

# CABINET



**MONDAY, 13 JUNE 2022 - 4.00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor C Boden (Chairman), Councillor Mrs J French (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor A Lynn, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor C Seaton and Councillor S Tierney

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor S Clark and Councillor Miss S Hoy

## **CAB1/22    PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting held 12 May 2022 were agreed and signed.

## **CAB2/22    APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

Members considered the Appointment to Outside Bodies report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Boden added that there are some additional positions to fill on the drainage boards but as some members have expressed an interest, there should soon be a full complement. Councillor Mrs French stated that as she had attended five IDB meetings over the last few weeks, more names do need to come forward to fulfil these vacancies.

**Proposed by Councillor Mrs French, seconded by Councillor Boden and AGREED:**

- 1. The proposed nominations in respect of Outside Bodies which require Fenland District Council representation.**
- 2. To note where requirements to provide representatives on outside organisations cannot currently be fulfilled**
- 3. To delegate to the Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Group Leaders the addition or deletion of outside bodies as the need arises during the municipal year and appointment of members to vacancies on outside bodies during the municipal year.**

## **CAB3/22    CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT UPDATE**

Members considered the Civil Parking Enforcement update report presented by Councillor Mrs French.

Councillor Murphy asked when the end date of this would be. Councillor Mrs French said she understands it to be going to Government in October with applications only being able to be sent twice a year, in April and October, and it should then be implemented in September 2023.

Councillor Tierney commended the work done by Councillor Mrs French and officers as this is not an easy project to get through. This is quite ground-breaking and difficult, but it is well worth doing right which is why it has taken time.

Councillor Mrs Laws agreed with Councillor Tierney and expressed her thanks to Councillor Mrs French, officers and all involved saying this has been a difficult task and it cannot come quickly

enough.

**Proposed by Councillor Mrs French, seconded by Councillor Benney and AGREED to note the progress being made by FDC and CCC in respect of moving the introduction of CPE forward.**

#### **CAB4/22    WISBECH LEVELLING UP FUND BID PROJECT SELECTION**

Members considered the Wisbech Levelling Up Fund Project Selection report presented by Councillor Seaton.

Councillor Tierney commended Councillor Seaton and the officers involved for some fine work. There are some members of the public viewing this meeting who do not quite know how these things work and may get quite disillusioned, as they either do not see plans coming or coming in a different way. He would like them to understand that what happens is that the Government or other authorities makes money available, set some criteria on it, which the Council must then bid for. If we win the bid, the Council works to deliver a project with whatever money is set. The projects set this time are excellent and he hopes that they are all successful. It is not easy, but we must keep trying. Councillor Seaton thanked Councillor Tierney.

Councillor Lynn thanked Phil Hughes and Simon Bell for the time they had spent with himself, Councillor Hoy and Councillor Tierney looking at various places in Wisbech in need of development and listening to how they as members felt about them and then putting those comments in the projects. Everyone had all had a say, which was good for the town and very refreshing.

Councillor Tierney agreed, saying this is the first time he has seen projects come back reflecting what had been said, which in turn had been because of listening to what people had told them.

**Proposed by Councillor Seaton, seconded by Councillor Mrs Laws and formally AGREED:**

- 1.1    the projects being put forward as part of the Council's Levelling Up Fund bid to Government, namely:**
  - **Castle visitor centre and improved public realm linking the castle and Market Place**
  - **Old Market Place including street greening and public realm enhancements between the town centre Old Market Place and Nene Waterfront**
  - **College of West Anglia – green skills centre**
- 1.2    to authorise the Portfolio Holder for Heritage and Social Mobility to work with Wisbech members, officers and consultants to submit a LUF bid to Government by 6 July 2022**
- 1.3    to note that the College of West Anglia project's inclusion in the Council's LUF bid is contingent on a successful, formally approved, funding bid to the CPCA in the region of £2m.**

#### **CAB5/22    DRAFT 6 MONTH CABINET FORWARD PLAN**

Councillor Boden presented the draft six-month Cabinet Forward Plan for information.

*(Councillor Boden moved this item on the agenda).*

## **CAB6/22    DRAFT LOCAL PLAN**

Members considered the Draft Local Plan report presented by Councillor Mrs Laws.

Councillor Boden stated that members were in receipt of an exempt Schedule 1 and although the preference is to remain in public session for as much of the debate as possible, if any member wishes to discuss the content of Schedule 1 then they would have to consider moving into private session. Members agreed to stay in open session.

Councillor Boden proposed various amendments to the Draft Local Plan, which was seconded by Councillor Mrs Laws. Councillor Boden stated that this is such a technical matter that the Council need to get it right and be as transparent as possible given it is such a lengthy document. He added that six amendments are being proposed, however he will not be moving the sixth amendment.

