

Minutes of a meeting of the **CABINET** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 12 March 2019 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

G A Porter (Leader)

M G Chandler (Deputy
Leader)
T A Carter

A Casson
R Gambba-Jones

C N Johnson
C J Lawton

The Chief Executive, the Executive Director Commercialisation (S151), the Executive Director Strategy and Governance, the Executive Director Place, the Executive Manager Governance, the Executive Manager Information, the Executive Manager Property and Development, the Executive Manager Growth, the Place Manager, the Housing Landlord Services Manager, the Housing Options Manager, the Delivery Unit Project Manager, the Environmental Services Manager, the Head of Service Revenues and Benefits (CPBS), the Recovery and Support Team Leader (CPBS), the IT Manager (Shared), the Digital and Customer Access Manager, the Customer Services Service Manager and the Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors C N Worth, P E Coupland, G J Taylor and B Alcock (Chairman, Performance Monitoring Panel), together with South Holland Citizens Advice Bureau, Parish Councils and Welland Seniors Forum.

In Attendance: Councillor G R Aley (Chairman, Governance and Audit Committee), Councillor A M Newton (Independent Group Leader) and Councillor F Biggadike.

75. MINUTES

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 12 February 2019 were signed by the Leader as a correct record.

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Councillor Porter informed the meeting that in relation to agenda items 13 and 14, in the interests of transparency, he wished it to be recorded that he was a small scale private sector landlord, and that he would leave the meeting during discussion of these items.

Councillor Carter informed the meeting that in relation to agenda items 13 and 14, in the interests of transparency, she wished it to be recorded that she was a small scale private sector landlord, and that she would leave the meeting during discussion of these items.

Action By

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77. QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC UNDER THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION (STANDING ORDERS).

No questions were raised under the Council's Constitution (Standing Orders).

78. TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS WHICH HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO CALL-IN.

There were no matters subject to call-in.

79. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANELS

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

80. RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder for Governance and Customer which requested that the Cabinet consider and approve the Records Management Policy for the Council.

DECISION:

That the Records Management Policy be approved and that delegated authority be given to the Executive Manager for Governance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Governance and Customer, to make minor amendments to the Policy.

(Other options considered:

- *To do nothing.*

Reasons for decision:

- *The Council is required to have a Records Management Policy and Retention Policy in place in order to show transparency and to comply with Data Protection legislation.)*

81. CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder for Governance and Customer and the Executive Director Strategy and Governance, which requested that the Cabinet agree to implement the Customer Access Strategy, which aimed to improve residents' experience of contacting South Holland District Council while also increasing the efficiency of overall operating arrangements.

KM, MS

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DECISION:

- a) That the draft Customer Access Strategy be approved;
- b) That the strategy be implemented from April 2019, to align with the Council's new Corporate Plan; and
- c) That the strategy's progress be reported to the Council's Performance Monitoring Panel on a six monthly basis, or as appropriate.

SB

CM

(Other options considered:

- *To propose changes to the draft Customer Access Strategy, or its reporting to the Council's Performance Monitoring Panel every six months;*
- *Do nothing.*

Reasons for decision:

- *To set out a clear plan for making best use of Council resources to meet the needs of its customers, achieving value for money for the Council and its residents.)*

82. ICT & DIGITAL STRATEGY AND DIGITAL WORK PROGRAMME 2019 - 2022

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Governance and Transformation and the Executive Director Strategy and Governance, which requested that the Cabinet adopt the new ICT and Digital Strategy, and recommended to Council the transfer of funds to ensure the delivery of the Digital Work Programme.

DECISION:

- a) That the draft ICT and Digital Strategy be approved, and implemented from April 2019 to align with the Council's new Corporate Plan;
- b) That the Digital Work Programme associated with this strategy be approved, subject to recommendation 4 below being agreed at Council on 27 March 2019;
- c) That the strategy's progress be reported to the Council's Performance Monitoring Panel on a six monthly basis, or as appropriate.

SB

CM

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

- d) That in order to deliver the Digital Work Programme, a transfer of £331,613 from the Council's investment and growth reserve

CM

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be approved.

(Other options considered:

- *Propose changes to the draft ICT and Digital Strategy and/or digital work programme, or their reporting to the Council's Performance Monitoring Panel every six months;*
- *Do nothing.*

Reasons for decision:

- *The strategy sets out a clear plan for making best use of Council resources to meet the needs of its customers – residents, businesses, staff and elected Members, while achieving value for money for the Council.)*

83. CAR PARKING CONSULTATION OUTCOME

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder for Place, which provided members with details of the outcomes of the statutory consultation and requested that changes to the car parking order be agreed.

