

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 4**

Minutes of the meeting of the Regulatory and Support Services Committee  
held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely  
on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 at 4:30pm

### **P R E S E N T**

Councillor Anna Bailey (Chairman)  
Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith  
Councillor David Ambrose Smith  
Councillor Sue Austen  
Councillor Mike Bradley  
Councillor Peter Cresswell  
Councillor Julia Huffer  
Councillor Carol Sennitt  
Councillor Alan Sharp

### **OTHERS PRESENT**

Julia Atkins – Senior Environmental Health Officer  
Jo Brooks – Director, Operations  
Lorraine Brown – Conservation Officer  
Liz Knox – Environmental Services Manager  
Nicole Pema – Human Resources Manager  
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer  
Ian Smith – Principal Accountant

#### **62. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions received from members of the public.

#### **63. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jo Webber.

#### **64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **65. MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

#### **66. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

67. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRESS**

It was resolved:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of items 7 to 9 because it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Categories 1, 2 and 6 Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as Amended).

68. **APPOINTMENTS, TRANSFERS AND RESIGNATIONS**

The Committee received an exempt report (R178, previously circulated) which provided details of staff appointments, transfers and resignations for the period 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017.

The Human Resources Manager advised the Committee that there had been 5 appointments, 2 transfers and 2 leavers over that period. 1 post had been deleted. No exit interviews had been held.

*Councillor Sue Austen joined the meeting at this point, 4:34pm.*

It was resolved:

That the content of the information report be noted.

69. **EXEMPT MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

70. **EXEMPT MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Transformation Programme Sub-Committee held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016 be received.

71. **DISABLED FACILITY GRANT REVIEW**

The Committee received a report (R179, previously circulated) which informed Members of the outcome of the countywide Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Review and its implications on service delivery for the Council.

The Environmental Services Manager reminded the Committee that the Review had been undertaken by a working group and had begun in February 2016. It

had aimed to take a strategic approach and to consider aligning the capital and revenue funding streams across the county and districts. This had been affected by a massive uplift in funding received, via the Better Care Fund and County Council.

The Review had highlighted three key findings, as outlined in paragraph 3.4 of the report. The working group had agreed a reduction in revenue funding, which would require an increase in the fees charged to fill the funding gap. The County Council wanted to withdraw all of its funding and there was a requirement to discuss this with them. Although there would be an uplift in the capital funding for this year, a balancing act would have to be managed to get people through the system and attempt to accumulate some surplus for use the following year. A more flexible approach to capital funding would therefore be needed and this could relate to relocation expenses, fast tracking some applications and providing top-up grants or loans.

If the Cambridgeshire Housing Adaptations Agreement was agreed this Council would have to review and re-align its own policies. This would also give an opportunity to work with partners and next year work would take place with the City and district councils to create a policy for the whole county. Targets had also been proposed by the County Council, which would be agreed, that related to decreasing the time to process applications.

Councillor Anna Bailey expected the modified service to have an overall neutral impact on applicants with both positive and negative impacts. The processes should speed up and this would be helped by simple adaptations being completed quicker. Overall it was a positive move to free up the money.

Councillor Alan Sharp questioned whether, although the capital grant was up 40% and revenue by 13%, there would any trouble financially due to increased demand. The cut in funding from the County Council would be a risk for 2018/19 and would they penalise this Council if its targets were not met?

The Committee was informed that there had been no mention of penalisation. An attempt would be made to achieve a reduction in the time needed to complete work, to meet the targets set. The time taken had already reduced from 12 months to 3, due mainly to the influx of additional capital funding.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the outcome of the DFG review be noted and that the fees for Care and Repair services be increased to 15% in 17/18 to cover the reduction in revenue funding from both Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group;
- (ii) That the adoption of the Cambridgeshire Housing Adaptations Agreement be agreed;

- (iii) That delegated authority be given to the Environmental Services Manager to sign off the amended housing adaptations policy, which would reflect the Cambridgeshire Housing Adaptations Agreement.

## **72. FEES FOR IMMIGRATION INSPECTIONS**

The Committee received a report (R180, previously circulated) which considered the introduction of fees for immigration inspections.

The Senior Environmental Health Officer advised the Committee that part of the immigration process was to inspect houses where the immigrants were due to go. This Council had carried out a few inspections previously without charge, even though this was permitted and other local authorities were already charging. The fee level proposed had been calculated on the time officers spent on the inspections and was considered reasonable. This would provide additional income for the Council.

Councillor Ann Bailey asked how the Council would know what was happening and how an inspection would be triggered. In response, the Committee was informed that information was received from the High Commission and the immigrants' relatives could contact the Council.

It was resolved:

That a fee of £100 be introduced for all immigration inspections from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.

## **73. AIR QUALITY ANNUAL STATUS REPORT 2016**

The Committee received a report (R181, previously circulated) which updated Members on the progress of implementing the Local Air Quality Management regime.

