

# Forest Heath District Council

**MINUTES** of the **CABINET** held at the District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall on Tuesday 25 June 2013 at 6.00 pm.

## **PRESENT:**

Councillors:

J E Waters (Leader)  
D W Bowman  
Mrs R E Burt

S J Edwards  
W Hirst  
R J Millar

Councillor T Simmons was also in attendance.

Also in attendance:

I Gallin, Chief Executive  
P Gudde, Environment Manager  
P Harvey, Service Manager (Corporate Development)  
P Heard, Legal Services Manager  
R Mann, Head of Resources and Performance  
L Watts, Director  
A Wilson, Director  
S Turner, Committee Administrator (Team Leader)

## **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N A Roman.

### 619. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

### 620. **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 14 May 2013 were unanimously accepted as an accurate record and signed by the Leader.

### 621. **MINUTES OF JOINT COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS AND OTHER GROUPS**

The minutes of the following meetings were received:

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| Shared Services Steering Group              | 25 March 2013 |
| West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel | 13 May 2013   |

There were no items the subject of formal report or proposition.

622. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved, duly seconded and unanimously

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the respective Steering Group and Joint Panel be approved and that authority is hereby given for such action to be taken as necessary to give effect thereto.

**KEY DECISIONS**

623. **FOREST HEATH DISTRICT COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2012/2013 (REPORT NO CAB13/091)** (Key Decision Reference: JUN13/02)

The Leader of the Council presented this report which explained that the Annual Report highlighted the key activities and developments that had been achieved against the Council's priorities, as detailed in the 2012-2016 Strategic Plan. The Annual Report also set out the Cabinet's Portfolio Holders and their respective responsibilities for 2013-2014.

The Annual Report had been considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 20 June 2013, where they had requested the following amendments:

- (a) Page 10 of the Annual Report – Column 2, Paragraph 3 – Winter Fuel Poverty Programme

The Committee wished to include within the Annual Report, the amount of funding which had been spent across Forest Heath.

- (b) Page 14 of the Annual Report – Column 1, Paragraph 3 – Projects which had been supported by the Member Locality Budgets

The Committee wished all of the projects which had been supported by the Member Locality Budgets to be included within the Annual Report.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

**RESOLVED:**

That the Council's Annual Report for 2012/2013 be approved, with the inclusion of the amendments proposed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 20 June 2013, as follows:

- (a) Page 10 of the Annual Report – Column 2, Paragraph 3 – additional sentence to read:

*'This enabled 120 homes in Forest Heath to be helped or improved from approximately £30,000 spent across the district.'*

- (b) Page 14 of the Annual Report – Column 1, Paragraph 3 – be replaced with:

*'In 2012/13 the following 37 community projects have received help through £29,412 of funding:*

- 'Run the Walks' in Newmarket;*
- Children's holiday activities through Arts for Arts;*
- Kit for girls rugby team through the Newmarket Parent Partnership;*
- An inaugural inter-schools rugby competition at Newmarket Rugby Club;*
- The Newmarket young people's exchange with Lexington;*
- Team dug-outs and supporter seating for Newmarket Hockey Club;*
- Training equipment for Newmarket St John Ambulance;*
- Storage facilities for Red Lodge and Mildenhall scouts;*
- Safety netting for Mildenhall Football Club;*
- New boilers for St Mary's church, Mildenhall;*
- Clothing kit for Mildenhall and district Sea cadets;*
- Village newsletters in West Row and Icklingham;*
- Social activities kit for Cavenham Village Green;*
- Storage facilities for Tuddenham Playing Field Association;*
- Audio and visual equipment for Herringswell Village Hall;*
- Floodlights for Kennett Youth Football Club;*
- Changing rooms at Gazeley Sports Club;*
- Hand tools and protective equipment for Red Lodge Conservation Group;*
- Support for Friends of Brandon Station;*
- Instruments for Music Builds Communities in Exning;*
- Play area for Stepping Stones Pre-school, Exning;*
- Street sports in Exning;*
- Chairs and kitchen replacement for Exning church hall;*
- Lighting for the Jubilee arch in Exning;*
- Musical equipment for young people in the Lakenheath Silver Band;*
- Generator, lighting and pa system for Lakenheath Playing Fields Association;*
- Cultural exchange programme for Brass Bands in the district;*
- Facilities for Beck Row Badminton Club;*
- Instruments for young people for the Breckland Brass Band;*
- Lighting panels for Brandon and District photographic Club;*
- Radio microphones for the Shoestring Theatre Company;*
- Cultural activities for older people in Newmarket and Mildenhall; and*
- Support for community events in the district run by the Royal British Legion, British Red Cross Society and Help for Heroes.'*

624. **MILDENHALL HUB UPDATE AND BUSINESS CASE (REPORT NO CAB13/092)** (Key Decision Reference: JUN13/04)

The Director presented this report which requested the Cabinet and Council to approve a funding bid, with partners, to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for a detailed business case for the 'Mildenhall Hub' project to inform public consultation and future budget planning. To support this application, it was also proposed that the Council confirmed its commitment

to the principle of shared facilities in Mildenhall, albeit that no decisions had yet been made.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

**RECOMMENDED:**

That:-

1. The Council confirms its support for the existing principle that public assets in Mildenhall should be located on as few sites as possible to deliver maximum benefits for service users and taxpayers, and commits to this principle as the basis for its own future asset management planning in the town.
2. To pursue this objective, the Council and its partners seek funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government (under its Transformation Challenge Awards scheme) to meet the cost of a business case and other implementation costs for the Mildenhall Hub project, as described in Report No CAB13/092.
3. The Director, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to prepare and submit the funding bid, including the detailed specification for the business case and any other work required.
4. Following appropriate consultation and subject to any planning considerations being met, the Council use the findings of this business case to inform its forthcoming decisions on the District Offices at College Heath Road, Mildenhall Swimming Pool and The Dome Leisure Centre.

