

Forest Heath District Council

MINUTES of the **CABINET** held at the District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall on Tuesday 5 March 2013 at 6.00pm.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

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

S J Edwards
W Hirst
R J Millar

Councillors W J Bishop, M J Jefferys, C Noble and T Simmons were also in attendance.

Also in attendance:

N Baker, Head of Planning and Regulatory Services
I Gallin, Chief Executive
P Gudde, Environment Manager
P Heard, Legal Services Manager
R Mann, Head of Resources and Performance
A Mayley, Head of Economic Development and Growth
L Watts, Director
H Hardinge, Committee Administrator

APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

455. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

456. **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2013 were unanimously accepted by the Cabinet as an accurate record and signed by the Leader.

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

The minutes of the following meetings were received:

Anglia Revenues & Benefits Partnership Joint Committee	30 January 2013
Local Plan Working Group	4 February 2013
Joint Development Management Policies Committee	11 February 2013

458. **LOCAL PLAN WORKING GROUP – 4 FEBRUARY 2013 – MINUTE NO 248 'JOINT DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES – SUBMISSION' (REPORT NO LOP13/004)**

Members were requested to note the recommendation listed under this item as it was to be considered by Cabinet at a future meeting.

459. **JOINT DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES COMMITTEE – 11 FEBRUARY 2013 – MINUTE NO 11 'JOINT DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES: SUBMISSION' (REPORT NO D270)**

Members were requested to note the recommendation listed under this item as it was to be considered by Cabinet at a future meeting.

460. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

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

KEY DECISIONS

461. **JOINT DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES – SUBMISSION (REPORT NO CAB13/069)** (Key Decision Reference MAR13/03)

This item was withdrawn from the agenda and was to be considered by Cabinet at a future meeting.

462. **SUFFOLK GROWTH STRATEGY (REPORT NO CAB13/070)** (Key Decision Reference MAR13/07)

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Tourism sought approval of the draft Suffolk Growth Strategy; which aimed to set out the ambition for growth in Suffolk and help the county secure future funding streams.

In response to a question from the Cabinet Member for Families and Communities the Leader confirmed that Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council would be developing their own 'West Suffolk Strategy' which would include linkage to partners outside of Suffolk, including those in the Cambridge sub-regional growth area.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. The content of the draft Suffolk Growth Strategy, as contained in Appendix 1 of Report No CAB13/070, be approved; and

2. The Head of Economic Development and Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Tourism, be given delegated authority to approve the final version of the Strategy prior to its launch on 27 February 2013.

463. **REVIEW OF CUSTOMER ACCESS LOCATIONS ACROSS FOREST HEATH (REPORT NO CAB13/071)** (Key Decision Reference FEB13/06)

The Cabinet Member for Families and Communities sought approval of a package of changes to the provision of customer service across Forest Heath which would ensure that service demand was met whilst also identifying some savings.

In response to a question from the Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Transport the Portfolio Holder agreed to provide all Cabinet Members with details of the intended timescale associated with the proposed changes. Cabinet was also assured that nothing would be rushed through and appropriate notice would be given in all cases.

Councillors W J Bishop and T Simmons addressed the meeting and highlighted Brandon Doctors Surgery's need for expansion. The Portfolio Holder welcomed the comments and would ask Officers to liaise with the surgery; he explained that the Council was keen to work with partners in delivering services to the local community wherever possible.

Lastly, the Portfolio Holder asked that his thanks be recorded to all the Customer Services staff he visited at the Brandon office, Mildenhall Bus Station and Newmarket Guineas office. He commended their helpfulness and applauded the professionalism they demonstrated whilst working in somewhat limited circumstances.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. The customer access provision in Brandon be relocated to the new Brandon Centre and alternative uses be found for the existing High Street office;
2. The opening hours of the customer service office at Mildenhall Bus Station be changed from 56 hours per week (8.15 to 17.45) to 36 hours (10.00 to 16.00) to meet customer demand;
3. Improvements to the design of the Bus Station, including upgrading the CCTV, be identified;
4. Work be undertaken with partners and the community in Mildenhall to identify the future use of the Bus Station building; and
5. The Saturday opening hours of the Newmarket Guineas office be reduced from 10.00 – 16.00 to 10.00 – 14.00.

