

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon on Thursday, 17th March 2005.

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

APOLOGY: An Apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs J Chandler.

143. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 24th February 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

144. YOUNG PERSONS HOUSING STRATEGY 2005 - 2007

By way of a report by the Head of Housing Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute book) the Cabinet was invited to consider the content of the first draft Young Persons Housing Strategy produced on behalf of the Council for 2005 – 2007.

Members were informed of the contextual role of the document in terms of the Council's overarching Housing Strategy and having noted that it had been submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery & Resources) on 1st March 2005, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that full Council be recommended to approve the Young Persons Housing Strategy 2005-2007.

145. REVIEW OF THE HOUSING REGISTER AND NOMINATIONS POLICY

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Housing Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute book) the Cabinet was acquainted with the outcomes of a review of the Council's Housing Register and Nominations Policy.

Having being advised of proposed amendments to the policy in relation to points awarded to applicants without access to a living room and to overcrowding assessments which had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery & Resources) on 1st March 2005, it was

RESOLVED

that the proposed amendments to the Housing Register and

nominations policy as outlined in the report now submitted be endorsed.

146. COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY

The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Operational Services to which was attached the draft Community Safety Strategy for the period 2005 – 2008 developed by the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership. Copies of the report and Strategy are appended in the Minute book.

RESOLVED

that full Council be recommended to approve the Community Safety Strategy for 2005/08.

147. EQUALITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY AND RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

By way of a report by the Head of Policy (a copy of which is appended in the Minute book) the Cabinet was invited to consider the content of a revised and enhanced Equality and Inclusion Strategy together with an updated Race Equality Scheme for the Council.

Having regard to the forthcoming review of the Council's Corporate and Best Value Performance Plan with the attendant need to ensure relevant co-ordination of the two documents, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Director of Central Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor with responsibility for Equality be authorised to approve amendments of textual detail to the Strategy, inter-alia, prior to its submission to the Council, in the light of the forthcoming review of the Council's Corporate Plan and Best Value Performance Plan.

148. EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN - CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE EAST OF ENGLAND

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute book) the Cabinet was acquainted with the significant elements of the East of England Plan issued for consultation in December 2004 and the content of suggested representations to the Regional Assembly.

Having noted that the recommendations of the Cabinet would need to be endorsed by Council at their meeting on 13th April 2005, it was

RESOLVED

that full Council be invited to authorise the submission of representations to the Regional Assembly based on the points raised in Chapter 4 of the report now submitted and that specific mention be made of the absence of a reference in the document to the Fens, Broads and other wetland areas in the Eastern Region and also to the need for further investigations

in relation to any potential future development of Alconbury Airfield.

149. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Planning Services to which was attached the draft Local Development Scheme for Huntingdonshire. Copies of the report and scheme are appended in the Minute book.

Having regard to comments received from Go – East and a reassurance from the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy that the time scales were still considered realistic, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the draft Local Development Scheme be endorsed for submission to the Secretary of State; and
- (b) that the Head of Planning Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy be authorised to make changes to the draft Local Development Scheme to reflect, inter alia the availability of an adequate supply of land for housing and the present position in relation to the Council's proposed arrangements with other local planning authorities in Cambridgeshire with regard to infrastructure contributions.

150. ST IVES WEST URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK AND MASTERPLAN

The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Planning Service (a copy of which is appended in the Minute book) outlining the responses received to consultation on the St Ives West Urban Design Framework and suggested amendments as a consequence thereof.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the revised St Ives West Urban Design Framework as amended to reflect the content of Annex 2 to the report now submitted, be approved as Interim Planning Guidance; and
- (b) that the Head of Planning Services be authorised, after consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Strategy to make any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations as necessary as a result of the amendments referred to in the preceding resolution.

151. ANGLIAN HOUSE, HUNTINGDON URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK AND MASTERPLAN

The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute book) outlining the

responses received to consultation on the Anglian House, Huntingdon Urban Design Framework and suggested amendments as a consequence thereof.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the revised Anglian House, Huntingdon Urban Design Framework as amended to reflect the contents of Annex 2 to the report now submitted, be approved as Interim Planning Guidance; and
- (b) that the Head of Planning Services be authorised, after consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Strategy to make any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations as necessary as a result of the amendments referred to in the preceding resolution.

152. CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH BIOLOGICAL RECORDS CENTRE

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute book) the Cabinet considered a proposal for the establishment of a Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biological Records Centre.

Having being informed that other local planning authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough City Council had committed to support the scheme and that the Council's initial capital contribution could be funded from the Planning Delivery Grant, thereby having no impact on the Council's Budget, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the establishment of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biological Records Centre be endorsed and funding from the Planning Delivery Grant for each of the years 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 as set out in the report approved;
- (b) that the Director of Operational Services be authorised to sign an Memorandum of Understanding setting out the management arrangements for the Centre;
- (c) that the operation of the Centre be reviewed at the end of 2005/06, to enable consideration to be given to the Council's future involvement or otherwise in the Centre after 31st March 2007; and
- (d) that, if appropriate, the Director of Operational Services after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy be authorised to approve the appointment of a District Council representative to serve on the Centre's Board of governance.

153. WASTE PFI UPDATE AND RECYCLING BUDGET

Following consideration of a report by the Head of Environment and Transport (a copy of which is appended in the Minute book) outlining the most recent developments in Cambridgeshire County Council's application for Private Finance Initiative (PFI Credits) to support future waste disposal arrangements in the County and updating the Cabinet on variations to the Council's recycling budget, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the award of £35 million in PFI credits to Cambridgeshire County Council for the provision of alternative waste treatment facilities and the resulting procurement programme be noted;
- (b) that the proposed programme for the submission of reports to future meetings in accordance with ongoing negotiations to develop partnering agreements with waste collection authorities be noted;
- (c) that the proposed use of Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant in the sum of £52,000 to support the District Council's partnering negotiations together with the transfer of capital funding of £50,000 from MTP Scheme reference 279/B to scheme reference 602 to contribute towards the cost of optional wheeled bins be approved;
- (d) that clarification of the previously approved variation to the MTP in respect of the £120,000 shortfall arising from changes to gate fees and recycling credits be noted; and
- (e) that consideration of the possibility of capping payments to Parish Councils and Voluntary Organisations providing sites for mini recycling centres be deferred for one year.

154. CAR PARKING CHARGES

Further to Min No. 04/69 and by way of a report by the Head of Environment and Transport (a copy of which is appended in the Minute book), the Cabinet considered objections received following the publication of proposals to vary car parking charges in the District.

RESOLVED

- (a) that a local enquiry to consider the objections be not convened; and
- (b) that subject to the inclusion of additional provision relating to the use of resident permits in the off-street car parks referred to in paragraph 5.2 of the report now submitted, the orders as advertised be confirmed.

155. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES ADVISORY GROUP

Further to Minute No. 04/82, the Cabinet received the report of the Members Advisory Group held on 2nd February 2005 (a copy of which is appended in the Minute book).

RESOLVED

- (a) that the proposed disposal of the site of public conveniences located at South Street, St Neots be approved in principle and the Town Council consulted thereon; and
- (b) that, subject to the preceding resolution, the recommendations of the Advisory Group as outlined in the report now submitted be approved.

156. MEDIUM TERM PLAN - REQUESTS FOR RELEASE OF FUNDING

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute book) the Cabinet considered requests for the release of funding for MTP schemes. Details of three additional schemes had been circulated following the despatch of the agenda.

Having considered the schemes involved, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the relevant funding be released from the following schemes and projects within the Councils MTP-

- ◆ Scheme ref: 00/014, Car Parks – Environmental improvements Phase 5;
- ◆ Scheme ref: 231/386/431, AJC Small Scale Schemes – District Wide;
- ◆ Scheme ref: 01/95/a and 389, Local Transport Plan – 2005/06;
- ◆ Scheme ref: 152/390/474, Safe Cycle Routes – creation of new routes to Schools;
- ◆ Scheme ref: 361, Huntingdon Transport Strategy;
- ◆ Scheme ref: 49, Huntingdon Town Centre Environmental Improvements Phase 2;
- ◆ Scheme ref: 104, Oxmoor Environmental Scheme;
- ◆ Scheme ref: 77, & 401 Huntingdon Town Centre Development;
- ◆ Scheme ref: 224, Town Centre Developments;
- ◆ Scheme ref: 241/B, Heart of Oxmoor;
- ◆ Scheme ref: 36, 387 and 469, Crime and Disorder – Lighting Improvements;
- ◆ Scheme ref: 400, Bus Shelters – Extra Provision;
- ◆ Scheme ref: 132, Railway Stations – Improvements – Partnership with Rail;
- ◆ Scheme ref: 3/323/385/472, Accessibility Improvements/Signage;
- ◆ Scheme ref: 607, Huntingdon Bus Station;

