

Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 24 January 2017 at 2.00 pm in the King Edmund Chamber, Endeavour House, Ipswich.

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

Also present: Councillors Sarah Adams, Mark Bee, Peter Beer, Tony Brown, Mary Evans, John Field, Jessica Fleming, Julian Flood, Sandra Gage, Peter Gardiner, Michael Gower, Leonard Jacklin, Inga Lockington, Sandy Martin, Bill Mountford, Graham Newman, Reg Silvester, Joanna Spicer and Paul West

Supporting officers present: Susan Cassedy (Democratic Services Officer).

53. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence received.

54. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Councillor Jane Storey, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Broadband, Rural Issues and Localities declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 6 "RAF Mildenhall Vision and Prospectus" by virtue of the fact that she had previously worked for Army and Airforce Exchange Service (AAFES) on various sites in Mildenhall and Lakenheath.

Subsequently at Agenda Item 7, Councillor Len Jacklin declared a non-pecuniary interest by virtue of the fact that he was a Governor at a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).

55. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

56. Public Questions

No public questions were received.

57. Standing Item – Update from the Scrutiny Chairman

At Agenda Item 5 the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee provided the Cabinet with an update on the Scrutiny Committee on 20 December 2016.

Decision: The Cabinet noted the report.

Reason for decision: The Cabinet recognised the importance of the Scrutiny function.

Comments by other councillors: The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport thanked the Scrutiny Committee and advised the work on the timeliness of the transition and maintaining delivery had been carried out.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: None received.

Dispensations: None reported.

58. RAF Mildenhall Vision and Prospectus

A report at Agenda Item 6 by the Director for Resource Management invited the Cabinet to consider the Vision and Prospectus for working with government to secure a positive legacy for RAF Mildenhall and surrounding towns and Villages. There had been wide consultation over a vision and prospectus during Autumn 2016 and the final document had been revised to reflect the consultation responses. At the Forest Heath District Council Extraordinary meeting on 22 November 2016 it was agreed that the prospectus would be submitted to Government. Suffolk County Council signed up to the content of the Vision and Prospectus.

Decision: The Cabinet received and noted the RAF Mildenhall Vision and Prospectus as a document with which local authorities would negotiate with government on the future use of the site as set out in Appendix A of the report.

Reason for decision: The Vision and Prospectus for RAF Mildenhall had been developed by key local partners. Cabinet was being asked to receive and note the document as it would be used by Forest Heath District Council, as the lead partner, to work with government to secure a positive legacy for RAF Mildenhall and the surrounding towns and villages.

Comments by other councillors: The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Broadband, Rural Issues and Localities said that the news of the proposed closure of the base had been a shock however the Vision and Prospectus was very far sighted. She referred to the aspirations of local councils working together and being an exemplar for others to follow. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Broadband, Rural Issues and Localities also noted that there was no mention of RAF Feltwell. In response the Leader, who was also a local councillor, stated that when first announced he and Councillor James Waters had made it very clear to the media that although a threat to the local economy it also provided great opportunity.

The Cabinet Member for Health noted that it was a wonderful opportunity for the people of Beck Row.

The Cabinet Member for Ipswich noted the great stakeholder relationship and the hospitality received from officers serving in the RAF and on the American Airbase.

In response to a Councillors' concerns about any possibility of the decision to close the airbase being reversed, the Leader advised that it had been a strategic decision about having a mid-air re-fuelling function at Mildenhall which was no longer required and that this would not be reversed due to the change in the US Administration. The Cabinet noted a Councillor's comment that it would be a shame if the runway was not utilised for aviation use in some way.

A Councillor referred to Paragraph 33 bullet point 4 in the report stating that discussion with Highways England would be critical, however the reality was that nothing would progress until 2025 onwards. The Leader agreed that the infrastructure would be absolutely vital.

With regard to the case studies set out on page 37 of the report a Councillor noted there was no mention of RAF Bentwaters and there also being very little information about the expansion at RAF Lakenheath. The Leader confirmed that there were indications that Lakenheath Airbase was to expand by many thousands of people. The Leader noted the comment about RAF Bentwaters with interest.

