

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, 22 November 2007.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.
Councillors P L E Bucknell, D B Dew, A Hansard, 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 C R Hyams.

70. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18th October 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

71. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

72. DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Further to Minute No. 06/24, consideration was given to a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the responses received to consultation on the supplementary planning document, "Developer Contributions towards Affordable Housing".

Having considered the schedule of responses and amendments outlined in the appendices to the report and in noting officers' recommendations on representations, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Developer Contributions towards Housing Supplementary Planning Document incorporating the changes set out in Appendix 1 to the report now submitted be approved;
- (b) that the Sustainable Appraisal, appended to the report now submitted, be approved;
- (c) that the Statement of Consultation, appended as Annex 5 to the report now submitted be approved; and

- (d) that the Head of Planning Services be authorised to approve any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations as a result of the changes above after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Environment and Transport.

73. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK :CORE STRATEGY - PREFERRED OPTIONS

A report by the Head of Planning Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) inviting the Cabinet to consider suggested preferred options for inclusion in the Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

Members were reminded that the Core Strategy would provide a spatial vision for the District up to 2026, which would include essential housing development, stable economic growth and environmental improvements. In that respect, the Cabinet emphasised that the success of the vision would be dependent on the delivery by the Government and other stakeholders of improved infrastructure, educational and health facilities for the District

Having been reminded of the timescale and procedure for public consultation and consideration by the Council prior to its submission to the Secretary of State, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Core Strategy: Preferred Options Report, as appended to the report now submitted, be approved as the basis for a public consultation and Head of Planning Services authorised to make any minor changes to the document as he considers necessary, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Environment and Transport.

74. GROWING SUCCESS PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Cabinet received a report by the Head of Policy and Strategic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) presenting performance data on the achievement of objectives in "Growing Success" – the Council's Corporate Plan.

Having been reminded that a joint working group of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels regularly reviewed those objectives considered to be priority, Executive Members requested that a summary of the Panel's deliberations should be appended to future monitoring reports. Having also requested further clarification about the target set for affordable housing, the demand for smoking cessation training and the continued requirement for "art attack" activities, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

75. BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2008-2013

Further to Minute No. 07/54 and by way of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the present position on the draft 2008/09 budget, the Medium Term Financial Plan for the period up to 2012/2013 and the longer term financial forecast to 2018/2019 together with the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) thereon.

In discussing the content of the report, Members emphasised the need to consider a range of potential scenarios, particularly given the uncertainty as to future levels of revenue support grant and the possible impact of a lower than expected increase in government grant in 2008/09 and in that context it was

RESOLVED

that full Council be recommended to;

- (a) note the implications of receiving a low level of revenue support grant in terms of future council tax rises and in that respect to request Officers to report to a future meeting on other options which would involve increases of between 4.99% and 7.5%;
- (b) support a policy of limiting increases in budget requirement to 4.99% but to invite Officers to consider models requiring a lower requirement approximating to circa 4%;
- (c) support the draft Medium Term Financial Plan as the basis for the production of the 2008/2009 budget, the revised Medium Term Plan for 2009-2013 and a financial plan to 2018/2019.;and
- (d) request Officers to review critically all budgets and Medium Term Plan schemes (revenue and capital).

76. DECENT HOMES FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Further to Minute No. 06/28 and by way of a report by the Heads of Housing Services, of Technical Services and of 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 £167,000 from EERA's Housing and Sustainable Communities Panel to help improve "non-decent" homes in the private sector.

In discussing how the grant should be used, Members were reminded that a previous award had been reserved for thermal efficiency improvements. Despite targeted publicity the take-up of this grant had been lower than anticipated. Having been advised that failure to spend the grant on the intended use might prejudice further allocations, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the grant of £167,000 be reserved for future years' spend on the provision of insulation improvements to private sector homes occupied by vulnerable people.

77. HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

Further to Minute No. 06/123, a report by the Head of Housing Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a copy of a proposed Homelessness Prevention Framework for discretionary payments designed to support the Council's preventative approach to homelessness.

Having considered the main aims, objectives and financial implications of the framework and in noting progress made to date on the Council's homelessness prevention programme, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the successes already achieved in the prevention of homelessness be noted; and
- (b) that the Homelessness Prevention Policy Framework for discretionary payments be approved and the Head of Housing Services requested to report further to the Cabinet after a year of operation on progress, cost and success of the scheme in preventing and reducing homelessness.

78. PROPOSED STUKELEY MEADOWS SKATE PARK

By way of a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a request for the release of funding for the development of a skate park in Stukeley Meadows which had been identified for inclusion in 2008/2013 Medium Term Plan.

Whilst noting that the scheme had been successful in securing £160,000 from external sources, Executive Councillors referred to the absence of any funding thus far Huntingdon Town Council particularly given the benefits of the proposals for the town. In that respect Members suggested that the Town Council be approached with a view to meeting the running costs of the facility, estimated at £10k per annum. In noting the time restrictions placed on some of the designated funding and the resultant need to commission work on the scheme by the end of the year, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- a) that up to £20,000 be released from the capital programme, prior to approval of the Council's Medium Term Plan to enable a scheme to develop a skate park in Stukeley Meadows, Huntingdon to proceed; and

- b) that Huntingdon Town Council be approached to consider meeting the running costs of the scheme estimated at £10k per annum.

79. LOCAL ECONOMY STRATEGY

With the aid of a report by the Head of Policy and Strategic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the content of the draft Huntingdonshire Local Economy Strategy.

By way of background, Members were reminded that the strategy had been developed in consultation with the business community and the Huntingdonshire Economic Forum and aimed to provide a focus for investment, activities and interventions for a range of organisations working in the local economy for continued economic success.

Having noted the next stage of the process – consultation with partner organisations prior to the document's endorsement by the Economic Forum in January 2008 - the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the contents of the draft Huntingdonshire Local Economy Strategy be approved.

80. LICENSING ACT 2003 - STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

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 results of consultation on the Council's revised Statement of Licensing Policy as required by the Licensing Act 2003, along with suggested responses thereto. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that full Council be recommended to approve the Statement of Licensing Policy appended to the report now submitted with effect from 7th January 2008 for a period of three years.

81. 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 affairs of particular persons.

82. LAND AT ST MARY'S STREET, REAR OF 22 HIGH STREET 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 the proposed disposal of Council-owned land at St Mary's Street, the rear of 22 High Street, Huntingdon.

RESOLVED

that the terms and conditions, as set out in the report now submitted, for the sale of District Council owned land at St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, be approved.

Chairman