

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 29 June 2005.

PRESENT: Councillor J A P Eddy - Chairman

Councillors J D Ablewhite, M G Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, I C Bates, J T Bell, Mrs B E Boddington, P L E Bucknell, E R Butler, Mrs J Chandler, K J Churchill, Mrs D E Collins, S J Criswell, J W Davies, D B Dew, P J Downes, J J Dutton, N J Finnie, J E Garner, D A Giles, Mrs C A Godley, J A Gray, Mrs K P Gregory, N J Guyatt, A Hansard, D Harty, D P Holley, C R Hyams, Mrs P J Longford, Mrs S A Menczer, P G Mitchell, M F Newman, R Powell, Mrs D C Reynolds, K Reynolds, T V Rogers, J M Sadler, T D Sanderson, L M Simpson, A B Stenner, P A Swales, G S E Thorpe, R G Tuplin, Mrs S J Vanbergen, J S Watt and Ms M Wheeler.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors W T Clough, J D Fell, C J Stephens and I P Taylor and Mr D H Bristow.

### 21. PRAYER

Reverend A Barrett, Curate of St. Mary the Virgin Church, Godmanchester opened the meeting with Prayer.

### 22. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### **Right Honourable Baroness Blatch of Hinchingsbrooke, CBE**

Following an announcement that he would be attending, on behalf of the Council, a service of thanksgiving for the life of the Right Honourable Baroness Blatch of Hinchingsbrooke at St. Mary's Church, Huntingdon on 27th July 2005, the Chairman invited the Council to stand for a few moments in silent tribute to Lady Blatch who had died recently.

### 23. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 25th May 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 24. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors I C Bates, Mrs B E Boddington, P J Downes, J J Dutton, J A P Eddy, D Harty, C R Hyams and K Reynolds declared a personal interest in Minute No. 28 (c) by virtue of their membership of

Cambridgeshire County Council.

**25. CABINET PROCEDURE RULES - DELEGATION BY THE LEADER**

In accordance with the Cabinet Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution and after an introduction by the Leader, Councillor D P Holley, the Council noted the allocation of executive functions for the ensuing municipal year contained in a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). Councillor Holley explained that he had varied responsibilities to align Portfolio Holders with respective Heads of Service and that whilst some portfolios appeared to be more challenging than others, he assured the Council that he had endeavoured to allocate workloads evenly.

In response to further questions, Councillor Holley outlined the role of the Deputy Leader and confirmed that the Portfolio Holder for Operations and Information Technology was responsible for operational issues in relation to waste/refuse collection with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport retaining responsibility for the oversight of waste policy and sustainability issues.

**26. GROWING SUCCESS - A CORPORATE PLAN**

By reference to a report by the Chief Officer's Management Team (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Council was reminded by the Leader of their decision in 2004 to adopt a new Corporate Plan – "Growing Success". (Minute No. 70 of the meeting held on 7th April 2004 refers).

Members noted that the Corporate Plan was a key part of the Council's policy framework and essential to the prioritisation and delivery of the Council's services within the context of the comprehensive performance management framework, the Medium Term Plan and service planning processes. The Leader added that the Plan recently had been reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and the Cabinet and would continue to be monitored on a quarterly basis against agreed targets and other indicators (a copy of the amended Plan also is appended in the Minute Book). The Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy, Councillor A Hansard, reminded Members that six priorities had been identified as being key elements of the quality of life in the District and that following assessment of a number of factors these had been categorised as high, medium or low. Outcomes or results also had been identified for each priority and would direct both service planning and review and the allocation of resources.

Having confirmed that a number of grammatical and typographical errors would be corrected in the final copy of the updated Plan, that direct reference would be made to Police Community Support Officers in Appendix C and that further background papers were available from a variety of sources, the Council

**RESOLVED**

that the updated Corporate Plan – "Growing Success" be adopted.

**27. FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2005/06**

Referring to a report by the Head of Environmental Health Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds, Executive Councillor for Housing and Public Health reminded the Council that the Food Standards Agency required the preparation, on an annual basis, of a Food Safety Service Plan (an executive summary of which also is appended in the Minute Book). A full copy of the Food Service Plan 2005/06 had been made available in the Members' Room.

