

## 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, 31 January 2008.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.

Councillors P L E Bucknell, D B Dew, A Hansard, C R Hyams, T V Rogers and L M Simpson.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds.

### **92. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **93. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor Bates declared a personal interest in Minute No 07/100 by virtue of his directorship of Cambridgeshire Horizons.

### **94. FINANCIAL MONITORING - REVENUE BUDGET**

The Cabinet received and noted a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) detailing expected variations in revenue expenditure in the current year.

In discussing the total amounts of payments written-off in the year for Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates, Members were advised of the recent decision by the Government to introduce charges for empty properties from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 and requested that a breakdown of the costs outstanding from this be included within future reports. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the spending variations in the Revenue Budget as at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007 be noted.

### **95. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - 2007/08**

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 2007/08 and the consequential estimated revenue impact. It was

RESOLVED

(a) that the report be received and the variations detailed at Annex A appended thereto noted;

- (b) that the variations outlined in para 2.1 of the report and their estimated capital and revenue impact noted; and
- (c) that a transfer of £65,000 from capital and revenue in respect of the Document Centre business systems development be approved.

**96. MEDIUM TERM PLAN: REQUEST FOR THE RELEASE OF FUNDS: DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS**

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a request for the release of funding from the Medium Term Plan.

RESOLVED

that the relevant funding as detailed in the report now submitted be released for the award of disabled facilities grants.

**97. FINANCIAL STRATEGY, MEDIUM TERM PLAN AND BUDGET**

Further to Minute No. 07/75 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 a number of variations to the assumptions made previously for the purpose of preparing the draft Financial Strategy, Medium Term Plan (MTP), the Budget and associated level of Council Tax for 2008/09, together with the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) thereon.

In reviewing the issues involved, Members questioned the desirability or otherwise of reducing the level of the general contingency fund given that there had been no call on it for 3 years.

Reference having been made to the outcome of consultation with the business community on expenditure proposals and in noting the benefit of rewording para 4.1 to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding, the Cabinet

RECOMMENDED

- (a) that, subject to further consideration being given by the Director of Commerce and Technology in conjunction with the Executive Councillor for Finance to a possible reduction in the level of the general contingency fund, the proposed Budget, Medium Term Plan and Financial Strategy appended to the report now submitted be approved; and
- (b) that a Council Tax increase of 4.99% (£5.48) representing a level of £115.39 for Band D properties be approved for 2008/09.

**98. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2008/09**

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) and having considered a proposed Treasury Management Strategy 2008/09, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Council be recommended to approve the 2008/09 Treasury Management Strategy as appended to the report now submitted.

**99. CAR PARKING STRATEGY - PROPOSED ACTION PLAN**

Further to Minute No. 07/67 and by way of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was invited to consider the content of a proposed Car Parking Strategy Action Plan for Huntingdonshire which set out proposals for car parking in the District up to 2011.

In so doing, Members were reminded that the Plan had been the subject of a consultation exercise carried out by the Car Parking Working Group during November and December and that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) had considered the Plan at their meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2008. With regard to the Panel's recommendations arising from that meeting, the view was expressed that a reduction of 25% in the cost of a car parking Season Ticket for cars with CO<sup>2</sup> emissions of 120g/km or less represented a fair and equitable discount. In discussing the use of surplus income generated by increased car parking, Executive Councillors felt it would not be appropriate to ring-fence surplus income from these charges. Having thanked the Car Parking Working Group and the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for their input, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Action Plan appended to the report now submitted be approved;
- (b) that steps be taken to amend the current Off-Street Parking Places Order to reflect the changes proposed in the Action Plan referred to in (a) above and their implementation with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2008;
- (c) that the proposed car parking charges outlined as the first option in Annex D to the report be approved and advertised; and
- (d) that the arrangements be reviewed following a period of 12 months of introduction of the revised charges.

**100. A QUALITY CHARTER FOR GROWTH IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

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

copy of a "Charter for Quality Growth in Cambridgeshire" which had been produced by Cambridgeshire Horizons in partnership with representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Members were informed that the initial aim of the Charter was to achieve higher standards of new housing developments planned for Cambridgeshire. Having noted that the Charter would be used to secure investment commitments from Government agencies and would assist communications with existing communities and developers, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the publication of a Quality Charter for Growth in Cambridgeshire be supported.

**101. EXCLUSION OF 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 and/or information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

**102. ST. NEOTS OUTDOOR POOL**

The Cabinet considered reports by the Head of Legal and Estates (copies of which are appended in the annex to the Minute Book) regarding the proposed disposal for the former St Neots outdoor pool by the St Neots Swimming Pool Trust.

Having considered the information contained therein, together with information in developments in negotiations with interested parties, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to approve terms with the St Neots Swimming Pool Trust to facilitate the disposal of the former outdoor pool site.

Chairman