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

No interests were declared.

34. **QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC UNDER CABINET PROCEDURE RULE 2.4**

No questions were raised by the public under Cabinet Procedure Rule 2.4.

35. **MATTERS WHICH HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO CALL-IN**

There were no matters subject to call-in.

**CABINET - 20 November 2012**

**36. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANELS**

There were no matters arising from the Policy Development and Performance Monitoring Panels.

**37. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC GRANTS REVIEW**

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Deputy Leader of the Council/Portfolio Holder for Localism and Big Society and the Community Development Manager which provided information on the review of the Council's grants programmes and sought agreement to ensure that funding focussed on delivering the Council's corporate priorities and agreed outcomes.

Councillor P S Przyszlak requested that consideration be given to the reserves when looking at grants.

Members discussed the mention of Designated Councillors' Budgets within the reports. Councillor C N Worth advised that there were some very small grant schemes which were currently approaching members regarding their budgets. Councillor R Gambba-Jones stated that some members had struggled in the past when spending their budgets, and that knowing the validity and worth of the groups that were approaching them would be useful. Councillor Worth suggested that members liaise with the Community Development Officer who had a lot of background information and could assist with match funding etc.

**DECISION:**

- a) That, during 2013/14, in principle the Council continued to fund key viable partner organisations that met its corporate priorities;
- b) That the Council move towards a more outcomes based approach to funding and that appropriate performance management systems be established from 2013/14;
- c) That the Deputy Leader of the Council, the Chairmen of the Performance Monitoring and Policy Development Panels and Deputy Chief Executive be given delegated authority to approve core funding based on delivery against corporate priorities, sustainability of the organisation and financial position; and
- d) That the Deputy Leader of the Council be given delegated authority to define the outcomes for future funding and information required by the Council to evidence the impact on local communities.

(Other options considered:

- Not to approve the recommendations;
- To use any savings identified to provide additional financial assistance to existing recipients;

**CABINET - 20 November 2012**

- To use any savings identified to provide additional financial assistance to organisations not currently in receipt of funding but that can deliver similar services;
- To use current funding to commission services based on delivering pre-determined outcomes;
- To utilise the community development budget to create an open grants programme; and
- In order to mitigate risks against any potential grant reductions and community support, grants could be signposted towards other grants including Designated Councillors' Budgets.

Reasons for decision:

- To ensure that groups and organisations funded help deliver the Councils corporate priorities;
- To ensure compliance with current contractual obligations;
- To enable more effective use of officer time to focus on delivering their current work programmes;
- Funding advice and support could be provided by other external partners;
- Financial contributions agreed would help lever in significant amounts of external funding and generate substantial figures of volunteer value;
- Ensure that all future funding commitments were cost effective;
- Alternative funding sources were available for activities and services previously funded, including Designated Councillors' Budgets; and
- To ensure the Council could demonstrate transparency in its funding allocations.)

**38. REVIEW OF CHARGING POLICY FOR HOMES CONNECTED TO THE COUNCIL'S SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS**

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing Landlord and the Housing Manager which sought approval to make changes to the current charging policy for homes connected to the Council's sewage treatment works.

The Leader requested officers ensure that the costs incurred were proportionate to what needed to be incurred, and that Legal advice be sought in order to minimise liability regarding leases, deeds and covenants etc. He suggested that there may be scope to collect from properties that had gone through the Right To Buy process.

**DECISION:**

- a) That delegated authority be given to the Housing Manager to commission further legal investigation work into introducing increased charges to private homeowners connected to the Councils sewage treatment plants;
- b) That, subject to the detailed legal investigation concluding that charges for private homeowners can be increased, delegated authority be given to the Housing Manager to pursue the option to recover the full shortfall amount by increasing the charges for both private homeowners and Council tenants;

**CABINET - 20 November 2012**

- c) That delegated authority be given to the Housing Manager to amend charges to Council tenants to fully recover the costs of the operating of the drain clearance service; and
- d) That delegated authority be given to the Housing Manager, in liaison with the Portfolio Holder for Housing Landlord, to deal with any matters arising.

(Other options considered:

- Not to approve the recommendations;
- To recover the full shortfall amount by increasing the sewage charges for Private customers only; and
- To recover the full shortfall amount by increasing the charges for Council tenants only.