Members were reminded of the objectives of the service plan in terms of identifying resources, establishing a work programme and providing a means by which to measure and manage performance. In drawing the Council's attention to the work programme for 2005/06, the Executive Councillor highlighted the intention to monitor, without inspection, low risk premises on a three-year cycle and to pilot an Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES) involving a postal survey to obtain information necessary to re-assess risk and maintain the database. An assessment of the pilot study would be reported to Members as part of the 2005/06 service plan.

Having noted the support for the Plan on the part of the Licensing and Protection Panel, the Council

RESOLVED

that the Food Safety Service Plan 2005/06 be approved.

**28. REPORTS OF THE CABINET, PANELS AND COMMITTEE**

**(a) Cabinet**

Councillor D P Holley, Leader and Chairman of the Cabinet presented the Report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 7th and 28th April, 19th May and 9th June 2005.

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In connection with Item No. 1, the Leader drew the Council's attention to a joint statement made by major stakeholders in Cambridgeshire in which they had indicated their support for the Highways Agency's proposals to upgrade the A14 trunk road from Ellington to Fen Ditton (a copy of the statement is appended in the Minute Book).

The Leader emphasised that the unanimity of the support expressed was unique and was critical if the timetable for the start of construction in 2008/09 and completion of the project between 2011/15 was to be achieved. The Council also were encouraged to take into account the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) contained in Item No. 1 of their Report to the meeting.

In support, the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Councillor N J Guyatt expressed the view that the current

level of usage of the A14 in Cambridgeshire inhibited growth in the eastern region and beyond, that there still were matters to resolve given the need for further study on the environmental, economic and local traffic impact, the future of the Huntingdon viaduct and the role of the existing A14 through Huntingdon consistent with the environment and growth of the town. The programme leading to commencement of construction on-site also was outlined.

Following these general statements, and having indicated his wish not to focus on the impact on any particular community, the Leader moved the following amendment to the recommendation as follows –

After “**RECOMMEND**, insert

- (a) that the Director of Operational Services be authorised, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, to make representations to the Highways Agency with regard to the need for measures to ameliorate noise during and after construction and to mitigate visual intrusion on all the communities affected by the routing of the proposed A14 upgrade scheme between Ellington and Fen Drayton; and
- (b)”

after, “that” in the first line of the recommendation, insert “, subject to (a) above”.

Councillors M G Baker, I C Bates, Mrs B E Boddington, P J Downes, J A Gray, D A Giles, R Powell and A B Stenner made representations in respect of the impact of the various proposed routes on the villages of Offord Cluny and D’Arcy, Buckden, Brampton, Hilton and those west of the District, the tendency for HCVs to use the A141 and A142 as alternative routes to the A14 and the need to consider the effect on the A428 during upgrade works on the A14. In response, the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, assured Members that he would also continue to lobby Ministers and the appropriate agencies in respect of the future of the A141, A428 and A1. Whereupon, on being put to the vote, it was

**RESOLVED**

- (a) that the Director of Operational Services be authorised, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, to make representations to the Highways Agency with regard to the need for measures to ameliorate noise during and after construction and to mitigate visual intrusion on all the communities affected by the routing of the proposed A14 upgrade scheme between Ellington and Fen Ditton; and

- (b) that, subject to (a) above, the comments listed in the report of the Director of Operational Services form the basis of the Council's formal response to the Highways Agency consultation on the upgrade of the A14.

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In connection with Item No. 9 and in response to a question from Councillor Churchill enquiring as to the part played by the District Council in the decision by the Huntingdonshire Primary Care Trust to retain a branch surgery in Little Paxton, the Leader advised the Council that the Cabinet had formally responded to the consultation and had expressed its strong concern regarding the suggested withdrawal of primary care services from Little Paxton.

