

Forest Heath District Council

MINUTES of the **CABINET** held at the District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall on Tuesday 2 October 2012 at 6.00pm.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

J E Waters (Leader)	Mrs R E Burt
N A Roman (Deputy Leader)	S J Edwards
D W Bowman	W Hirst

Councillor T Simmons was also in attendance.

Also in attendance:

D Beighton, Principal Planner
I Gallin, Chief Executive
P Heard, Legal Services Manager
R Littlechild, Head of HR and Corporate Support
K Marley, Head of Environmental Services
L Pope, Head of Finance, ICT, Internal Audit and Procurement
L Watts, Director
A Wilson, Director
H Hardinge, Committee Administrator

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R J Millar.

198. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions/statements from members of the public.

199. **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2012 were unanimously accepted by the Cabinet as an accurate record and signed by the Leader.

200. **MINUTES OF JOINT COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS AND OTHER GROUPS**

The minutes of the following Joint Committee were received:

Joint Development Management Policies Committee

23 August 2012

201. **JOINT DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES COMMITTEE – 23 AUGUST 2012 – MINUTE NO 6. JOINT DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES – SUBMISSION VERSION CONSULTATION (REPORT NO D110)**

Members were requested to note the recommendation listed under this item, as it had been subject to a report previously considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 4 September 2012.

202. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the respective Committee be approved, as amended, and that authority is hereby given for such action to be taken as necessary to give effect thereto.

KEY DECISIONS

203. **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – JOINT AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (REPORT NO CAB12/031)** (Forward Plan Reference OCT12/09)

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Transport advised that his item had been previously considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 29 May 2012 at which the document was approved for consultation.

However, that consultation never commenced and further work had since been carried out to the document to introduce a 'Local Connection Criteria' to enable the allocation of housing to those in need.

The Local Plan Working Group had since reconsidered the amended document and Cabinet's approval was now sought prior to consultation taking place.

Members welcomed the amended document and remarked upon its importance to the District.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the Joint Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document be approved for public consultation.

204. **CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT POLICY (REPORT NO CAB12/032)** (Forward Plan Reference OCT12/02)

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste advised that Forest Heath District Council's Enforcement Policy was approved in October 2009 and was now due for review.

The aim was to develop a joint policy with St Edmundsbury Borough Council over the next 12 months. In the interim it was proposed that the current Forest Heath Policy, which was still relevant and appropriate (subject to minor updating), continued to be used until the new joint policy was approved.

The Cabinet Member thanked the Officers concerned for the production of the report and Cabinet welcomed the amended Policy.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. Forest Heath District Council's Corporate Enforcement Policy, as attached as Appendix 1 to Report No CAB12/032, be approved for a further 12 months; and
2. Development of a joint Enforcement Policy with St Edmundsbury Borough Council, under the new Head of Regulatory Services, be approved.

205. **SINGLE PAY AND REWARD STRATEGY (REPORT NO CAB12/033)** (Forward Plan Reference OCT12/04)

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Governance and Performance presented this report which advised Cabinet of the process to move to a Single Pay and Reward Strategy across Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, for all staff.

Delegated Authority was sought to take the steps required to achieve a collective agreement with Unison, the recognised trade union, on the pay and terms and conditions for posts below senior management level, which would complete the outstanding pay review.

The Cabinet Member thanked HR Officers for the production of the report and the detailed work which had been undertaken to support the Strategy.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RECOMMENDED:

That:-

1. The Joint Chief Executive be given Delegated Authority, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Resources, Governance and Performance (Forest Heath District Council) and Performance and Resources (St Edmundsbury Borough Council) to enter into negotiations with Unison on the Councils' preferred single payline model, outlined in Paragraph 10 of Report No CAB12/033, in order to reach a collective agreement within the agreed criteria, outlined in Paragraph 7 of the report, and subject to the 7 year projected costs being within the existing combined pay budget;

2. Progress be noted on moving to a Single Pay and Reward Strategy across the Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council partnership; and
3. Any agreed Joint Pay and Reward Policy emanating from the delegations detailed in Recommendation 1 (above) will be reported to each Council for adoption by 31 March 2013, as outlined in Paragraph 12 of the report.

206. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESOURCE REVIEW – BUSINESS RATES RETENTION: POOLING (REPORT NO CAB12/034)** (Forward Plan Reference OCT12/10)

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Governance and Performance explained that one of the features of the Local Government Finance Bill, currently going through Parliament, was the retention of a proportion of the business rates revenue generated in a local area by the relevant local authorities.

Creating a business rates pool would ensure maximum amounts of business rates collected in Suffolk remained in Suffolk, and it provided opportunities for the eight Councils to work together to deliver enhanced economic prosperity for the County as a whole.

The Cabinet Member advised that the date of 19 October 2012, as made reference to in the first page of the report, as being the completion date for formal sign off of the intention to pool, had since been extended to 9 November 2012.

Councillor T Simmons addressed the Cabinet and made reference to Paragraph 10 of Report No CAB12/034 and the reference therein to 'encouraging business development'. He asked if it would be possible for the Council to state that they would wish to encourage business development specifically in the areas of high unemployment in the District.

The Leader took the point on board and agreed to raise this in the discussions to be held between Suffolk Public Sector Leaders.

Lastly, the Cabinet Member advised of a minor amendment to Recommendation 2, following which, with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. Forest Heath District Council should continue to form a pool with the County and Borough/District Councils in Suffolk for the collection of business rates, with effect from 1 April 2013;
2. The detailed governance and operating arrangements be established and approved by Suffolk Public Sector Leaders;
3. The County Council becomes the Lead Authority and acts as Banker for the pool; and

4. The Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer be empowered to sign on behalf of the Council to request DCLG to designate the Suffolk pool, in line with DCLG timescales.

NON KEY DECISIONS

207. HOUSING LAND SUPPLY – A WAY FORWARD (REPORT NO CAB12/035)

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Transport explained that the Forest Heath district did not currently have enough land set aside or identified for all the housing needed over the next five years.

Given the implications of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework, and the presumption in favour of not approving sustainable development proposals where the development plan was not up to date - as in the case of Forest Heath - it was important that consideration was given to rectifying this shortfall in as expeditious a manner as possible.

Cabinet was, therefore, asked to consider what options were available to the Council in order to take a more proactive approach, whilst still complying with all the relevant planning legislation.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Transport be delegated to work with Planning Officers in order to conclude this matter as quickly as possible.

208. REVIEW OF KEY DECISIONS TO BE CONSIDERED AT CABINET (REPORT NO CAB12/036)

The Legal Services Manager asked Cabinet to review the list of Key Decisions to be considered at Cabinet for the period October 2012 to May 2013.

The Officer informed Members that since publication of the agenda an amendment to the list of Key Decisions had been issued in order to enable a further report to be considered at the Cabinet meeting on 6 November 2012.

He also verbally advised on additional amendments to the document which had since been made.

Councillor T Simmons addressed the Cabinet and made reference to Key Decision Reference NOV12/02 'Residents Parking Zone – Assess Options/Ballot Results'. He asked whether consultation with the Newmarket District Councillors had commenced on this item.

The Chief Executive agreed to seek clarity on the timescales associated with this item and would inform Cabinet and Newmarket Ward Members direct.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the list of Key Decisions to be considered at Cabinet, for the period October 2012 – May 2013, attached as an Appendix to Report No CAB12/036, be noted subject to the amendments as advised verbally at the meeting.

The meeting closed at 6.25pm.