A Councillor expressed concern about whether the amount of money allocated would be sufficient for such a vision and also questioned the number of square metres quoted on page 41 of the report. The Leader agreed to pass on these comments.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: Councillor Jane Storey, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Broadband, Rural Issues and Localities declared a non-pecuniary interest by virtue of the fact that she had previously worked for AAFES on various sites in Mildenhall and Lakenheath

Dispensations: None reported.

59. Closure of Mill Meadow Pupil Referral Unit

A report at Agenda Item 7 by the Corporate Director for Children and Adults invited the Cabinet to consider a recommendation to close Mill Meadow Pupil Referral Unit which has been judged by Ofsted to be in Special Measures.

Decision: The Cabinet agreed to recommend to the Secretary of State that Mill Meadow Pupil Referral Unit was closed and the places offered by the Unit transferred to other alternative settings in the county.

Reason for decision: The Local Authority's priority was to provide a stable, high quality environment for pupils attending the provision. In the light of the failure to attract a suitable sponsor and the cost of refurbishing the present accommodation, the preferred course of action was to close the provision and transfer pupils to other alternative provision settings, as soon as possible. This would:

- enable pupils to be educated in stable, sustainable and appropriate settings;

- enable pupils to be supported by experienced staff with appropriate resources.

Comments by other councillors: A Councillor noted the fantastic services PRUs provided to very demanding students who required a first class service and expressed sadness at the closure. While noting the vibrant and exciting outlook that the Albany provided the Councillor expressed concern over it and other PRUs requiring capital to be spent in order to bring them up to the standard required. The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Skills noted the comments made and confirmed he would look in to the issues raised.

The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Skills confirmed that staff at Mill Meadow Pupil Referral Unit had been redeployed.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: Councillor Len Jacklin declared a non-pecuniary interest by virtue of the fact that he was a Governor at a Pupil Referral Unit.

Dispensations: None reported.

60. Determination of the Admission Arrangements to Schools in Suffolk for the 2018/2019 School Year

A report at Agenda Item 7 by the Corporate Director for Children and Adults invited the Cabinet to approve the County Council’s proposed oversubscription criteria and published admissions numbers for maintained community and voluntary controlled schools as well as the co-ordinated admissions scheme.

Decision: The Cabinet:

- i. approved the overview of the proposed Admission Arrangements for the 2018/2019 School Year as set out in Appendix 1, Section 1 of the report;
- ii. approved the proposed admissions oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled schools for the school year 2018/2019, as set out in Appendix 1, Section 2 of the report. This included the change to the religious criterion to include children and/or families who are practising members of the Anglican churches within the Worldwide Anglican Communion;
- iii. approved the notes to the oversubscriptions criteria as set out in Appendix 1, Section 2 of the report. which included the proposed change to close the waiting list for applications in the normal year of entry to 31 December 2018;
- iv. agreed that looked after children and previously looked after children should be referred to as children in care and children previously in care as set out in Appendix 1, Section 2 of the report;
- v. approved the proposed Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Schools in Suffolk 2018/2019, and related timetables, which sets out the admissions procedures for all maintained, academy, and free schools in Suffolk as set out in Appendix 1, Section 3 of the report;
- vi. approved the proposed relevant areas which admission authorities would use to consult on their admissions policies, as set out in lists and maps shown in Appendix 1, Section 4 of the report;

- vii. approved the proposed Published Admission Numbers (PANs) for Suffolk's community and voluntary controlled schools as set out in Appendix 1, Section 5 of the report; and
- viii. approved the Supplementary Information Form to support applications for admission under the religious grounds criterion to Church of England Voluntary Controlled Schools as set out in Appendix 1, Section of the report

Reason for decision: The Council as the local authority, and admissions authority for community and voluntary controlled schools, was required to comply with the School Admissions Code (December 2014) and relevant legislation. Admission arrangements for entry in September 2018 had to be determined by 28 February 2017.

Comments by other councillors: The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Broadband, Rural Issues and Localities reminded Cabinet that the Council had signed up to the Military Covenant and she paid tribute to the Admissions Team who had helped military families with in-year admissions. She also noted the significant percentage of parents given their first or second choice of school.

