

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held at The Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 4 November 2004

PRESENT: Councillor D P Holley - Chairman
Councillors I C Bates, Mrs J Chandler,
R L Clarke, N J Guyatt, D P Holley,
Mrs P J Longford, T V Rogers and
L M Simpson

APOLOGY An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds

72. INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed representatives from Mid-Bedfordshire District Council who were in attendance to observe the proceedings.

73. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 14th October 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

74. BUSINESS GENERATION AT LEISURE CENTRES

The Chairman announced that this item had been withdrawn from the Agenda and would be considered at a future meeting.

75. REPORT OF THE SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP

The report of the Safety Advisory Group (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) held on 22nd September 2004 was received and noted.

Having been acquainted with the circumstances surrounding the fire alert at Pathfinder House on 26th July 2004, it was

RESOLVED

that the recommendations for improvements to evacuation procedures as outlined in paragraph 5.3 of the report now submitted be approved.

76. COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT - DRAFT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Further to Minute No. 04/35, the Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Policy to which was appended a draft Improvement

Plan which had been prepared in response to the recent Comprehensive Performance Assessment. A copy of the report and draft Improvement Plan are appended in the Minute Book.

Having regard to the requirements of the new local development framework and the portfolio contents of Executive Councillors, it was

RESOLVED

that the draft Improvement Plan as now submitted be approved, subject to :-

- ◆ the deferment of the review of “housing which meets local need” from 2006/07 to 2007/08 and the advancement of accessible services and transport choices from 2007/08 to 2006/07;
- ◆ the addition of Councillor Mrs P J Longford as joint lead member for “learning and knowledge in the Improvement Plan; and
- ◆ the addition of Councillor L M Simpson as the joint lead member for “access and accommodation” and “capacity” in the Improvement Plan.

77. MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2005 - 2010: PROGRESS

Consideration was given to a report by the Director of Commerce and Technology (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) updating the Cabinet on progress to-date in reviewing the Medium Term Plan and the Base Budget and seeking Members’ guidance on the options to be presented when the Budget and MTP was formally considered in January and February 2005.

Having noted that arrangements would be made for Executive Councillors to meet informally to discuss schemes proposed in the Medium Term Plan and that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) would be invited to comment on the report at their meeting on 9th November 2004, it was

RESOLVED

that further consideration of this item be deferred until the next meeting of the Cabinet.

78. RAMSEY GATEWAY URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

Further to Minute No. 03/190, the Cabinet considered a report together with annexes (copies of which are appended in the Minute Book) outlining the responses received to consultation on the Ramsey Gateway Urban Design Framework.

Having considered the proposed responses and amendments outlined in Annex 1 and 2 to the report now submitted, it was

RESOLVED

that the revised Urban Design Framework as amended to reflect the content of Annex 2 to the report now submitted be

approved as Interim Planning Guidance to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

79. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK - ST IVES WEST

(By virtue of their offices as Members of Cambridgeshire County Council Councillors I C Bates and R L Clarke declared personal interests in the following item and remained in the meeting for the duration of the discussion and voting thereon).

A report by the Head of Planning Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a draft Urban Design Framework for three allocated housing sites to the west of St. Ives.

Having been reminded that the three sites were allocated within the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration, Members were informed by the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy that plans to improve transport links around the site and into St. Ives generally would be discussed at the Huntingdonshire Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee on 6th December 2004.

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) and those made by some Executive Councillors, it was explained that the type of development proposed on the three sites would need to await the submission and consideration of planning applications. The Cabinet also was reassured that account would be taken of the Christmas and New Year holiday period when consulting on the Urban Design Framework. It was subsequently

RESOLVED

that the Urban Design Framework be approved as draft Interim Planning Guidance for public consultation.

80. A VISION FOR ST NEOTS

By way of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were informed of the publication by the Civic Trust Regeneration Unit of a Centre Vision report on St. Neots Town Centre.