The Environmental Services Manager advised the Committee that the Council was required to submit this report on an annual base to the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). This report now had to be signed off by the Council's Chief Executive as well as the County Council. The Council had vast amounts of monitoring tubes around the district, which showed that generally air quality in the district was good with no areas of concern. If any measures had to be implemented in the future then the County Council would be involved. The recording of air quality data had been used when planning for the Fordham and Ely southern by-passes, which demonstrated the advantage of having such information.

Councillor Mike Bradley was concerned that air quality near Ely railway station was bad but Witcham Toll, where it was worse, had been ignored. The Environmental Services Manager acknowledged the situation at both places, which was caused by stationary traffic. It would not be possible to by-pass Witcham Toll, but the levels recorded were still within permitted limits. This area would continue to be monitored.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the 2016 Annual Status (ASR)(Appendix 1) for East Cambridgeshire District Council be noted and that the report for formal sign off by the Chief Executive of East Cambridgeshire District Council and the Director of Public Health Cambridgeshire County Council be approved;
- (ii) That following formal signatures the report be submitted to the Secretary of State (DEFRA) for consideration and that the report be made available on the Council's website, and a link be sent to all relevant departments/stakeholders as identified in Appendix 2.

#### 74. **BUILDINGS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

The Committee received a report (R182, previously circulated) which provided the results of the recent consultation on the draft Buildings of Local Interest Register.

The Conservation Officer advised the Committee that the intention had been to identify buildings of significance to the local area. Originally there had been 106 nominations for inclusion on the Register, but this had been whittled down to 94 that matched the relevant criteria. Some of these related to commercial properties, but their permitted development rights would not be affected. The public consultation had resulted in 28 responses, including objections from some building owners.

Councillor Anna Bailey queried what criteria had been used to define the properties that could be included and whether the Register would impinge on the planning process. The Conservation Officer stated that the criteria include the age of the building, any architectural value, technical innovation, and any historical or social significance. Although some buildings were located in conservation areas, being in the register would not impose any additional restrictions.

The Committee then considered properties in the register that had been highlighted, to consider their inclusion or exclusion from the final register.

##### Platelayer's Hut, Dullingham Railway Station

Network Rail had objected to its inclusion. Councillor Alan Sharp thought this building was of interest to local people and should be kept in the Register. This was agreed.

##### Signal Box, Dullingham Railway Station

This was still currently manned, though Network Rail could install electrical gates later. It was agreed to keep this in the Register.

#### Mission Hall, Dullingham Ley

The building had undergone a complete change, with extensions added by the home owner, therefore it was agreed to remove it from the Register.

#### Ely Cathedral Conference Centre, Cathedral Green, Ely

The Cathedral and Councillor Coralie Green had objected to its inclusion, as it was felt it did not meet the criteria. There was also some concern about future development of the building and it was considered that it was not of any merit and was unattractive. Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith thought it was a handsome building, though the insides were a shambles. Councillor Julia Huffer considered it the wrong building in the wrong place. It was therefore agreed to remove it from the Register.

#### Ely Railway Station

Network Rail and Councillor Coralie Green had objected and thought its inclusion could inhibit development. The Conservative Officer stated that a lot could still be done to the building, even if in the Register. Councillor Mike Bradley considered the station unique and represented Ely, so it was important to keep it in the Register. Upon being put to the vote, it was agreed that this building remain in the Register.

#### Former Drill Hall, Barton Road, Ely

The only objection had come from Councillor Coralie Green, who rated it as 'not significant'. Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith contended that the building had more value than just as a building, by what it provided. Councillor Anna Bailey agreed that it had a social side, which had been provided historically. Upon being put to the vote, it was agreed that this building be kept in the Register.

#### Church of St Matthew, Wisbech Road, Littleport

The owner of this property had objected to its inclusion, declaring that it had a lot of covenants from the Church Commissioners from whom it had been purchased. As the property was isolated, listing it in the Register would cause security issues. Councillor Mike Bradley reckoned it was a nice building of good interest and should be kept in the Register. This was agreed.

#### 17 Bridge Lane, Mepal

This was a residential property that had been drastically altered, losing a lot of its original character. It did not meet the relevant criteria. Councillor Mike Bradley did not think it deserved any merit. It was agreed to remove it from the Register.

#### The Anchor, Sutton Gault

The owners had objected to its inclusion, as it could affect their business needs as a commercial property. Councillor Julia Huffer stressed the need to retain the district's public houses, so its retention in the Register was agreed.

#### The Swedish Houses, Maryland Avenue, Swaffham Bulbeck

These were a set of residential house with historic value, as they were post-war houses. Two were in private ownership and two belong to Sanctuary Housing, which were not in a fit state. Objections had been received from the owners,

although the buildings had a substantial attraction. Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith wanted it investigated whether there were any other examples of these types of buildings anywhere else in the country, as they were of social historic interest. They should be preserved, perhaps in a museum.