Councillor Boden proceeded to read out some of the proposed amendments to the Draft Local Plan in turn, stating that this is what is being proposed for consultation and the Council will take all comments made by the public and officers into account.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Seaton stated that in respect of Amendment 1 regarding Policy LP1 Settlement Boundaries, it is important to have this flexibility for the rural areas. There needs to be an opportunity for limited development where appropriate, otherwise it is too rigid. Therefore, he is behind using flexibility within reason to promote certain types of development that will benefit rural areas. Councillor Tierney agreed, saying that the Council must allow for special circumstances that are beneficial to a community that may not have been considered or was not expected.
- Councillor Tierney commented that in respect of the proposed Amendment 2 regarding Policy LP10 Shop Frontages, Security Shutters and Canopies, it is his view that people should be able to put up what restrictions or shutters they like but he will support this. It is an improvement and a step forward although not as far as he would have gone. Councillor Seaton agreed that flexibility is required in this area of planning, and it is important for planning officers to use the flexibility with discretion, and although he would not go as far as Councillor Tierney, he appreciated his thoughts. Councillor Mrs Laws said in respect of this proposed amendment, the Council has listened to businesses and members. She would suggest that Councillor Tierney's view is rather extreme, particularly for Conservation Areas, but the Council must look at the criminal element that causes destruction and, in the aim to support businesses and shopkeepers, this is a good compromise.
- Councillor Boden commented that he is not putting forward Amendment 6 in respect of Policy LP46, Residential Site Allocations in Chatteris. He stated that both he and Councillor Mrs Laws have been rigorous in their focus on the housing element of the Draft Local Plan as they want to ensure deliverability and it is pointless allocating sites that either cannot or will not be delivered. The Council is obliged to deliver approximately 550 homes per year for 20 years and having sites in the Local Plan which make up those numbers which then cannot be delivered leads to a danger that the Council will lose its land supply. Councillor Boden added that both he and Councillor Mrs Laws have agreed to remove all the areas that are broad locations for growth which had been identified in the previous Local Plan but had not been developed and where there was no planning application for any development, with some of the areas having been in the plan since 1994, which is long enough for them to have been developed if they could be. Therefore, there has been a number of removals or partial removals of areas which are currently in the 2014 plan identified as being broad locations for growth on housing.

- Councillor Boden added that when an application came forward for Chatteris East it made sense for that policy to be adopted for that location and for that area to be allocated for housing. It came so late in the day, however, that the Council did not have time to change the report, so it was included in the maps. Since then, the application has not come before Planning Committee which suggests that there is uncertainty as to why it has not come forward. It may be that it will come to Planning Committee soon, but members must make a decision today based how things are at the moment. Councillor Boden added that for this reason both he and Councillor Mrs Laws agreed to remove this site from the Local Plan given the uncertainty with the planning application and to have a consistent policy.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and agreed to Amendments 1 to 5 of the Draft Local Plan.

Councillor Boden expressed his enormous thanks to Councillor Mrs Laws for her dedication to this process and to the officers involved, particularly Gemma Wildman, Simon Machen and officers within the Planning Team. He cannot emphasise enough their tremendous amount of assistance, their professionalism and dedication.

Councillor Mrs Laws stated that she had a close working relationship with officers and would like to record principal names, particularly Simon Machen, Gemma Wildman, Ed Dade, Gareth Martin, Nick Harding, Carol Pilson and Dan Horn. They had been the principal leaders, but a lot of work had been undertaken by other officers behind the scenes. She could not express the amount of work though very challenging times during Covid to assess the sites with the number of hours and the work undertaken having been beyond duty and it is all appreciated.

**Proposed by Councillor Mrs Laws, seconded by Councillor Boden and Cabinet AGREED to approve the Local Plan for consultation, as amended in accordance with amendments 1 to 5 in the Proposed Amendments to Draft Local Plan document, starting in July 2022 and to delegate authority to officers to make minor, inconsequential amendments to the document prior to its publication (in order to correct matters such as fact or aid clarity to the reader).**

*(Councillors Murphy, Benney, Lynn and Mrs French left the room for this item by virtue of the fact they are members or substitutes of the Planning Committee and took no part in the discussion on voting thereon).*

#### **CAB7/22    24 HIGH STREET, WISBECH - AWARD OF CONTRACT AND APPROVAL OF ASSOCIATED FINANCE & OFFICER DELEGATIONS**

Members considered the 24 High Street Wisbech report presented by Councillor Seaton.

**Proposed by Councillor Seaton, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and AGREED to:**

- **Note the current position in relation to the 24 High Street project**
- **Note the outcome of the tender evaluation process**
- **Authorise officers in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Social Mobility and Heritage to undertake approval of the award of a construction contract to the preferred bidder on or before 11 July 2022.**

*(Members resolved to exclude the public from the meeting for discussion on Schedule 1 to the report on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)*