Having regard to concerns expressed by those Executive Councillors representing wards in and around St Neots relating to the content of parts of the document, it was

RESOLVED

that further consideration of the matter be deferred to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

81. HUNTINGDON RIVERSIDE PROJECT

Further to Minute No. 02/221 and with the assistance of a joint report by the Estates and Property Manager, Head of Community Services and Planning Policy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the

Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the outcome of a report by consultants on proposals for the development of the Riverside Park, Huntingdon. Having noted the significance of the local transport strategy in the context of paragraph 3.3.3 and that the bus route along the length of Hartford Road in question would not be "guided", Executive Councillors emphasised their expectations that, substantially, funding of the order envisaged would need to be sought from sources other than the District Council if the project was to proceed. In the meantime, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the principle of the preferred solution for the development of the Riverside Park as outlined in the report now submitted; and
- (b) that a programme be prepared for the work outlined in the report and the potential funding sources explored, to include opportunities for securing private sector funding where appropriate.

82. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES - AGENCY ARRANGEMENTS & FUTURE PROGRAMME

Further to Minute No. 03/132 and with the assistance of a report by the Head of Environment and Transport (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was acquainted with the present position in relation to the Council's public conveniences, their future maintenance and the revised financial implications thereof.

Having reviewed the recommendations in the report, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Head of Environment and Transport be authorised, following consultation with the Executive Councillor for Waste and Street Scene, to negotiate draft heads of terms with Huntingdon, St. Ives and St. Neots Town Councils for an agreement for the joint operation and maintenance of all town centre public conveniences for a period of not more than seven years and to report the outcome of the negotiations to Cabinet not later than its meeting on 3rd February 2005;
- (b) that the Head of Environment and Transport be authorised to serve notice on J C Decaux terminating the agreement in respect of automatic public conveniences in villages from 1st January 2005 and to make arrangements for their removal and for the restoration of the sites;
- (c) that the release of funds from the MTP for 2004/05 in respect of the removal of automatic public conveniences be approved;
- (d) that the changes to the MTP arising from the removal

of automatic public conveniences be approved;

- (e) that the remaining recommendations in the report be deferred; and
- (f) that an Advisory Group comprising Councillors I C Bates, Mrs J Chandler, R L Clarke and N J Guyatt be established to consider the matter further and to report with their recommendations to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

83. HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION ACT (HECA) EIGHTH PROGRESS REPORT (2004)

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Environmental Health Services to which was attached a copy of the Council's 8th Annual Report on Home Energy and Fuel Poverty Initiatives. A copy of the report which was to be submitted to the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs as part of the Council's Annual Housing Investment Programme Return is appended in the Minute Book.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the content of the Annual Report on Home Energy and Fuel Poverty Initiatives, as appended to the report now submitted be approved; and
- (b) that the Chief Executive be authorised to sign the report on behalf of the Council prior to its submission to the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

84. QUARTERLY SUMMARY OF DEBTS WRITTEN OFF

The Cabinet received and noted a report by the Head of Revenue Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) summarising debts which had been written off during the quarter July – September 2004, the cumulative total for the current year and comparisons with previous years.

85. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to the amount of expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Council for the supply of goods and services.

86. EXTENSION TO FACILITIES AT RAMSEY LEISURE CENTRE: REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING

By way of a report by the Leisure Centres Co-ordinator (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a request for the release of funding from the Medium Term Plan and a supplementary capital estimate to fund an extension to the facilities at

Ramsey Leisure Centre.

Having expressed their concerns at the difference between the tendered cost of the project and the budgetary provision for the scheme, it was suggested that issues with the leisure programme should be considered by the newly appointed Procurement Manager and a report submitted to a future Cabinet meeting, subsequently it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the release of £200,000 of capital funding for the extension of facilities at Ramsey Leisure Centre be approved;
- (b) that the request for an additional supplementary capital estimate of £128,000 be not approved;
- (c) that a transfer of £128,000 from the budget heading "Future Maintenance of Leisure Centres" be approved to fund the remaining cost of the extension of facilities at the Centre; and
- (d) subject to the foregoing resolutions and the availability of funds, a contract for the extension of facilities at Ramsey Leisure Centre in the sum of £328,381 be awarded to R G Carter Building Ltd.

Chairman