Councillor Anna Bailey was concerned over the state of the houses and this should be referred to the Council's Housing Department, so they were made fit-for-purpose. It was possible that these were rare examples of this type of building but their condition should be reviewed with Sanctuary. It was consequently agreed to remove them from the Register at this point, with the possibility of reviewing them for inclusion at a later date.

#### White Horse Inn, Silver Street, Witcham

The owner had objected to its inclusion, though they appeared to be getting confused with the community assets designation. Councillor Julia Huffer thought that this should be retained for the village. Councillor Carol Sennitt agreed and stated that if it closed the social aspect of the building would be lost. It was agreed to keep this in the Register.

Councillor Anna Bailey suggested that letters be sent to the properties affected by the decisions made to re-assure them. The Conservation Officer stated the Register would be published on the Council's website, with a copy available in Reception.

It was resolved:

That all properties listed in the Register be agreed except for the following which are to be removed:

- Mission Hall, Dullingham Ley
- Conference Centre, Cathedral Green, Ely
- 17 Bridge Lane, Mepal
- Swedish Houses, Maryland Avenue, Swaffham Bulbeck

## 75. **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee received a report (R184, previously circulated) which considered the budget monitoring information for services under the Committee's remit.

The Principal Accountant advised the Committee that this was the third report for 2016/17 with figures showing the financial situation as at the end of December. There was a significant current under spend, as explained under paragraph 3.4 of the report, due to additional income from Planning and Licensing. There had been no variance in the expected capital expenditure.

Councillor Anna Bailey queried how the additional income would affect future budgets. The Principal Accountant explained that some caution would be used when forecasting potential income for future years.

Councillor Alan Sharp questioned how realistic the forecast was for all the capital budget to be spent during the year and whether some slippage was

possible. A lot more Revenue spend could also be expected on the Home Improvement Agency (HIA), Planning and Refuse Collections before year end. The Principal Accountant had spoken to the relevant Service Leads and it was anticipated that the capital budget would be spent this year. The Planning figures had been affected by the increase income being generated. The Materials Recycling Facility was slack in invoicing the Council for refuse collections, hence the lower figures shown. With regards the HIA, this would be checked out and a response given later.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the Committee had a projected year end under spend of £303,000 compared to its approved revenue budget of £5,358,043 be noted;
- (ii) That the Committee had a projected capital programme outturn of £1,232,444 be noted.

#### 76. **COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee received a report (R185, previously circulated) which considered the Council's Communication and Public Relations Services forward agenda plan for January to March 2017.

Councillor Anna Bailey reminded the Committee that it had requested a look at the rolling programme for the Communications and Public Relations Service.

Councillor Peter Cresswell genuinely believed that communications was not a strength of the Council. The Council had to get right its external and internal communications, as well as passing information onto Members. Too often Members heard of events too late. As the new service was responsible for the internal Connect magazine, it should also include provision of that information as part of their service. It should also publicise as much as possible the good work going on within the Council. The Council was paying for this service, so should seek maximum benefits from it.

Councillor Anna Bailey stated that the external public relations company had not been asked to disseminate internal information. Prominent had contacted all Councillors inviting them to meet to discuss what is and would be happening in their wards. Their programme had been tabled, but Members could add items in if they considered something was missing.

The Director, Operations, revealed that Prominent, the public relations company, used social media a lot to promote the Council. Its forward programme was shown in the appendix, but Members could add in other projects when they came up. The company had publicised more stories over the last 6 months, but that had not detracted from its day-to-day issues.

Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith thought that it would be valuable to hold meetings between the company and Members, and expected these to take place by the end of January. Members would appreciate a short monthly digest



outlining what was happening in the district. Councillor Bailey advised that this happened through the monthly Connect publication which was sent to all staff and Councillors.

It was resolved:

That the forward agenda plan for the Council's Communication and Public Relations Service for January to March 2017, as per the Appendix attached, be noted.

## 77. **FORWARD AGENDA PLAN**

The Democratic Services Officer advised the Committee of a couple of changes to the agenda plan:

- The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Regulations report had been moved to the 20<sup>th</sup> march meeting;
- The Avoidable Contacts report had been moved back to the 24<sup>th</sup> April meeting.

Councillor Anna Bailey explained that the Avoidable Contacts report had been put back due to an issue in recording data. Delaying the report would allow useful data to be gathered.

The Director, Operations, revealed that a report on a Review of Travellers' Sites Fees would be brought to the Committee once the County had met to determine the future ownership of the Earith and Burwell Sites.

It was resolved:

That the following amendments were agreed:

- A report be brought to the next meeting relating to a Review of Travellers' Sites Fees once the future ownership of the sites be determined by County;
- The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Regulations report be moved to the 20<sup>th</sup> March meeting;
- The Avoidable Contacts report be moved to the 24<sup>th</sup> April meeting.

## 78. **MINUTES**

The Committee received the minutes of the Transformation Programme Sub-Committee meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016.

The meeting closed at 5:50pm.