625. **REVENUES COLLECTION PERFORMANCE AND WRITE-OFFS (REPORT NO CAB13/093)** (Key Decision Reference: JUN13/03)

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Governance and Performance presented this report which sought approval for the write-off of uncollectable amounts in respect of accounts for Council Tax. The specific reasons for recommending each write-off, was included within the exempt Appendix 1.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

**RESOLVED:**

That the write-off of 11 accounts for Council Tax totalling £36,199.19, as detailed within the exempt Appendix 1 of Report No CAB13/093, be approved.

626. **LEVEL OF COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT GRANT AND CHARGING FOR PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL ELECTIONS FOR 2014/2015 ONWARDS (REPORT NO CAB13/094)** (Key Decision Reference: JUN13/05)

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Governance and Performance presented this report which sought to establish the level of Council Tax Support Grant for 2014/2015 onwards for Parish and Town Councils.

The report also recommended that from 2014/2015, Parish and Town Councils should be charged for election costs which were currently borne by the District Council. In relation to Appendix B of the report (Estimated Parish Referendum/Election Costs), a typographical error was reported in that 'Worlingham' should actually read 'Worlington'.

The Cabinet Member explained that this report had been prepared taking into account the significant financial challenges faced by the Council, like most others, over its current Medium Term Financial Strategy. For Forest Heath District Council alone, the annual savings target for 2015/2016 was expected to be in the region of £0.6m. That was over and above the savings to be achieved through sharing services with St Edmundsbury Borough Council. Shared services alone might not address the saving requirements for next year's budget and, therefore, local savings were also expected to be developed in order to achieve a balanced budget for 2014/2015.

The Cabinet Member also explained that engagement with Parish and Town Councils on these proposed changes would take place on 17 July 2013 at the Parish/Town Forum meeting. Officers would continue to work with the Cabinet Member for Families and Communities, to develop a workshop approach to the Forum meeting, designed to support discussions around managing the impact of these changes at a local parish and town level.

The Cabinet Member for Families and Communities wished to thank the Cabinet Member and Officers for the work which had gone into the development of the report.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

**RECOMMENDED:**

That:-

1. The level of Council Tax Support Grant for Parish/Town Councils be phased out over a 4 year period at a 25% reduction each year starting in 2014/2015.
2. Delegated authority be given to the Head of Resources and Performance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Governance and Performance, to finalise the Council Tax Support Grant Scheme design, following the Parish and Town Forum meeting on 17 July 2013, subject to there being no detrimental impact on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy beyond that allowed for in recommendation 1. above.

3. The cost of any Parish/Town Council elections (including By-Elections) from 2014/2015, be funded by the relevant Parish/Town Council.

**NON KEY DECISIONS**

**627. DEVELOPING A WEST SUFFOLK SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY (REPORT NO CAB13/095) (Key Decision Reference: MAY13/02)**

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Transport presented this report which explained that to achieve a shared approach to policy, service delivery and to meet statutory obligations, Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council had developed a draft Sustainability Strategy.

Once adopted, this would replace the following existing strategies covering Sustainability and Fuel Poverty:

- The Forest Heath District Council Fuel Poverty Strategy
- The St Edmundsbury Borough Council Affordable Warmth Strategy
- The Forest Heath District Council Sustainable Development Strategy

A copy of the revised joint Strategy was attached at Appendix 1 to the report, which would be subject to stakeholder consultation prior to adoption. Following stakeholder consultation, the revised draft Strategy would be subject to Cabinet approval, prior to adoption by the Council.

The Cabinet Member also wished to acknowledge the work which had been undertaken by Officers within the Environmental Services Team, in the development of this joint Strategy.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

**RESOLVED:**

That:-

1. The proposed West Suffolk Sustainability Strategy, as presented in Appendix 1 to Report No CAB13/095, be approved for stakeholder consultation.
2. Following the consultation, the Cabinet to receive the revised draft West Suffolk Sustainability Strategy.

**628. GENERATING INCOME FROM RENEWABLE ENERGY – PROGRESS (REPORT NO CAB13/096) (Key Decision Reference: MAY13/05)**

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Tourism presented this report (on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste) which explained that Forest Heath District Council had been developing new ways of improving business efficiency and generating income through investment in renewable energy generation eligible for the Clean Energy Cashback. The Council was also committed to cutting Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions arising from heating and powering public buildings under their control.

This report provided an update on the investment by the Council in solar photovoltaic (PV) systems which were installed during the winter of 2011/2012. Based on their first year performance, the PV systems appeared to be on track to meet the return on investment and CO<sub>2</sub> savings on which the business case had been based.

Further opportunities to invest in renewable energy technologies to deliver energy and CO<sub>2</sub> savings would be identified and proposals submitted for Cabinet approval as they arose.

The Cabinet Member also wished to acknowledge the work which had been undertaken by Officers within both the Environmental Services Team and the Property Services Team in carrying out this work to achieve these savings.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

**RESOLVED:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

629. **REVIEW OF THE LIST OF KEY DECISIONS (REPORT NO CAB13/097)**

The Cabinet was asked to review the list of Key Decisions to be considered by Forest Heath District Council for the period June 2013 to May 2014.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

**RESOLVED:**

That the list of Key Decisions, for the period June 2013 to May 2014, attached as an Appendix to Report No CAB13/097, be noted.

The meeting closed at 6.30 pm.