

Minutes of an Extraordinary Cabinet Meeting held on 30 June 2016 at 5.30 pm in the King Edmund Chamber, Endeavour House, Ipswich.

Present: Councillors Colin Noble (Chairman), James Finch, Tony Goldson, Matthew Hicks, Beccy Hopfensperger, Christopher Hudson, Gordon Jones, Richard Smith MVO and Jane Storey

Also present: Councillors Mark Ereira, Mandy Gaylard, Len Jacklin, Sandy Martin and David Wood

Supporting officers present: Linda Pattle (Democratic Services Officer).

1. Election of Vice Chairman

Councillor Jane Storey was elected as Vice Chairman of the Cabinet for the 2016/17 Municipal Year.

2. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

3. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations.

4. East Anglia Devolution: Norfolk and Suffolk Devolution Proposal

At Agenda Item 4 the Cabinet considered a report setting out a number of recommendations relating to a combined authority for the Norfolk and Suffolk area.

Immediately prior to the Cabinet meeting, an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council had taken place. At that meeting the Council had voted to approve a number of recommendations regarding the Norfolk and Suffolk Devolution Proposal. The original recommendations had been amended by Council, and the amended proposals as agreed by the Council were now put before the Cabinet for consideration.

The Leader introduced the report. He considered that all councillors had had an opportunity to express their views during the Council meeting. He had voted in favour of the Devolution Proposal, as had the majority of councillors. He considered that the right decision had been made.

Decision: The Cabinet:

- i) Agreed that, while it recognised the Government's current insistence on the establishment of a Directly Elected Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk before it was prepared to devolve the functions in this agreement to a Combined Authority for this area, it nonetheless proposed to enable the residents of Norfolk and Suffolk to make their views clear as to whether they supported a Directly Elected Mayoral post being established.
- ii) Agreed the publication of the draft Scheme for a Norfolk and Suffolk Mayoral Combined Authority (as agreed under Agenda Item 3 of an Extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 30 June 2016) for consultation purposes, subject to such final minor revisions as may be approved by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, and prior to the commencement of the formal consultation exercise. Such formal consultation to commence once all Norfolk and Suffolk Councils had considered the matters in the Council report and, in any event, no later than the 4 July 2016. In the event that a Constituent Authority named in the Scheme did not agree to endorse the Deal Agreement and/or the Scheme, Cabinet authorised the Chief Executive to make the relevant, necessary changes to be made to the Deal Agreement, the Scheme and the Governance Review to reflect that Authority's non-participation.
- iii) Agreed that the Council should ensure that every form of Suffolk County Council's consultation on the Mayoral Combined Authority included a clear and dedicated question to the consultees asking whether they supported the establishment of a Directly Elected Mayor.
- iv) Agreed that the outcome of the consultation exercise be submitted to the Secretary of the State by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader.
- v) Agreed that the Council and Cabinet both meet by no later than 28 October 2016 to consider giving consent to an Order establishing a Mayoral, or non-Mayoral, Combined Authority for Norfolk and Suffolk.
- vi) Agreed that, insofar as any of the matters referred to in the Council report concerned the discharge of non-executive functions, authority was delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, to take all necessary steps and actions to progress the recommendations detailed in the Council report.
- vii) Agreed that, in the event that any technical changes were required to reflect legislative requirements and the contents of the Deal Agreement, authority was delegated to the Chief Executive, in agreement with the other Chief Executives/Managing Directors across Norfolk and Suffolk to make the necessary changes to the Scheme.

Reason for decision: To enable the wishes of county councillors, as agreed at an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held at 2.00 pm on 30 June 2016, to be put into effect.

Comments by other councillors:

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection spoke in support of the recommendations. He commented that the steps agreed were part of a long process. The concerns expressed at the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council would be taken into account and the proposals would be studied closely when they came back for further consideration on 28 October 2016.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage said that he had not spoken in the debate at the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council, but 43 councillors had done so. He considered it to be the best debate he had listened to during his time as a member of the Council. He had some reservations and would be taking up certain financial matters with the Director of Resource Management, but he was in favour of approving the recommendations and thought that every effort must be made to ensure that the public engagement exercise would be of the highest quality.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills spoke in favour of the proposals. He acknowledged that there was a great deal of work to be done, but he was pleased that negotiations were set to continue.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, whilst in favour of the proposals, expressed concerns that the people of Suffolk might be daunted by their complexity. He considered that great efforts must be made to ensure that the public engagement exercise was simple and coherent.

A councillor asked what would be done to make the engagement exercise sufficiently intelligible to encourage the public to take part. The Leader stated that he would circulate to group leaders the proposed engagement plan and questions, on which he would welcome feedback within the existing tight timetable. He wished to see the engagement process continue after the formal submission of findings to the government, in order to ensure that as many Suffolk people as possible had the opportunity to express their views.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: None declared.

Dispensations: None noted.

The meeting closed at 5.45 pm.

Chairman