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In connection with Item No. 21 and in response to a question regarding proposals for the project management of the new District Council Headquarters, the Leader assured the Council that whilst details of the project management arrangements had yet to be finalised, the terms would be more favourable and represent better value to the Council than otherwise could be secured by the use of external consultants. In the event of more detailed questions, the Leader indicated that he would discuss the matter further with Councillors outside the meeting.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that, subject to the foregoing paragraphs, the Report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 7th and 28th April, 19th May and 9th June 2005 be received and adopted.

**(b) Standards Committee**

Councillor T D Sanderson presented the Report of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 6th June 2005.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 6th June 2005 be received and adopted.

**(c) Development Control Panel**

Councillor P G Mitchell presented the Report of the meetings of the Development Control Panel held on 18th April, 23rd May and 20th June 2005.

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In connection with Item No. 1 (a) and in response to a question from Councillor D A Giles, the Chairman undertook to confirm, after the meeting, whether a triangle of land off the A1 at Little Paxton, known locally as Cosy's Corner was allocated for employment/industrial use. On the same subject and in response to a question from Councillor Mrs K P Gregory regarding the traffic impact of the proposed development on the infrastructure of Little Paxton, the Chairman replied that the traffic likely to be generated by the proposed housing development would be no greater than the movements currently recorded from the industrial estate currently occupying the site and that, in any event, any perceived problems would be addressed through a reserved matters application.

On the same subject and in response to questions from Councillor K Churchill, the Chairman outlined his understanding of the lease arrangements of the three remaining tenants on the Bydand Lane Industrial site and he invited the questioner to inspect documentation (a copy of which he would send to him) which suggested the availability of a number of alternative commercial sites in St. Neots.

On the same subject and in response to a question from Councillor P J Downes, the Chairman confirmed that the application represented a significant departure from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan, 1995 and that regard must be taken of emerging planning policy.

Upon being put to the vote, the recommendations contained in Item No. 1 (a) were not approved.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 4.16 pm, it was

RESOLVED

that the meeting stand adjourned.

Upon resumption at 4.40 pm

**(c) Development Control Panel (continued)**

In connection with Item No. 1 (a) of the Report of the Development Control Panel, the Leader moved and it was duly seconded that, in view of the legal and planning implications of the Council's decision, the recommendations

contained in Item No. 1 (a) be referred to the next meeting of the Development Control Panel and, if appropriate, to a future meeting of the Council.

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In connection with Item No. 1 (b) and in response to a question from Councillor K Reynolds regarding the percentage of affordable housing proposed for the site at Moorhouse Drive, Huntingdon given that the land was in the ownership of the District Council, the Chairman undertook to seek an explanation as to why no higher than 29% of the development would comprise affordable housing and to notify the questioner accordingly. On the same subject and in response to a question from Councillor P J Downes, the Leader reminded Members of the Council's commitment to the re-investment of funds into Oxmoor raised by the sale of land on the estate. Upon being put to the vote, the recommendations contained in Item No. 1 (b) were declared to be CARRIED.

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Upon being put to the vote the recommendations contained in Item No. 1 (c) were declared to be CARRIED.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that, subject to the foregoing paragraphs, the Report of the meetings of the Development Control Panel held on 18th April, 23rd May and 20th June 2005 be received and adopted.

**(d) Employment Panel**

Councillor J W Davies presented the Report of the meeting of the Employment Panel held on 8th June 2005.

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In connection with Item No. 3 and in response to a question from Councillor D B Dew, the Chairman confirmed that the proposed changes to staffing in the Information Management Division would result in savings in the long term.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Employment Panel held on 8th June 2005 be received and

adopted.

**(e) Licensing and Protection Panel**

Councillor J M Sadler presented the Report of the meeting of the Licensing and Protection Panel held on 21st June 2005.

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In connection with Item No. 2, the Chairman extended his appreciation to the Commercial Services Team of the Environmental Services Division for their achievements in food law enforcement during 2004/05.

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In connection with Item No. 4 and in response to a question from Councillor C R Hyams, the Chairman confirmed that recent legislation under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 related to high hedges only and not to trees.

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In connection with Item No. 5 and in response to a question from Councillor J E Garner regarding the proposed operating hours pertaining to consents for pavement cafés, the Chairman replied that it was the intention of the Panel to encourage a growth in café culture whereby the public could enjoy the consumption of a meal and alcohol in the open air before 9pm.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Licensing and Protection Panel held on 21st June 2005 be received and adopted.