464. **SUFFOLK HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY (REPORT NO CAB13/072)** (Key Decision Reference FEB13/03)

The Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture sought approval of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (developed by Suffolk's Health and Wellbeing Board) as part of the Forest Heath policy framework.

The Cabinet Member for Families and Communities spoke in support of the Strategy and emphasised the need for joint working between professionals delivering health and social care services.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RECOMMENDED:

That:-

1. The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy developed by Suffolk's Health and Wellbeing Board, attached at Appendix One of Report No CAB13/072, be agreed; and
2. It be agreed that Forest Heath would contribute to the implementation of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy through its service delivery mechanisms (where appropriate in terms of meeting local need and matching policies and resources of the Council), and through membership of the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board, which has the statutory duty to produce the Strategy and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

465. **FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (REVENUE AND CAPITAL) – APRIL TO DECEMBER 2012 (REPORT NO CAB13/073)** (Key Decision Reference FEB13/03)

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Governance and Performance asked Cabinet to review the Council's Revenue and Capital financial performance for the first nine months of 2012/2013 and the year end forecast position.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. The 2012/2013 revenue and capital budget positions for the first nine months of the financial year be noted; and
2. The revenue budget virements outlined in Appendix E of Report no CAB13/073, be noted.

466. **REVENUES COLLECTION PERFORMANCE AND WRITE-OFFS (REPORT NO CAB13/074)** (Key Decision Reference MAR13/06)

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Governance and Performance sought approval for the write off of uncollectable amounts in respect of accounts for Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefit overpayment.

An amended version of Report No CAB13/074 was tabled to the meeting, together with an amended version of (exempt) Appendix 2.

In response to comments made by the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Families and Communities, the Portfolio Holder spoke on the robustness of the Anglia Revenues Partnership and the vigilance operated in terms of debt recovery.

In view of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste wishing to ask questions on specific Account Numbers set out in the exempt appendices attached to the report, it was agreed that further consideration of this item would take place later in the meeting following exclusion of the press and public.

NON KEY DECISIONS

467. **BURY ROAD CAR PARK, BRANDON – LAND SWAP (REPORT NO CAB13/075)**

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Governance and Performance sought approval for a land swap with Suffolk County Council which would be mutually beneficial to the County Council and Forest Heath District Council.

Councillor W J Bishop addressed the meeting and spoke in support of the proposal and applauded the joint working with the County Council.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the land swap detailed on the plan at Appendix A of Report No CAB13/075, be progressed.

Councillor D W Bowman left the meeting at 6.30pm during the preliminary discussion of the above item.

468. **AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF BRANDON (REPORT NO CAB13/076)** (Key Decision Reference MAR13/01)

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste asked Cabinet to note the results of an Air Quality Management Review of Brandon.

Councillor W J Bishop addressed the meeting and expressed surprise that the impact of emissions arising principally from road transport in Brandon was unlikely to have a significant adverse impact on health. He asked that Officers carry out further work by way of comparing Brandon's results with that of a similar town. The Cabinet Member agreed for this comparison to be carried out and Councillor Bishop would be provided with this information direct.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

469. **REVIEW OF THE LIST OF KEY DECISIONS (REPORT NO CAB13/077)**

Cabinet was asked to review the list of Key Decisions to be considered by Forest Heath District Council for the period March to May 2013.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the list of Key Decisions, for the period March – May 2013, attached as an Appendix to Report No CAB13/077, be noted.

470. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That, under Section 100(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and 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 prescribed in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and indicated against each item and, in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

471. **REVENUES COLLECTION PERFORMANCE AND WRITE-OFFS (REPORT NO CAB13/074)** (Key Decision Reference MAR13/06)

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste posed questions on specific Account Numbers set out in the exempt appendices attached to Report No CAB13/074. In response to those questions the Portfolio Holder explained that the Council was unable to pursue brewery companies for Business Rates debts as the debt was legally assigned to the named landlord and not the premises owner. He added that the Anglia Revenues Partnership had raised this direct with the brewery companies concerned and had received no support from them; hence they had gone on to lobby Central Government on the matter but had achieved no progress with this to date.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the write off of the amounts detailed in the exempt appendices 1 – 3, of Report No CAB13/074, be approved as follows;

- i. 13 accounts for Council Tax totalling £45,665.27;
- ii. 28 accounts for Business Rates totalling £150,536.68; and
- iii. 3 Housing Benefit overpayment totalling £13,334.00.

The meeting closed at 6.40pm.