In response to a Councillor's question regarding the possibility of schools finding ways in which to refuse admitting children with challenging behaviour, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills advised that the Fair Access Panel was evolving and this involved schools challenging other schools to be fair in their admissions. If an Academy was found to be unfairly refusing admission to children with challenging behaviour it would be referred to the Regional Schools Commissioner.

In response to a Councillor's query regarding statements being replaced by Education, Health and Care plans and how this effected children with less complex needs such as dyslexia, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills confirmed that it was a different system with more involvement from parents and that the change had been challenging for all parties. He added that the new way in which schools' results were analysed assisted in the new process as every pupil's progress was now tracked. Officers advised that schools were meeting the needs of children with less complex needs out of their existing budgets and could bring in specialist support without the need for a plan.

A Councillor advised that some parents found it difficult to understand the admissions criteria and requested that the information provided to parents was made easier to understand.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: None declared.

Dispensations: None reported.

61. Revenue Budget 2017-18 and Capital Programme 2017-20

A report at Agenda Item 6 by the Director for Resource Management invited the Cabinet to consider the Council's Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2017-18 and make recommendations to the County Council on the budget requirement and council tax for 2017-18 together with the Capital Programme, its financing and prudential indicators.

Decision: The Cabinet, in noting that any changes due to the final Local Government Finance Settlement for Suffolk and/or District and Borough Councils finalising their council tax and business rates tax-bases would be adjusted within the funding from the contingency reserve figure, recommended to Council:

- a) the budget proposals, including savings of £31.3m (as set out in paragraphs 28 to 30 of the report) leading to a 2017-18 budget requirement of £436,355,298 as set out in the report;
- b) a freeze in general council tax for 2017-18 so that the Band D council tax for County Services remains at £1,126.53p (as set out in paragraph 42 of the report);
- c) an increase in the Social Care Precept that was ringfenced to help fund Adult Social Care. This increase was equivalent to 3% of the total Band D council tax. Therefore the 2017-18 Band D Social Care Precept would be £56.97 (as set out in paragraphs 40 to 43 of the report);
- d) a council tax requirement/total precept on the collection funds of District and Borough Councils of £289,151,087 which includes the precept to fund Adult Social Care of £13,918,832 (as set out in paragraph 44 of the report);
- e) a capital programme for 2017-18 totalling £97.7m as detailed in paragraphs 45 to 47 of the report; and

In agreeing the above recommendations Cabinet also:

- f) agreed the responses to the recommendations and comments made as part of the budget scrutiny process as set out in Appendix A; and
- g) noted the report of the Director of Resource Management on the robustness of the budget and on the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves (as set out in Appendix B of the report) and that under the Local Government Act 2003 the Council is obliged to take account of this report in making decisions on the budget.

Cabinet also recommended to Council:

- h) the revised policy on Minimum Revenue Provision and Capital Prudential Indicators (as set out in Appendix C, Section B, Paragraphs 23-37 of the report); and
- i) the Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Prudential Indicators (as set out in Appendix C, Section C of the report).

Reason for decision: The Cabinet was required to recommend to Council a revenue budget and capital programme on an annual basis.

Comments by other councillors: In response to a Councillor's questions concerning the proposed cuts to Public Protection, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection advised that Suffolk and Norfolk Trading Standards had agreed to work together but the savings were not based on the services being integrated. Officers also explained that the table at Appendix A was provided as requested and that the 'Fire Control and Fire Uniforms' 'Actual Balance' for 31/3/2016 was shown as blank due to the reserves all being included in the 'Other Fire earmarked reserves'.

Due to the complexity of a Councillor's questions on waste, it was agreed that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection be sent these outside of the meeting.

In response to a Councillor's question on how much had been spent On-Street Parking Account in the current financial year and how much would be accrued for 2017/18 and 2018/19 and where this money was going to be spent, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage agreed to send the Councillor this information outside of the meeting. Officers advised that there was to be a paper to Cabinet in March on Civil Parking Enforcement and about £1.3m would be used for set-up costs.

With regard to capital highways projects the Councillor also wished to know how much of the £62.5m capital for 2016/17 would be underspent and if there was to be an underspend how much would be carried over or re-allocated. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport advised that a number of projects had been delayed however all the money had been allocated and was planned to be spent with no identified savings. Officers added that the revised forecast for 2016/17 was expected to be spent and that there would be an update on this at the February Cabinet meeting.