**(f) Licensing Committee**

Councillor J M Sadler presented the Report of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 21st June 2005.

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The Chairman reported that some 182 applications had been received to date for personal licences and 129 for club and premises certificates under the Licensing Act 2003 which represented only 20% of the total number of applications which had been anticipated before the last day for the conversion of existing licences of 6th August 2005.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 21st June 2005 be received and adopted.

**(g) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance)**

Councillor P A Swales presented the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) held on 12th April and 14th June 2005 and of a joint meeting with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) held on 7th June 2005. (The recommendation in Item 1 had already been dealt with under Minute No. 28(a) ante).

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In connection with Item Nos. 4 and 6 and in response to questions by Councillor P J Downes, Councillor Swales explained that the "BREEAM" rating to be adopted in the replacement accommodation for Pathfinder House referred to the "British Research Establishment for Environmental Efficiency Measures" and that he felt that the proposed Travel Plan should include incentives to encourage the use of alternative ways to travel to work by employees.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Reports of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) held on 12th April and 14th June 2005 and of a joint meeting with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) held on 7th June 2005 be received and adopted.

**(h) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources)**

Councillor K Reynolds presented the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny (Service Delivery and Resources) Panel held on 5th April and 7th June 2005.

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In response to a question from Councillor P J Downes, Councillor Reynolds confirmed that the Panel would be re-considering the issues of smoking and the use of sunbeds in leisure centres in the context of a wider study being undertaken on public health.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) held on 5th April and 7th June 2005 be received and adopted.

## **29. ORAL QUESTIONS**

In accordance with the Council's Procedure Rules (Section 8.3) of the Council's Constitution, the Chairman proceeded to conduct a period of oral questions addressed to Executive Councillors and Panel Chairmen as follows:-

### **Question from Councillor P A Swales, to the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Councillor N J Guyatt**

In response to a question regarding the recent achievements of the Ramsey Area Partnership, Councillor Guyatt confirmed that the "Make a Difference Campaign" had won both the strategic partnership working category and was overall winner of the East of England's Best Market Town project. In commending this success, Councillor Guyatt was pleased to report that the award had been achieved with the support of a wide range of partners and in particular had recognised the work undertaken with young people including Ramsey Abbey, Ailwyn and Junior Schools.

### **Question from Councillor J Taylor to the Executive Councillor for Operations and Information Technology, Councillor L M Simpson**

In response to a question regarding the total cost to date of the Customer First Project, Councillor Simpson replied that he was currently unable to supply the information as the appropriate accounts had not yet been finalised but that the funding required had been allocated under the relevant Medium Term Plan schemes by the Council at their meeting in February. Additional funding of approximately £900,000 also had been forthcoming via grant assistance from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister following submission of the Council's IEG statement.

### **Question from Councillor P J Downes to the Leader, Councillor D P Holley**

In response to a question regarding the possibility of the Council being capped, the Leader replied that there had been no indication of the likely outcome of the Government's deliberations on this matter, although an announcement was anticipated by the end of June.

### **Question from Councillor Mrs B E Boddington to the Executive Councillor for Operations and IT, Councillor L M Simpson**

In response to a question as to when residents would be able to

dispose of kitchen waste in their green wheeled bins, Councillor Simpson replied that it was anticipated that this extension to the recycling service could commence in September and that he was pleased to report that the Council currently was achieving a 53% recycling rate.

**Question from Councillor T D Sanderson to the Leader of the Council, Councillor D P Holley**

In response to a question in respect of utilisation of Section 106 funds to meet the cost of improvements to the junction at Hinchingsbrooke Park Road/Brampton Road, Huntingdon, the Leader replied that the original scheme to which funds had been allocated was now not considered to be the best solution at that junction and alternative proposals were to be discussed with the County Council.

**30. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: SECTION 85**

The Chief Executive reported that there were no absences of Members from meetings for consideration in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The meeting concluded at 5.31 pm.

Chairman