

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, 23 February 2006.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.

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.

168. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th February 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

169. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor I C Bates declared a personal interest in Minute No. 175 by virtue of his membership of Cambridgeshire County Council.

170. PRIMARY CARE TRUSTS

Further to Minute No. 05/88, the Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding proposals for the proposed reconfiguration of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), Strategic Health Authorities (SHA) and Ambulance Trusts in the Eastern Region. Consideration also was given to a report by a Working Group established by the Service Delivery and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel recommending the retention of a free-standing Huntingdonshire PCT.

Members were reminded that two options for the future configuration of the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire had been included as part of the formal consultation process and that representations previously made by the District Council to the SHA had sought the inclusion of an additional option for a free-standing Huntingdonshire PCT.

Mindful of the high level of support locally for the retention of the Huntingdonshire PCT, the Council's decision at their meeting held on 22nd February to support a Motion to that effect, the contrasting needs of the rural community in Huntingdonshire and the working relationship between the District Council and the PCT which had secured a number of successful health-related initiatives, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

(a) that the Chief Executive advise the Norfolk, Suffolk and

Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority (SHA) of the District Council's support for the retention of a free-standing Primary Care Trust for Huntingdonshire;

- (b) that the content of the report authored by the PCT entitled "Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS in Huntingdonshire" be endorsed; and
- (c) that a copy of the District Council's representations in the matter be forwarded to the Chairman and Chief Executive of the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire SHA and to other interested partner organisations and stakeholders.

171. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT: GOVERNANCE

Further to Minute No. 05/157, a report by the Head of Policy was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding the establishment of a Local Area Agreement Board to oversee the development and ensure the achievement of the Local Area Agreement framework outcomes.

Having been acquainted with the terms of reference and proposed composition of the Board which would be drawn from business, the County and District Councils, Local Strategic Partnerships, the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, the Police, the Health Authorities, and the voluntary and community sectors, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Leader of the Council be appointed to represent the District Council on the Local Area Agreement Board for Cambridgeshire.

172. LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS: SHAPING THEIR FUTURE

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 comment on a consultation paper issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) entitled "Local Strategic Partnership: Shaping Their Future". Using a series of questions, the consultation had invited responses on the development and current thinking on LSPs and community strategies as informed by recent evaluation undertaken nationally and by the Audit Commission.

Members noted that the paper would be considered by the District Council's partners involved in the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership and Partnership Board, who could submit comments directly to the ODPM.

Having been advised that the HSP Board had already considered the implications of the proposals and acknowledged the potential role of Overview and Scrutiny in the evaluation of the LSP and community strategy process, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the conclusions set out in paragraphs 7.1 – 7.3 of the report now submitted be endorsed and that the Head of Policy be authorised to respond to the consultation paper.

173. MONITORING OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME - 2005/06

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) highlighting variations to the approved Capital Programme in 2005/06 and the consequential estimated revenue impact. It was

RESOLVED

that the report be received and the variations noted.

174. 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 by Fund Managers during the quarter 1st October – 31st December 2005 in managing the investment of the Council's capital receipts. Having been advised that the interest earned on the funds invested would exceed the targets assumed in the budget, Members

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report now submitted be noted.

175. HIGHWAYS AGENCY 2006

Members considered a report by the Head of Environment and Transport (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding progress in negotiations to secure a new agreement with the County Council for the discharge of specific functions in future years following the termination of the Highways Agency in March 2005.

Having noted the range of highway-related activities which would be included in the future agency arrangement and the financial implications of the proposed arrangements, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Environment and Transport, the Director of Operational Services be authorised to enter into an agreement with the County Council for a period of 3 years commencing 1st April 2006, to secure the discharge of the highways functions described in paragraph 6.2 of the report now submitted, within existing budget provision.

176. CONCESSIONARY FARES

Further to Minute No. 108, consideration was given to a report by the Head of Environment and Transport (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) updating the Cabinet on progress achieved towards the introduction of a new Concessionary Fares regime on 1st April

2006. Reference also was made to a Members briefing note prepared by the Head of Environment and Transport (a copy of which is also appended in the Minute Book). Members were advised that since their previous meeting, negotiations had continued among Cambridgeshire authorities and the bus operating companies to finalise a scheme that was acceptable to all parties.

