

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held at Cabinet Room, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Thursday, 27 May 2004

PRESENT: Councillor D P Holley - Chairman

Councillors I C Bates, Mrs J Chandler,
R L Clarke, Mrs K P Gregory, N J Guyatt,
T V Rogers and L M Simpson

209. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6th May 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

210. CUSTOMER FIRST CONTACT CENTRE - RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGY

By way of reports by the Director of Operational Services and of the proceedings of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) held on 04/05/04 (copies of which are appended in the Minute Book), the Cabinet considered a proposed Recruitment and Retention Strategy for the Customer First Contact Centre.

Having been acquainted with the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the Cabinet agreed that the term "call centre" should in future be used to refer to the facility. Following an amendment to the covering report to reflect the need to establish 12 Call Centre Agent posts initially, which at the request of ELAG representatives would be advertised internally in the first instance, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Recruitment and Retention Strategy as appended to the report now submitted be approved; and
- (b) that the release of £155,000 from the MTP in 2004/05 be approved together with £297,000 in 2005/06 onwards to enable appointments to be made to the posts referred to in paragraph 3.2 of the report now submitted

211. REPAYMENT OF LOANS MADE FOR REPAIR / REFURBISHMENT OF PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

Further to Minute No. 03/168, the Cabinet received and noted a report by the Head of Housing Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) detailing the estimated rate at which loans made under the Council's repair assistance policy would be repaid to the Council.

212. HOMELESSNESS - PRIVATE SECTOR LEASE SCHEME

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Housing Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking approval to increase the number of properties within the Private Sector Lease Scheme with the King Street Housing Society. Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

- a) that the Private Sector Lease Scheme be extended to meet the local needs of providing temporary accommodation for homeless households, subject to each phase being evaluated to ensure that it will result in financial benefit to the Council and the preservation of maximum flexibility in terms of terminating leases without a financial penalty.
- b) that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Homelessness Grant of £23,000 be used to finance the management charges for the first year of the next phase; and
- c) that the necessary budget transfer from the housing benefits to homelessness for each phase be approved whilst recognising that fluctuations in demand for housing benefit may nevertheless result in unavoidable overspendings.

213. GOVERNANCE ISSUES

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the need to establish a Corporate Governance Panel to consider certain governance and financial responsibilities of the Council. Having considered the issues involved, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that full Council be recommended to approve:-

- a) the establishment of a Corporate Governance Panel with terms of reference as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report now submitted;
- b) the composition of the Panel with 7 Members including a minimum of one and a maximum of three Cabinet Members;
- c) amendments to the terms of reference of the Standards Committee to omit those other duties allocated to it which do not relate to the Members' Codes of Conduct as listed on page 28 of the Constitution; and
- D) an amendment of Article 4 of the Constitution to delete the reference in paragraph 1(b) in relation to the Council Tax Base and the insertion of a reference to control of the Council's investments.

214. MONITORING OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2003/04

By means of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with anticipated variations in the Capital Programme in the current year. Having been advised of changes to the total variation from -£341,000 to -£284,000, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- a) that the report be received and expenditure variations noted;
- b) that the estimated capital savings and revenue impact also be noted; and
- c) that the financing of the upgrading of CCTV Links to St Neots and St Ives estimated at £40,000 be approved from the 2004/05 provision for camera replacements.

215. TREASURY MANAGEMENT INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE

A report by the Head of Financial Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which reviewed the respective levels of performance achieved during the quarter 1st January to 31st March, 2004 by External Fund Managers in the matter of investment of the Council's capital receipts.

RESOLVED

that the content of the report be noted.

216. RESPONSE TO DEFRA CONSULTATIONS ON THE UNLAWFUL DISPOSAL OF WASTE

By means of a report by the Head of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the details of recent consultation papers issued by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs concerning fly tipping and proposed new directions in respect of the unlawful disposal of waste.

Having considered the proposals outlined in the consultation papers and the suggested responses, the Cabinet emphasised that the latter should address their apprehension with regard to the prospect of additional responsibilities being imposed on waste collection authorities without the accompanying financial resources. According it was

RESOLVED

- a) that, subject to an appropriate caveat to condition the terms of acceptance of any additional responsibilities by waste collection authorities by reference to the availability of the accompanying financial resources, the response to the consultation papers as outlined in the report now submitted be approved; and

- b) that appropriate representations on the matters be made to the Local Government Association, the Minister of State for Local Government and the Regions and the Members of Parliament for the Huntingdon and North West Cambridgeshire Constituencies.

217. DISTRICT COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION MEMBERS' ADVISORY GROUP

A report of the meeting of the District Council Headquarters and other Office Accommodation Member Advisory Group held on 19th May 2004 was received and noted.

218. 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 financial or business affairs of a particular person, the amount of expenditure to be incurred under a particular contract for the supply of goods/services, terms proposed in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property and the supply of goods and services and the opinion of Counsel.

219. PURCHASE OF AIR QUALITY MONITORING EQUIPMENT

By means of a report by the Head of Environmental Health (a copy of which is appended in the annex to the Minute Book), the Cabinet considered a request seeking approval to the acceptance of a quotation other than the lowest received for the purchase of air quality monitoring equipment.

Having considered the perceived benefits in purchasing rather than leasing the equipment, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- a) that the quotation from Thermo Electron in the sum identified in the report now submitted, be approved; and
- b) that a supplementary capital estimate of £29,000 be approved and the revenue budget reduced as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report now submitted.

220. COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS AND DEPOT FEASIBILITY STUDY

Further to Minute No 03/133 and by way of a report by the Head of Environment and Transport (a copy of which is appended in the annex to the Minute Book) the Cabinet were apprised of the outcome of the tendering process for the appointment of consultants to undertake a detailed feasibility study of options for the District Council's headquarters and depot accommodation. Having considered the appraisal mechanism by which tenders were

evaluated, it was

RESOLVED

- a) that £75,00 be released for the feasibility study from the Medium Term Plan;
- b) that Lambert Smith Hampton be appointed as consultants to undertake the study; and
- c) that the future programme for the completion of the feasibility study as set out in paragraph 4 of the report now submitted be noted.

221. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF SAPLEY SQUARE, HUNTINGDON

The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Officers Management Team (a copy of which is appended in the annex to the Minute Book) concerning the procurement approach undertaken to date in relation to Phase 1 of the Acorn Health Centre Development and seeking approval to the transfer of certain contracts or procurement processes to the Council, subject to the inclusion of appropriate caveats with regard to management of the risks involved.

The report also outlined advice received from Counsel on the matter and a proposal to negotiate the contract for Phase 2 of the development with the contractor for the Health Centre. In order to complete the works in the timeframe required by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister funding agreement, to avoid the problem of restricted access to the site and to take advantage of the very competitive, successful tender submitted by a nationally recognised contractor for Phase 1, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that subject to the conditions outlined in paragraph 6.5 of the report now submitted -

- a) the procurement process for the main contract and the Council entering into the contract be approved;
- b) the employment of the quantity surveyor, as the Employer's Agent, on the contract terms originally agreed be approved; and
- c) the procurement process and engagement of Cambridgeshire County Council for Clerk of Works services be approved.