- ◆ Scheme ref: 50, Ramsey Great Whyte – Environmental Improvements – Phase 2;
- ◆ Scheme ref: 51, Ramsey Little Whyte – Environmental Improvements;
- ◆ Scheme ref: 04/495/A, Corporate EDM System;
- ◆ Scheme ref: 602, Optional Wheeled Bin for Dry Recyclables; and
- ◆ Scheme ref: 279, Joint Waste Procurement.

157. CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS - COUNCIL TAX AND NON DOMESTIC RATES

Further to Minute No 01/201 the Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Revenue Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute book) outlining a proposal to enable payment of Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates by credit card.

Having noted that the Council previously had agreed to accept payment by credit and debit cards for Council debts in April 2002 but had specifically excluded payment by credit cards for Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates and having reviewed the financial implications of the proposal, it was

RESOLVED

that the introduction of credit card payments for Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates be approved, subject to the addition of a handling fee equivalent to that charged by the banking and internet service providers.

158. LEISURE CENTRES: LINE UPGRADES FOR I.T NETWORK

The Cabinet considered a report by the ICT Services Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute book) outlining proposals to upgrade connections to Leisure Centres in the District and the Ramsey Community Information Centre.

Having considered the financial implications of the proposals, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that variations and budget transfers as outlined in chapter 3 of the report now submitted be approved to enable the upgrading work to the I.T Network to proceed.

159. REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute book) outlining the timetable for the review of the Councils Constitution by the Corporate Governance Panel and seeking comments on the present Constitutional arrangements.

RESOLVED

that in their forthcoming annual review of the Constitution, the

Corporate Governance Panel be invited to consider the possibility of including a requirement for Members serving on the Development Control and Licensing Panels to undertake training in their respective subject areas.

160. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to terms proposed in the course of negotiations for the acquisition of property and the supply of goods and services.

161. HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION

The Cabinet received the report of the meeting of the District Council Headquarters and other Office Accommodation Members' Advisory Group held on 18th February 2005 and considered the Group's recommendations in relation to the steps to be taken to procure suitable headquarters and depot premises for use by the Council.

Having also been acquainted with the outcomes of discussions by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels on the matter, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (i) that further detailed investigation be undertaken into the issues outlined in paragraph 8.4 and the options referred to in recommendations (d) and (e) of the report by the Head of Environment and Transport appended to the report of the Members Advisory Group;
- (ii) that £74,000 be released in 2005/06 in respect of the cost of further investigations referred to in (i) above;
- (iii) that no further consideration be given to the option with regard to the refurbishment of Pathfinder House and Castle Hill House;
- (iv) that, having regard to the observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels, further work be authorised to identify the availability of edge-of-Town Centre sites in Huntingdon and to test competitively the cost of these and other options;
- (v) that consideration be given at a future meeting to a report detailing the options referred to in recommendations (i) and (iv) above for testing competitively;
- (vi) that full Council be invited at its meeting on 13th April 2005 to note progress made to date;
- (vii) that a further report be submitted to Council in

September 2005 on the selection of a final preferred scheme and its implications for the Medium Term Plan; and

- (vii) that investigations be undertaken into the potential availability of external funding for buildings that achieve a high Environment Assessment Rating for the Building Research Establishment.

162. HUNTINGDON HIGH STREET: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS: PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE

The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Environment and Transport (a copy of which is appended in the Minute book) requesting approval for an procurement procedure to enable a tender to be negotiated with one of Cambridgeshire County Council's term contractors for the Huntingdon High Street Environmental Improvements.

Having considered the options for procurement and having noted that an arrangement along these lines suggested would be likely to deliver the best solution for the scheme in question, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the use of a non-traditional procurement method as set out in the code of procurement be approved; and
- (b) that the County Council's term maintenance contract and its contractor, May Gurney Ltd, be used for the Huntingdon High Street Environmental Improvements scheme.

Chairman