

ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

**Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 20 December 2011 at 2.00 pm
in Studio One, The Apex, Charter Square, Bury St Edmunds**

PRESENT: Councillor J H M Griffiths (Leader of the Council) (in the Chair)
Councillors Clements, Mrs Gower and Stevens

61. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Everitt, Mrs Mildmay-White and Ray.

62. Declarations of Interests

Members' declarations of interests are recorded under the item to which the declaration relates.

**63. Recommendations from the Shared Services Steering Group:
6 December 2011**

The Cabinet considered Report C273 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the Business Case for a Shared Communications Service for Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council and the allocation of £17,000 transitional funding.

On 6 December 2011 the Shared Services Steering Group considered Report SSG11/005 for a Shared Communications Service between Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council. The Business Case included exploration of a number of options. The Steering Group concluded that the preferred option was for a single West Suffolk Communications Team covering both Councils, which would result in a shared saving of £43,000 each year. However, there was a need for transitional funding of £17,000 for 2012/2013 to cover increased communications demand over a period of major change for both partners and to help provide specific support and training to services over this period.

In response to a question the Cabinet was informed that the transitional funding of £17,000 for 2012/2013 was to finance staffing levels at 5.1 full time equivalent posts which compared with a new structure of 4.5 full time equivalent posts. The Cabinet recognised that both Councils were approaching a time of major change and a key element of success in implementing such change was effective communications. The increase in staffing would allow the team to achieve the level of activity necessary to deal with the additional internal and external communications demands of the major structural changes and to effectively engage with services to enable them to move towards a different approach to communications.

There was also a general discussion on communications and that there was a need for a common language between both Councils in order that Members and staff could understand the processes in both Councils. In addition, there was a need to continue with the practice within the Borough Council that Local Ward Members were made aware of any communication issues relating to their ward.

RESOLVED:- That

- (1) the Business Case for a shared Communications Service for Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, attached as an Exempt Appendix to Report SSG11/005, be approved; and
- (2) the allocation of £17,000 transitional funding for 2012/2013 be approved.

The meeting concluded at 2.12 pm

**J H M GRIFFITHS
CHAIRMAN**