DECISION:

a) That, having taken into account the results of the consultation, installation of card and cash payment machines be agreed, for the car parks at:

- Sheep Market – Spalding PE11 1BE
- Victoria Street – Spalding PE11 1EA
- Holland Road – Spalding PE11 1UL
- Winfrey Avenue - Spalding PE11 1DA
- The Vista – Spalding PE11 2RA
- Swimming Pool – Spalding PE11 1QD

b) That, having taken into account the results of the consultation, it be agreed that the South Holland District Council (Off Street Parking Places) (Civil Enforcement) Order 2012 be amended so as to allow payment of parking charges by 'any means advertised' such as coin, card and mobile phone.

(Other options considered:

- *To do nothing.*

Reasons for decision:

- *That the order is made future proof by amending it to accept the provision of 'any payment method as advertised' to allow for changes in technology and include current options such as mobile phone payments for car parking as part of the consultation;*
- *To provide the customers of SHDC's car parks a much*

CP

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improved service by giving them a variety of payment methods).

(The Environmental Services Manager left the meeting following discussion of this item.)

84. OPPORTUNITY PETERBOROUGH CONTRACT

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder for Growth and Commercialisation which asked the Cabinet to review the continuation of the Opportunity Peterborough contract for a further six months.

DECISION:

That following consideration of the activity pursued during the first period of the Opportunity Peterborough contract (as set out within the report), continuation of the arrangement be approved for a further six months.

NB

(Other options considered:

- *To give notice of termination of contract and cease work with Opportunity Peterborough, and not to conclude the remaining period of the contract.*

Reasons for decision:

- *The work undertaken during the initial contract period has been completed in accordance with the service scope captured within the contract for the arrangement;*
- *Activity developed and pursued over the first period of the contract, specifically work relating to further proactive business engagement and the development of a well-articulated approach to marketing South Holland as a location 'open for business' points to the relationship having the potential to be effective over the lifespan of the two year period.)*

85. REVIEW OF HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health and the Executive Director Place, which advised members of the consultation process required to amend the Council's Housing Allocations Policy and sought approval to begin this process, implementing a new policy.

Proposed changes to the Policy, on which consultation would take place, were appended to the report.

DECISION:

- a) That subject to consultation with affordable housing partners

JK

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the report, outlining the proposed changes to the Council's Housing Allocations Policy, be approved; and

- b) That, subject to consultation, implementation of the revised Housing allocations Policy from April 2019 be approved.

(Other options considered:

- *To do nothing, and continue to operate under the existing Housing Allocations Policy.*

Reasons for decision:

- *To introduce changes that will create a simpler system to use, an emphasis on applicant self-management encouraging responsibility for their housing application and the encouragement for people to take an informed, measured and long term view of their housing options.)*

(The Head of Service- Customer Contact (CPBS) left the meeting following discussion of this item).

(Councillors Porter and Carter left the meeting following discussion of this item, for the next two items of business (HIMO Licensing Policy and Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy).

86. HIMO LICENSING POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health and the Executive Director Place, which advised members of the proposed new HIMO Licensing Policy and sought approval to implement the revised Policy.

Upon consideration of the report, the following issues were raised:

- Section 1.4 of the report advised that a HIMO must have a licence if it had five or more people in two or more households. It was stated that the report did not refer to family groups – this could affect whether these criteria were applicable, and clarification was sought as to how the Authority established whether a family group existed. Officers responded that in order to establish a family connection, paper evidence was required as part of the application from the landlord. If this was not available, the property would be inspected to determine the situation.
- It was stated that there was currently a mismatch between criteria within the HIMO Licensing Policy and those relating to planning permissions. This was being addressed and it was important to ensure that all relevant permissions were in place before a license was granted.
- It was clarified that the HIMO Licensing Policy had arisen following a statutory direction from central government.

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DECISION:

That recent legislative changes affecting the Council's Private Sector Housing Team be noted, and the policy entitled HIMO Licensing Policy be approved.

JK, PS

(Other options considered:

- *To do nothing and continue with the existing Policy.*

Reasons for decision:

- *To have a licensing policy which was compliant with current legislation and met the needs of a responsive Private Sector Housing service.)*

(The Shared Executive Manager Information and the Shared IT Manager left the meeting following discussion of the above item.)

87. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder Housing and Health and the Executive Director Place which asked the Cabinet to consider the draft Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy and sought approval to implement the revised Policy.

