

# CABINET



**THURSDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2021 - 3.00 PM**

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

## **CAB20/21 PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held 24 August 2021 were approved and signed.

## **CAB21/21 FREEDOM LEISURE**

Members considered the Freedom Leisure report presented by Councillor Clark.

Councillor Boden referred to paragraph 5.9 of the report and said that the prospect of the management fee starting to be paid in part in only three months' time is significantly better than anticipated when the budget for this financial year was first set. The levels of activity have exceeded our best hopes and it is hoped that this can continue for Freedom Leisure. He added that Councillor Clark was correct to emphasise that January 2022 memberships would be crucial, and it will be the first opportunity to compare the position with pre-pandemic figures.

### **Cabinet AGREED that:**

- **Fenland District Council provides the Phase VI financial relief to Freedom Leisure set out in these recommendations and detailed in section 5 of the report.**
- **FDC defers the monthly management fee of £38,000 per month for October 2021 – December 2021, at an estimated cost to the Council of £114,000, repayable in accordance with the terms set out at paragraph 3.4 of these recommendations.**
- **FDC continues to support Freedom Leisure on an open book basis by providing financial support from the remaining NLRG grant. The current estimated cost of operational support for the period is £25,260.**
- **Repayment of the £114,000 described in these recommendations shall become payable through an annual deduction of 75% of any profit generated in excess of the levels predicted in the LOBTA (Leisure Operators Base Trading Account). This is a change from the current 50/50 profit share and will be subject to the performance of the business over the contract period.**
- **The Monitoring Officer and s.151 Officer are authorised to put in place all necessary arrangements to give effect to the agreed recommendations to include entry into the necessary legal arrangements and expenditure of the amounts described from existing budget provisions.**

## **CAB22/21 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME**

Members considered the Council Tax Support Scheme report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Tierney commented that this seems a sensible set of proposals, he is glad that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel looked at it and approved it and he will certainly be supporting it.

Councillor Boden said the report is out for public consultation and will be brought back in the New Year for consideration by Full Council.

**CABINET considered the report and associated comments and recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Panel and AGREED:**

- (i) that the current 20% contribution rate for working age claimants remain unchanged for the 2022-23 scheme;**
- (ii) to approve for consultation the following four changes to the current scheme as detailed at Sections 4 and 5 of the attached report:**
  - (a) to reduce the capital threshold to £10,000 and abolish tariff income;**
  - (b) to introduce a fixed rate deduction of £7.40 for non-passported non-dependents;**
  - (c) to streamline the claim process and**
  - (d) to increase the tolerance for Universal Credit data re-assessments.**

*(Councillor Lynn left the meeting at 3.11pm at the beginning of this item)*

### **CAB23/21 FENLAND WALKING, CYCLING & MOBILITY DRAFT STRATEGY**

Members considered the Fenland Walking, Cycling and Mobility Draft Strategy report presented by Councillor Seaton.

Councillor Seaton thanked the Hereward Community Rail Partnership for their assistance in funding and helping with the development of this strategy.

Councillor Mrs French said she welcomes this but asked that the draft document be updated throughout as it incorrectly refers to the March Area Transport Strategy (MATS) as the March Area Transport Study; emphasizing it is a strategy not a study. Many things being worked on in the MATS have been costed through the County Council and some of the things highlighted in the MATS are not in FDC's strategy. She welcomes the Cycle 63 from Whittlesey to Peterborough but pointed out in the MATS we had improved the NCN63 cycle signage and local signed route at a cost of £12k; also, down near the prison was also highlighted so she asked if these could be included. Councillor Mrs French added that she welcomes the possibility of a cycle path from the Peas Hill roundabout to Mill Hill providing no road space is used as it would be too dangerous and there is enough kerb space to do it. Councillor Mrs French thanked officers for their hard work in such a short space of time.

Councillor Seaton echoed Councillor Mrs French's thanks to officers and confirmed he was happy to make the changes she outlined.

Councillor Tierney stated that he supports the strategy and all the plans and schemes within it but as this is a public meeting, he wanted to raise a particular issue. He said that it is common for the public to see walking, cycling and mobility and conflate it with highways and paths, forgetting which

council does which. However, this strategy must go hand in hand with proper maintenance of highways and paths, which is not Fenland District Council's responsibility. Therefore, he would like to see in the future when we work on such strategies, for us to encourage the County Council to think about how they allocate their budgets because paths and highways are not always maintained to the level the public would expect. He is concerned that very good work such as this is then overlooked because the public understandably focus on potholes. Therefore, he wanted to point out the difference between the councils whilst being in full support of this strategy.

Councillor Boden thanked Councillor Tierney, saying his point is entirely correct and the issue of the improvement of highways maintenance has been included within the report.

Councillor Laws said she fully supports this strategy; it is ambitious. It has proved since Covid-19 that the public are walking and cycling more, particularly in her area between Whittlesey and Peterborough when NHS staff and essential workers have been using that route. She has received many reports about punctured tyres etc and trips after dark. That route is so well used, and she believes there will be a huge response to the consultation. It allows our children to come off the A605, one of the busiest and most dangerous A roads as they cycle to Sir Harry Smith.

Councillor Benney said from a Chatteris perspective, he also fully supports this strategy. The plans for Chatteris provides better connectivity to the retail park which will further develop in time and there will be better and safer access for children to school.

**Cabinet AGREED to adopt the strategy as Version 1 and to approve the selected schemes to develop costed proposals to be ready to put forward for funding.**

#### **CAB24/21 DRAFT 6 MONTH CABINET FORWARD PLAN**

Councillor Boden presented the Cabinet Forward Plan for information.

3.29 pm

Chairman