

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, 29 June 2006.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.

Councillors P L E Bucknell, N J Guyatt,
A Hansard, Mrs D C Reynolds, T V Rogers
and L M Simpson.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs J Chandler and Mrs P J Longford.

23. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 8th June 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

24. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Bates declared a personal interest in Minute No 32 by virtue of his membership of the Cambridgeshire Police Authority.

25. CREATIVE ENTERPRISE

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Policy (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a draft Creative Enterprise Strategy for Huntingdonshire aimed at increasing the sustainability, growth and productivity of creative industries in the District and maximising their potential to contribute towards broader social, economic and cultural regeneration.

In so doing, attention was drawn to proposals to develop a Creative Enterprise Centre on the campus of Longsands College in St Neots, in conjunction with the Department of Communities and Local Government and Longsands College, which would link opportunities for job and business creation and economic regeneration through the Cambridge sub region with the economic benefits from other regional centres. Having also considered a request for the release of funding from the Medium Term Plan for this development, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Creative Enterprise Strategy for Huntingdonshire be approved for publication as a supplement to the Local Economy Strategy;
- (b) that the relevant funding as outlined in Appendix B be released from the Medium Term Plan (scheme ref 657) in respect of the development of a Creative Industries Enterprise Centre at Longsands College, St Neots; and

- (c) that the Director of Central Services be authorised, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy, to enter into a lease of land for the Enterprise Centre at Longsands College and a funding agreement with the Department for Communities and Local Government.

26. MOBILE HOME SITE, EYNESBURY - CONTAMINATED LAND REMEDIATION STRATEGY

Further to Minute No.05/140 and by way of report by the Head of Housing Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the findings of additional soil sampling of contaminated land at the Council's Mobile Home Park at Eynesbury, St Neots and a recommended approach for the remediation of the land.

In considering the information contained in the report, Members' attention was drawn to a programme of work for the remediation of the land including the temporary rehousing of residents while the work was undertaken. In discussing financial and other issues associated with the work, Members were reminded that Government funding had been sought from the Contaminated Land Capital Projects Programme and received an assurance that the net cost to the Council for the whole of the project should not be significant. Whereupon, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report now submitted be noted; and
- (b) that a supplementary capital estimate of £437,000 and a supplementary revenue estimate of £10,000 be approved to fund the works necessary to progress the next stage of the project to enable tenders to be sought.

27. AMENDMENTS TO THE HOUSING RENEWAL ASSISTANCE POLICY

Following consideration of a report by the Head of Housing Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining seven proposed amendments to the Council's Housing Renewal Assistance Policy, it was

RESOLVED

that, subject to the relevant Executive Councillor being consulted on grant approval levels for warm front top up grants and disabled facilities grant top up assistance (policy No. 3 refers) and references being made to Registered Social Landlords and arrears rather than money owed in policy No. 6, the proposed amendments to the Housing Renewal Assistance Policy as outlined in the annex to the report now submitted be approved.

28. ADDITIONAL FUNDING FROM REGIONAL HOUSING BOARD FOR DECENT HOMES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

By way of a report by the Heads of Housing Services, Technical Services and Environmental and Community Health Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were advised that the Council had been awarded a capital grant of £327,925 from the Regional Housing Board to help improve "non-decent" homes in the private sector.

In discussing how the grant should be used, consideration was given to the criteria for meeting the Government's decent homes standard and Members were advised that the majority of dwellings that failed the standard in Huntingdonshire did so due to poor thermal efficiency. Having expressed concern over the Government's constraints for spending the grant given the Council's priority for affordable housing and homelessness and the need to introduce water efficiency measures in the Eastern Region, it was

RESOLVED

that a supplementary capital estimate of £327,925 be approved to provide thermal efficiency improvements to private sector homes occupied by vulnerable people, funded from the Regional Housing Board capital grant.

29. CAMBRIDGESHIRE SUB-REGION GYPSY/TRAVELLER NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2005

With the aid of a report by the Heads of Housing Services and of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the key findings of the Cambridge Sub Region Gypsy/Traveller Needs Assessment undertaken by Anglia Ruskin University and Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College.

Having noted that Officers would be drafting a Gypsy and Travellers Sites Development Plan Document to meet the identified needs up to 2021, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the key findings of the Cambridge Sub Region Gypsy/Traveller Needs Assessment be noted.

30. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME REVISIONS - DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING

By way of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with proposed amendments to the Local Development Scheme for Huntingdonshire and the associated draft Supplementary Planning Document in relation to developer contributions towards affordable housing.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the proposed amendments to the Local Development Scheme as outlined in the report now submitted be approved for submission to the Secretary of State;
- (b) that the draft Supplementary Planning Document on developer contributions towards affordable housing be approved for consultation and the Executive Councillor for Planning and Transport be authorised to approve its Sustainability Appraisal; and
- (c) that the Head of Planning Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning and Transport be authorised to make changes to the draft Supplementary Planning Document to reflect inter alia specialist developments such as retirement homes.

31. HUNTINGDON TOWN CENTRE VISION

By way of report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were informed of the publication by the Civic Trust regeneration unit of a Centre Vision report on Huntingdon Town Centre. Having noted the main aims and objectives of the report, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that subject to the approval by the Head of Planning Services after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy of any minor, detailed amendments, the Huntingdon Town Centre Vision be adopted as informal planning guidance.

32. POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS

In response to a recommendation contained in a report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) for the Council to review the Council's financial contribution for the employment of Police Community Support Officers in Huntingdonshire given the availability of new funding streams from the Government under the Neighbourhood Police Fund, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the District Council's funding for the employment of Police Community Support Officers in Huntingdonshire be withdrawn as soon as possible, commensurate with there being no reduction in the number of officers that were financed by the Council; and

- (b) that future copies of the quarterly Community Safety Partnership report on crime in Huntingdonshire be circulated to all Members of the Council.

33. LOCAL JUSTICE AREA BOUNDARIES CONSULTATION PAPER

By way of a report by the Head of Legal and Estates (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with a proposal to make a minor change to the boundaries of the Peterborough, Huntingdonshire and Cambridge local justice areas to realign their boundaries with the Cambridgeshire police force divisions, the relevant local authorities and crime and disorder reduction partnerships.

In considering the proposals, Executive Councillors raised concerns over transport issues in certain parts of the District when the public travelled to and from court. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted and the Head of Legal and Estates requested to convey to the Cambridgeshire Justices' Issues Group, the District Council's concern over the accessibility of courts for residents of parts of the District.

34. SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP

The report of the Safety Advisory Group held on 14th June 2006 was received and noted.

35. 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 terms proposed in the course of negotiations for the acquisition/disposal of land or property.

36. UNIT 10, GLEBE ROAD, ST PETERS INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, HUNTINGDON

The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Legal and Estates (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) regarding a request to purchase the freehold of 10 Glebe Road, St Peters Industrial Estate, Huntingdon. Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that consideration of the matter be deferred pending the submission of further information to a future meeting.