Reasons for decision:

- To potentially reduce/remove the financial burden placed upon the Housing Revenue Account for the Council's sewage and drainage related work.)

39. **PROPOSALS FROM THE LOCALISM ACT: ALLOCATIONS AND A NEW APPROACH TO TENANCY MANAGEMENT**

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing Landlord and the Housing Manager which sought approval of the new Allocations Policy and Tenancy Strategy.

Councillor Gambba-Jones referred to the statement regarding armed forces personnel, on page 50 of Appendix B, and queried where the five year figure had come from. The Assistant Housing Manager advised that the five year figure had been recommended by the British Legion. Councillor Przyszlak suggested that it would be more appropriate to word it as a minimum of five years and not five years exactly.

Councillor H R Johnson referred to page 45 of Appendix B and queried how the figure of £65k had been worked out. The Assistant Housing Manager explained that the figure referred to the total household income of the two main earning adults. Councillor A M Newton referred to page 45 of Appendix B and queried whether the figure of £75k was too low. Members requested that the rationale be given for all the figures mentioned.

Councillor Newton referred to the statement regarding applications made by staff, elected members and their families, on page 50 of Appendix B, and queried what would happen should someone be directly related to the Housing Manager. The Leader stated that the application would have to be dealt with by the next senior officer.

**RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL:**

That, subject to the above actions being dealt with, the new Allocations Policy and Tenancy Strategy be approved.

**CABINET** - 20 November 2012

(Other options considered:

- Not to approve the recommendations; and
- To approve the recommendations with amendments.

Reasons for decision:

- To ensure that South Holland District Council complied with the Localism Act 2011 and took advantage of the opportunities that the Act now provided.)

#### 40. **CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Portfolio Holder for Internal Services, Performance and Business Development and the Human Resources Manager which sought approval and adoption of the revised Health and Safety Policy Statement for South Holland District Council.

Councillor G J Taylor explained that, in addition to having a formal policy in place, it was also very important to have a common sense approach regarding health and safety.

Councillor Worth queried the need for the Deputy Leader of the Council to sign off the Policy in addition to the Leader. Councillor A Harrison stated that on 14 November 2012 the Policy Development Panel considered the report on the revised Health and Safety Policy Statement, and members had agreed that there was no need for the Deputy Leader of the Council to sign off the Policy. She added that the Panel had supported the recommendations and agreed that they go forward to Cabinet and full Council for approval.

#### **RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL:**

That the revised Health and Safety Policy Statement for South Holland District Council, attached as Appendix A within the report, be approved and adopted.

(Other options considered:

- To recommend to Council amendments to the proposed, revised Health and Safety Policy as a replacement for the 2009 Health and Safety Policy; and
- Not to recommend to Council amendments to the proposed, revised Health and Safety Policy as a replacement for the 2009 Health and Safety Policy.

Reasons for decision:

- There were significant legal implications if an up to date and robust Health and Safety Policy was not in place;
- Having a Health and Safety Policy in place provided a clear commitment and direction for South Holland District Council to follow.)

#### 41. **FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE QUARTER 2 2012-13**

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Deputy Leader/Portfolio Holder for Strategic Finance and Democratic Services and the Assistant Director Finance (S151) which detailed information on the forecast full year financial position, as at 30 September 2012, and sought approval of recommendations detailed in the appendix within the report.

**CABINET** - 20 November 2012

Members noted that the recommendations were detailed within page 104 of Appendix A.

**RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL:**

- a) That the report and appendix be noted;
- b) That the following recommendations, detailed in Appendix A within the report be approved:
  - Increase the budget on the Spalding Water Taxi Project by £4000, to be funded from Section 106 monies;
  - Increase the budget on Manor House, Crowland by £4000, to be funded from Revenue Resources; and
  - Increase the budget for the Decent Homes Unfit and Disrepair programme by £100,000 due to the increased demand for loans, to be funded from the Regional Housing fund.

(Other options considered:

- Not to approve the recommendations; and
- To approve the recommendations with amendments.

Reasons for decision:

- To provide timely information to members on the overall finances of the Council and to make the best use of resources available.)

