

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Thursday, 15 September 2005.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Vice-Chairman in the Chair

Councillors Mrs J Chandler, N J Guyatt,
A Hansard, 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 D P Holley.

57. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 1st September 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

58. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Hansard declared a personal interest in Item No.73 by virtue of his membership of St Neots Town Council.

59. CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO THE WAY THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDES FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES

A report by the Director of Commerce and Technology (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) was submitted summarising the Government's suggested options for changing the way financial support to local authorities was calculated.

In discussing a basis for a District Council's response to the paper, Members concurred that any new arrangements should be fair should have regard for authorities ability to demonstrate value-for-money in the delivery of services and should avoid any resource equalisation which would result in a transfer of funds from low-spending to high-spending authorities. Having also recorded its apprehension as to the operational and practical implementations of the proposal free concessionary bus fare scheme, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Director of Commerce & Technology, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Finance, be authorised to respond on the Council's behalf to the Government's proposals for changing the way financial support to local authorities is calculated.

60. FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Further to Minute No.04/49, further consideration was given to a report by the Director of Commerce and Technology (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) setting out three potential options available in terms of adopting a strategy for managing the Council's finances in the period 2011/12. A report by the Head of Administration summarising the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) on the matter was also circulated.

Having been reminded of the Cabinet's previous decision to delete option 2 from any future deliberations, the uncertainties of the Council's future commitments and in noting the views expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, it was

RECOMMEND

that Council be requested to defer a decision on the Council's Financial Strategy until the winter cycle of meetings.

61. REVENUE OUTTURN 2004/05

A report by the Head of Financial Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of the outturn of revenue expenditure 2004/05 and the variations between the original and revised budget provision for that year.

Having emphasised the need for managers to be realistic in the phasing of schemes during reviews of the MTP and within budget monitoring, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the level of net outturn expenditure in the sum of £14,556 million as at 31st March 2005 and together with the carry forward of £292,000 to the current year be noted.

62. 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 April to 30th June 2005 by three external fund managers in the matter of investment of the Council's capital receipts.

RESOLVED

that the content of the report be noted.

63. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Further to Minute No.05/19, a report by the Head of Policy was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which reviewed the Council's performance against targets within the Corporate Plan – "Growing Success" - during the period April to June 2005.

Having been acquainted with the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels on the document, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the report be noted

64. COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: USE OF RESOURCES

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Policy (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was appended a draft Value for Money Self-Assessment which had been introduced as part of a amended "Use of Resources" judgement to be made by the Audit Commission in conjunction with changes to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process.

Having been informed that further work on the self – assessment would be required prior to its submission to the Commission before 1st October 2005, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

(a) that the contents of the report now submitted be noted; and

(b) that the Chief Executive be authorised, after consultation with either the Leader of the Council or Deputy Leader of the Council, to approve and submit the District Council's Use of Resources - Value for Money self-assessment.

65. AGEING WELL IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE - OLDER PEOPLES HOUSING, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE STRATEGY

By way of a report by the Housing Strategy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was acquainted with the contents of a draft of the Older Peoples' Health, Housing and Social Care Strategy "Ageing Well in Huntingdonshire", together with an associated action plan.

Having been informed that the Strategy had been produced to examine the issues and identify the actions that the District Council, the Huntingdonshire Primary Care Trust and other agencies and stakeholders would need to take to provide adequate services to older people, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Older Peoples' Health, Housing and Social Care Strategy together with the associated action plan be approved.

66. STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING - SERVICE STANDARDS

By way of a report by the Head of Environment and Transport (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the outcome of an asset survey reviewing the

standard of existing street name plates and numbering in Huntingdonshire.

In so doing, Members were advised of the problems and anomalies arising from street names and, particularly – rural areas and the National Street Gazetteer. Having been advised that the existing policy of not numbering all properties in the District had not resulted in a problem for the emergency services or the Local Land Property Gazetteer, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the progress of the asset survey and the repair of damaged plates from existing budgets be noted;
- (b) that, subject to the agreement of the relevant Parish Councils, action be undertaken to resolve the problems of inconsistent street naming;and
- (c) that the existing policy of not numbering properties in villages were established practices for households to provide house names be retained.

67. DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

With the aid of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet received a draft Statement of Community Involvement which set out arrangements for involving stakeholders in the process of preparing the Local Development Framework and determining planning applications. Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the draft Statement of Community Involvement be approved for the purpose of public consultation.

68. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK - LONGSANDS QUARTER

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 land in and around Longsands College, the Regional College, the site of the open air swimming pool, the Almond Road surgery and Health Centre in St Neots. The framework was intended to present the planning policy context for the redevelopment of this area, which included the creation of a new health centre for this part of the town.

Having noted concerns expressed by Members representing wards in and around St Neots about car parking and the potential loss of a public amenity, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Urban Design Framework be approved as a basis for public consultation.

69. DESIGN GUIDANCE - CAR COURTS - A GUIDE FOR DESIGNERS

With the aid of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet received a draft copy of guidance notes prepared to accompany and extend the advice provided on the design of car courts within residential areas in Huntingdonshire.

RESOLVED

that the design guidance for car courts be adopted as Council policy.

70. DEVELOPMENT BRIEF - THE GRAND CINEMA, RAMSEY

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 design brief for the Grand Cinema in Ramsey. The brief was intended to present the planning policy context and design parameters for the future redevelopment of the site and adjoining land.

Having emphasised the importance of maintaining a community facility for Ramsey, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the development brief be approved as a basis public consultation.

71. HUNTINGDONSHIRE BIG GIG

Arising from the absence of funding in the Medium Term Plan for a "Big Gig project" consideration was given to a report by the Arts Services Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) setting out alternatives either not to proceed with the event or to organise a ticketed event in 2007 underwritten by the District Council.

Having considered information contained in the report, the financial pressures which would need to be addressed by the Council in the near future, the risks associated with underwriting an event of this nature and views expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) on the matter, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that no future Big Gig events be organised by the District Council.

72. ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN - PROGRESS REPORT

A joint report by the Head of Legal and Estates and of Environment and Transport was submitted (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book) updating Members on the current position with regard to land and property management and new assets

Having considered the information contained in the report, the

Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy, be authorised to accept new assets, including sustainable urban drainage systems, where they are accompanied by satisfactory financial and management arrangements;
- (b) that the Director of Central Services be authorised to accept the transfer of amenity land, currently maintained but not owned by the District Council.

73. CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU, ST. NEOTS

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Legal and Estates (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining details of a request from the Citizens Advice Bureau for the Council to continue to act as a guarantor of a lease of premises in New Street, St Neots.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Executive Director of Central Services, after consultation with the Executive Member for Resources and Policy, be authorised to approve arrangements for the Council to act as guarantor of a lease of premises in New Street, St Neots to the Citizens Advice Bureau.

74. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES ADVISORY GROUP - APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS

RESOLVED

that Councillors Bates, Mrs Chandler, Guyatt and Mrs Longford be appointed to serve on the Public Conveniences Advisory Group for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

75. SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP

The report of the Safety Advisory Group held on 15th June 2005 was received and noted.

76. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to the identity of parties tendering for a contract, the terms proposed for the acquisition or disposal of property and/or the supply of goods or services and the amount of expenditure which would be incurred under said contract.

77. HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION - INITIAL TENDER EVALUATION

Further to Minute No.05/56 and with the assistance of a report by the Director of Operational Services (a copy of which is appended in the annex to the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the initial evaluation of three tenders for the Council's future office and other accommodation requirements.

Having considered the deliberations of the Office Accommodation Members Advisory Group and Overview and Scrutiny Panels on the matter, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the outcome of the initial evaluation of tenders for the Council's future office and accommodation requirements be noted;
- (b) that Council be recommended to include tenders from the two companies referred to in paragraph 5.5 of the report in the final evaluation;
- (c) that, subject to (b) above, the Chief Executive be authorised to notify the remaining unsuccessful company that their bid will not be given further consideration;
- (d) that the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Deputy Leader, be authorised to agree payments as necessary, but not exceeding £20,000, to each of the two companies referred to in (b) above to support the presentation of more detailed information; and
- (e) that a final decision on the proposed awarding of a contract and consequential changes to the Medium Term Plan be taken by full Council at the meeting on 7th December 2005.

Chairman