

CABINET

THURSDAY, 19 MARCH 2020 - 4.00 PM



PRESENT: Councillor C Boden (Chairman), Councillor Mrs J French (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor S Clark, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor S Tierney and Councillor S Wallwork

APOLOGIES: Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor P Murphy and Councillor C Seaton

Councillor Boden advised that Councillor Mrs Laws, Councillor Murphy and Councillor Seaton were absent due to current Government guidance regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, otherwise they would have been in attendance.

CAB25/19 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The public minutes of 20 February 2020 were confirmed and signed.

CAB26/19 ADDITIONAL ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DEEMS URGENT

Councillor Boden issued the following COVID-19 statement as Leader of the Council.

“Coronavirus (COVID-19) was first diagnosed in December 2019 within China. Since that time it has spread rapidly to the extent that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has classified it as a pandemic.

The impact of COVID-19 is increasingly evident across the UK. Fenland is also feeling that impact. I felt it important to table this urgent Cabinet statement to provide a clear commitment to Fenland’s residents and businesses of everything the Council will continue to do in support of them.

The Council has quickly mobilised its business continuity arrangements in preparedness to deal with COVID-19. These plans will ensure that key services will continue to function with a minimum amount of disruption. The Council is also ensuring that Government and Public Health England (PHE) advice is readily available to all.

In such uncertain times frequent communication is vital. The Council is sending out regular updates to its employees and elected members along with informative press releases to the public. The Council’s website and social media outlets are being refreshed daily.

Our workforce continues to provide excellent services to residents and businesses through this difficult time. In order to support their continued contribution measures such as remote and flexible working, hand sanitisers and protective equipment is being made available where necessary. These measures will help to provide the ongoing resilience required to ensure that key services continue to function.

Whilst the Council will do everything within its powers to minimise the disruption associated with COVID-19 there is the potential for some impact. Where this may occur, both our members and residents will be kept fully updated.

Fenland District Council is aware of the significant anxiety that exists within the minds of our older

people and across our business community.

The Council is committed to playing a full part to ensure that our older and most vulnerable residents receive the support required to protect them from the impact of COVID-19. This includes the following:

- A database of the over 70's and an assessment of people's needs
- Supporting the establishment of the Cambridgeshire County Council-led volunteer hub
- Liaising closely with town and parish Councils, community and voluntary groups and other key partners, such as the County Council, to mobilise district wide volunteering capacity
- A social-distancing hotline that will be provided through the Council's contact centre to help signpost people to the local support available

Fenland's local economy and our cherished businesses are starting to see the impact of COVID-19. Earlier this week the Chancellor announced a comprehensive package of support to assist businesses through these difficult times. This included business rates holiday periods, business grants and loans, along with the hardship fund. The Council is already implementing the business rates relief measures and is eagerly awaiting Government guidance to ensure the other means of support are quickly made available.

These are unprecedented times and the impact of COVID-19 is profound, however, working as one unified member and officer team this Council will do everything in its powers to positively respond to the Government's call to arms in providing every possible support to our communities, their residents, and our highly valued local businesses."

CAB27/19 MARCH AREA TRANSPORT STUDY

Members considered the March Area Transport Study report presented by Councillor Mrs French on behalf of Councillor Seaton.

Cabinet AGREED to:

- **Note and comment on the emerging outcomes of the March Area Transport Study**
- **Note and comment on the emerging options for the March Railway Station Masterplan options**
- **Approve the study outcomes for consultation with the public.**

CAB28/19 PARSON DROVE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Members considered the Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan report presented by Councillor Boden on behalf of Councillor Laws.

Cabinet AGREED to recommend to Council the formal adoption of the Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan as a part of the Development Plan for Fenland and note the decision statement that will be presented to Council on 21 May 2020.

CAB29/19 MY FENLAND

Members considered the My Fenland District Council report presented by Councillor Tierney.

Cabinet AGREED to note the progress of the 'My Fenland' programme to date and endorse the activities contained within phases 1 and 2 of the programme.

CAB30/19 DRAFT 6 MONTH CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Councillor Boden presented the Cabinet Forward Plan for information.

CAB31/19 RESTRICTED MINUTES - CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

The confidential minutes of 20 February 2020 were confirmed and signed.

4.12 pm

Chairman