**42. GENERAL FUND DRAFT ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL MEDIUM TERM PLAN**

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Deputy Leader/Portfolio Holder for Strategic Finance and Democratic Services and the Assistant Director Finance (S151) which sought approval of the draft General Fund revenue and capital estimates and the draft medium financial term plan to be released for consultation.

Councillor Przyszlak explained that further information was still required. However he suggested that the draft General Fund revenue and capital estimates and the draft medium financial term plan be taken to consultation in order to provide an indication. The Chief Executive mentioned that, thanks to Deputy Chief Executive and the Assistant Director Finance (S151), the need to find £1m had been reduced to £393k in order to balance the next years budget.

**DECISION:**

That the draft General Fund revenue and capital estimates and the draft medium financial term plan be approved and released for consultation.

(Other options considered:

- Not to approve the recommendations; and
- To approve the recommendations with amendments.

**CABINET** - 20 November 2012

Reasons for decision:

- To comply with the budgetary and policy framework.)

**43. WRITE OFFS**

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Deputy Leader/Portfolio Holder for Strategic Finance and Democratic Services and the Assistant Director Finance (S151) which sought approval to write off irrecoverable debts.

Members noted that the appendices were not for publication by virtue of Paragraphs: 1 (information relating to any individual), 2 (information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual) and 3 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)) in Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972. The appendices were therefore attached to the agenda as item 16, should members wish to discuss in further depth.

Councillor Przyszlak stated that the actual cost to South Holland taxpayers was not quite as much as that stated within the report. He explained that the Non Domestic Rates were collected on behalf of Central Government and only 10% of the Council Tax figure was kept by the District Council.

**DECISION:**

That the following debts be written off:

Council Tax	-	£1,260.33
Non Domestic Rates	-	£41,790.14
Sundry Debtors	-	£1,272.60
Former Tenant Arrears	-	£9,218.44
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>£53,541.51</b>

(Other options considered:

- Not to approve the recommendations; and
- To approve the recommendations with amendments.

Reasons for decision:

- All recovery methods available had been considered and where appropriate pursued before making the decision to write off.)

**44. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**DECISION:**

That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

**CABINET** - 20 November 2012

45. **WRITE OFFS**

Consideration was given to the appendices relating to the joint report of the Deputy Leader/Portfolio Holder for Strategic Finance and Democratic Services and the Assistant Director Finance (S151) which sought approval to write off irrecoverable debts.

This item had been dealt with under agenda item 13.

46. **REVIEW OF SUPPORTED HOUSING**

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing Landlord and the Housing Manager which sought approval to modernise the Supported Housing Service.

**RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL:**

- a) That the Supported Housing Team functions be separated out to ensure that landlord and supported people functions were independent;
- b) That additional reports be commissioned on the future supply and demand for sheltered housing and any opportunities for Nene House;
- c) That, subject to Lincolnshire County Council confirming a successful bid as outlined within the report, members approve option 4 within the report; and
- d) That, should the revised bids as outlined within the report prove unsuccessful, the future provision of sheltered housing and lifeline management within the South Holland District be commissioned by Lincolnshire County Council as outlined within the report.

(Other options considered:

- Not to approve the recommendations; and
- To approve the recommendations with amendments.

Reasons for decision:

- To ensure that any further provision of sheltered housing and lifeline management is appropriately funded and reflected both the supply and demand for services.)

(The meeting ended at 8.00 pm)

(End of minutes)

**CABINET - 20 November 2012**

These minutes are published on Friday 23 November 2012. In accordance with the Council's Constitution the DECISIONS detailed above will, unless otherwise stated, come into force and may then be implemented on Monday 3 December 2012 (i.e. after the expiry of 5 working days from the date of publication of these minutes), unless during that period a notice which is signed by at least one member of the Council and complies with the requirements of Rules 15(b), (c) and (d) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules is served on the Assistant Director Democratic Services requesting that the decision be called-in and the Assistant Director Democratic Services approves the request for call-in. Where a decision is called-in it will firstly be considered by the Performance Monitoring Panel on a date to be fixed.

Any FINAL DECISIONS and any URGENT DECISIONS take effect immediately.

Any RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL detailed above will be submitted for consideration to the meeting of the full Council on Wednesday 28 November 2012.

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