It was explained that agreement had been secured for the operation of a scheme which would involve free travel within the District and a part subsidy for travel within other Cambridgeshire areas. This would operate for a period of one year commencing on 1st April 2006. The scheme would be reviewed and developed further following an assessment of recorded travel data in the first year of operation.

Having noted the financial implications of the scheme illustrated in Table 1 of the report now submitted and the extent of the supplementary issues still requiring agreement prior to its implementation, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that on the understanding that all City and District Councils in Cambridgeshire formally commit to the proposed scheme, Option 2 contained in Table 1 of the report now submitted be approved for implementation for the twelve months period commencing 1st April 2006;
- (b) that free travel on Community Transport services be made available to pass holders for services accessing market towns in Huntingdonshire; and
- (c) that the Head of Environment and Transport be requested to report to the Cabinet on the progress of the scheme after 6 months operation and appropriate publicity given to the scheme.

177. CAR PARKING ORDER - OAK DRIVE, HUNTINGDON

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 a proposal to control car parking in the vicinity of Sapley Square, where a new health centre, PCT offices and a community centre currently were being developed.

The Order would provide free parking for a maximum of two hours with no return within one hour and set other requirements for the regulation and use of the car park. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Director of Central Services be authorised to proceed with the making of an Off Street Car Parking Order for the car park at Oak Drive, Huntingdon.

178. SMALL SCALE ENVIRONMENT IMPROVEMENTS

The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Environment and Transport (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining

progress on small scale environmental improvement schemes and proposing a programme of schemes for 2006/07. Following discussion on the criteria for the prioritisation of schemes, it was

RESOLVED

that the necessary funding be released from the medium term plan for the programme of schemes for 2006/07 as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report now submitted.

179. PLANNING GAIN SUPPLEMENT: CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to a report by the Planning Policy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) describing the content of a consultation paper published by HM Treasury entitled "Planning Gain Supplement: A Consultation". Members were informed that Planning Gain Supplement (PGS) was a proposed new tax which would be levied by Central Government on land that had the benefit of planning permission. The new tax would be used to fund a range of infrastructure needs and largely replace the S106 contributions currently secured by local authorities.

Although acknowledging that the proposed PGS would offer benefit to developers, Members expressed concern at the methodology which might be used for the distribution locally of funds generated from development and at the categorisation of items which would fall within and outside the proposed new planning obligations. Therefore, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy be authorised to respond to the consultation along the lines described in paragraphs 4.1 – 4.5 of the report now submitted and that the response be copied to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Government Office for the Eastern Region.

180. CONSULTATION ON PLANNING POLICY STATEMENTS

By way of a report by the Planning Policy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was acquainted with the content of consultation papers published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) on Housing (PPS3) and Development and Flood Risk (PPS25) comments on which had been requested by 28th February 2006.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the report now submitted be noted; and
- (b) that the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy be authorised to respond to the consultation papers along the lines described in paragraphs 3.1 and 5.1 of the report relating to PPS3 and PPS25 respectively.

181. DEVELOPMENT BRIEF - OLD FIRE STATION SITE/HOUSEHOLD WASTE DISPOSAL SITE, ST NEOTS

Having considered a report by the Head of Planning Services to which was attached a draft development brief for the Old Fire Station – Household Waste Disposal Site, St. Neots (copies of both documents are appended in the Minute Book), the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the development brief for land surrounding the Old Fire Station and Household Waste Disposal sites in St. Neots be approved for public consultation prior to adoption as Interim Planning Guidance.

182. DISABILITY 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 draft Disability Equality Scheme for adoption by the Council.

Members were advised that the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) would place a duty on public bodies to promote disability equality and that preparation of a draft scheme would enable consultation to be undertaken in advance of the statutory deadline for implementation. Having been informed that the draft scheme would be produced in a similar way to the current Race Equality Scheme, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the content of the draft Disability Equality Scheme be approved for consultation.

183. HOUSING ACT, 1985: ENFORCEMENT OF STANDARDS - DELEGATED POWERS

A report by the Head of Environmental Health Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking a variation to the Council's scheme of delegation in respect of the enforcement of housing standards in properties, including houses in multiple occupancy, Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Head of Environmental Health Services and the Director of Operational Services be authorised to appoint suitably qualified, experienced and trained Officers to carry out duties under the Housing Act 1985 and any Regulations or Orders made thereunder and after consultation with the relevant Executive Councillors to institute legal proceedings under the Act.

Chairman