Councillor Biggadike commented that disposal of refuse at properties with no curtilage was an issue and that no reference was made within the policy as to how this problem would be addressed. It was noted that this was an important issue which gave HIMOs a bad reputation. The Authority would consider, with the enforcement team, how it would be dealt with going forward.

DECISION:

That the revised Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy attached at Appendix A to the report be approved and implemented.

JK, PS

(Other options considered:

- *To do nothing, and continue to operate without an updated formal Private Sector Housing Enforcement policy.*

Reasons for decision:

- *To have an enforcement policy which is compliant with current legislation and meets the needs of a responsive Private Sector Housing function).*

(The Housing Options Manager and Councillor F Biggadike left the meeting following discussion of the above item.)

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(Councillors Porter and Carter returned to the meeting following discussion of the above item.)

88. DEBT WRITE OFF

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder, Finance and the Executive Director Commercialisation (S151) which sought approval for the write off of uncollectable debt.

Members noted that the report contained details of individual debts within the confidential appendices (Appendix A – Council Tax and Appendix B – Business Rates), and a copy of the Operational Debt Write Off Policy in confidential Appendix C. These 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 any individual) and 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

Members agreed that only the principles of the report would be discussed and there was therefore no need for the meeting to go into private session.

It was noted that the indicative loss to the Council amounted to £1171.23.

DECISION:

That the following debts be written off:

Council Tax	£1,211.54
Business Rates	£1,729.94
Total:	£2,941.48

(Other options considered:

- Do nothing; or*
- 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;*
- Officer time can be maximised on greatest returns, at the same time as ensuring robust procedures for debt management are in place across all revenue streams.)*

89. BENEFITS VERIFICATION POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder for

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Finance and the Executive Director Commercialisation (S151) which defined the standards of verification for evidence required in respect of Housing Benefit claims and Local Council Tax Support Applications, to help protect public funds from fraud and error.

DECISION:

- a) That the Benefits Verification Policy be approved, with implementation from 1 April 2019; and
- b) That subsequent annual reviews and revisions be delegated to the Executive Director Commercialisation (S151) and the Portfolio Holder for Finance.

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(Other options considered:

- *Do nothing.*

Reasons for decision:

- *The new Benefits Verification Policy will help prevent fraud and error at the same time as ensuring a clear and consistent standard approach to the evidence requirements and verification to support new Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims and changes in circumstances.)*

(The Housing Landlord Services Manager, the Digital and Customer Access Manager, the Head of Service – Revenues and Benefits (CPBS) and the Recovery and Support Team Leader left the meeting following discussion of the above item.)

90. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE LEADER DECIDES ARE URGENT.

There were no urgent items.

91. 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 and 7 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

92. FUTURE OCCUPANCY OF THE SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL'S OFFICE AT PRIORY ROAD, SPALDING

Consideration was given to the report of the Deputy Leader which requested agreement from the Cabinet for letting accommodation

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at the Council Offices at Priory Road, Spalding.

DECISION:

- a) That the Cabinet authorise the Executive Director of Commercialisation (S151), in consultation with the Deputy Leader in their capacity as Chair of the Priory Road Community Hub Sub Committee to negotiate, conclude terms and enter into a leasehold agreement with the party identified in the report, for space on the ground floor of the South Holland District Council Offices, on the terms set out in the report;

RH

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL:

- b) That it be recommended to full Council that the Cabinet approve a provisional sum budget of up to £10,000 from the Growth and Investment Reserve toward the costs associated with moving staff currently occupying space at South Holland District Council Offices;
- c) Full Council to approve a budget of £82,500 capital contribution towards the cost of undertaking works required prior to taking occupancy and which will be recovered through the resulting leasehold agreement with the party identified in the report.

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(Other options considered:

- *To seek to renegotiate terms, cease negotiation or seek another tenant.*

Reasons for decision:

- *One Public Estate – The Council’s Moving Forward Programme includes themes about partnership working and maximising opportunities from this. Supporting the One Public Estate agenda is a good example of such an initiative.)*

(The meeting ended at 10.55 am)

(End of minutes)

These minutes are published on 15 March 2019. In accordance with the Council’s Constitution the DECISIONS detailed above will, unless otherwise stated, come into force and may then be implemented on 25 March 2019 (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 either a Ward Representative (in relation to a matter in their ward) or two members of the Performance Monitoring Panel or any three

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members, and complies with the requirements of the Council's Constitution is served on the Executive Manager Governance requesting that the decision be called-in and the Executive Manager Governance 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 27 March 2019.