With regard to a question concerning the cut to the Highways Revenue Budget of £2.186m and whether this was due to staff reduction and what 'Plan B' would be, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport advised that this would be met through the Transformation Programme which would deliver more effective and timely services using integrated teams and there would be no need for a 'Plan B'.

In response to a Councillor's question regarding why the HASCI savings were no longer included the Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage advised that this was due to social care integration savings not materialising and the health and social care teams not being able to forecast further savings. In response to a Councillor's question regarding the £1.4m cut to Housing Related Support, the Chamber was also advised that Housing Related Support was to be 're-balanced' across the county to deliver support where needed. The Cabinet Member for Adult Care agreed to send the Councillor further information on the detail of savings.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Care explained the changes to the way the Council was to commission voluntary sector organisations by moving from grant funding to more commissioned contractual arrangements in order to provide more targeted services. She added that the strategy made organisations more sustainable so they did not rely on any one source of income going forward. In response to a Councillor's concern that voluntary organisations may become too controlled by the public sector, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage stated that the Council needed to be brave enough to take criticism from them.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage confirmed that he would look into why on page 161 of Appendix A, the proposed cuts to voluntary sector grants totalled £223,110 but the stated saving in Annex D was £290,000. He advised that the total of all cultural grants was £500,000 and that the grant reduction effect would be lessened by paying three years grant up-front in April 2017. Officers also confirmed that if an organisation did not appear on the list then there was to

be no reduction in its grants. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage confirmed the level of funding for Suffolk Libraries then was £5.95m.

A Councillor wished to know how much of the specialist contingency for Early Help and Specialist Support had been spent so far. The Councillor also wished to know that if it had not been spent why had it not been spent on sensory impairment. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage referred to the unanticipated in-year cost pressures within Children and Young People's Services. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills agreed to provide a written answer.

The Councillor also referred to Table 2 on page 176 of Appendix B 'Forecast Balances on Earmarked Reserves' and asked why the earmarked reserves for Broadband had not been spent down. It was explained that the government grant and money from Broadband take-up would always be used first before drawing on the reserves. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage advised that 2020 was the government target for 100% broadband coverage when the reserve would go down to zero.

A Councillor noted that the November budget out-turn statement included expenditure of reserves in the current financial year of £10m however this was now estimated at £6m. In response to the Councillors request for a figure for the actual outturn for the financial year 2016/17. the Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage advised that the estimate for the end of March 2017 was a £6m budget overspend. With just two more months left of the current financial year and systemic overspend problems in CYP which would be addressed in the following financial year with a further £5m being put into the budget, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage stuck to estimate that the council would be overspent at the 31 March by around £6.1m, 1.2% over the budget.

A Councillor referred to the Adult and Community Services proposed revenue budget in Table 2 on page 143 of the report and the other changes of £12.4m. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage advised that other changes in the Adult and Community spend of £12.4m includes the 2% Adult Social Care Precept money that the Council has had in 2016/17. The Cabinet Member for Adult Care confirmed that it was both the precept and the grant received which were built in to part of the package the Council offered in care rates and included financial rises to cover, in part, the impact of the National Minimum Wage.

A Councillor referred to page 6 of Annex D and raised concern over the Travel Transformation Programme seeking to find £0.55 from the Home-to-School budget. The Councillor also expressed concern over the proposed increase in the charge for spare seats on home to school buses and from procuring transport for PRUs and asked how better transport could be procured whilst still saving money. The Councillor also referred to the provision of travel training to Special Educational Needs (SEN) students and how this would be achieved. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills advised that, with regard to provision of travel training for SEN students, that the barrier was often the parents' reluctance to let their children receive travel training. However, once training had been received parents had been delighted with the confidence that it had given their children. He stressed that this training would not be suitable for every child but demand was currently out-stretching capacity. A Councillor asked that the Cabinet bear in mind the problems caused for children with learning

difficulties travelling on buses that were redirected when providing this training. The Cabinet was also advised that the reducing use of taxis by special schools had been driven by one school that had identified both financial savings and better outcomes for children.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: None declared.

Dispensations: None reported.

62. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 4.25 pm.

Chairman

