

## 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, 21 February 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.

### **103. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **104. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

No declarations were received.

### **105. CALL-IN: CAR PARKING STRATEGY**

Further to Minute No. 07/99 and with the assistance of a report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the deliberations of the Panel following its "call in" of the decision made by the Cabinet on the proposed car parking strategy action plan for Huntingdonshire at its meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2008.

Members were advised that the Panel had been disappointed that the Cabinet had decided to accept the Car Parking Working Party's recommendation to introduce a 25% reduction in the cost of a car parking season ticket for vehicles with emissions below 120g/km. The Panel had felt that the Cabinet should take a more innovative approach and introduce greater incentives to encourage motorists to purchase and use low emission vehicles. In the discussion that ensued, Executive Councillors took the opportunity to reconsider the level of charges to be introduced for car parking from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2008, given the financial implications of introducing a reduction for season ticket holders with low emission vehicles.

With regard to the Panel's recommendation regarding the use of surplus income it was assumed would be generated by increased car parking, Executive Councillors reiterated that it would not be appropriate to ring fence surplus income from charges in accordance with Council policy. Members also noted that the Council's expenditure on highways and transportation issues far exceeded any surplus that might be made from car parking charges.

In discussing arrangements to review the Car Parking Action Plan, Executive Councillors recognised the need to consider climate change issues within the forthcoming Environment Strategy and that it would therefore be appropriate to reconsider the implications for the car parking action plan earlier than previously intended.

Having acknowledged the Overview and Scrutiny Panel's input into the matter, the Cabinet

**RESOLVED**

- (a) that the views expressed by the Overview & Scrutiny (Service Support) Panel be noted;
- (b) that a reduction of 50% in the cost of a car parking season ticket for cars with CO<sup>2</sup> emissions of 120g/km or less be introduced as part of the implementation of the car parking action plan with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2008;
- (c) that the wider issues of encouraging the use of low emission vehicles, public transport, cycling and walking be dealt with in the development of the Environment Strategy and in the next review of the car parking action plan;
- (d) that surplus income from car parking charges be not ringed fenced for integrated, sustainable and accessible transport;
- (e) that the resolution in Minute No 99 (c) of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2008 be amended and the proposed car parking charges outlined as the second option in Annex D of the Car Parking Strategy Action Plan be approved and advertised;
- (f) that the resolution in Minute No 99 (d) of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2008 be amended and issues relating to climate change in the car parking action plan be reviewed following a period of 6 months after the introduction of the revised charges; and
- (g) that further consideration be given by the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, a representative of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) and relevant officers to the initial scoping of the review of the Car Parking Action Plan referred to in (f) above.

**106. CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY, COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING STRATEGY, CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY.**

By way of a report by the Chief Officers' Management Team, the Cabinet was invited to consider the following strategies:

- Customer Service;

- Communications and Marketing; and
- Consultation and Engagement.

(Copies of the reports and strategies are appended in the Minute Book.)

In so doing, Members were advised that the strategies had been updated following the adoption of a revised version of "Growing Success" – the Council's Corporate Plan in June 2007 and that the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) had considered them at their meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

Arising from Members' comments in relation to the necessity for separate action plans for each of the strategies rather than a general plan embracing all of the objectives, the Head of Policy and Strategic Services acknowledged that while some of the actions were inter-related the plans needed to be prepared individually for the purpose of inspection and external audit. Having referred also to the need to identify savings within the plans and in view of the absence of measures/targets within the Customer Service action plan, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the contents of the Customer Service, Communications and Marketing and Consultation and Engagement Strategies be approved and a further report submitted as and when the supporting action plans are developed.

#### **107. RIVERSIDE PARK, HUNTINGDON: IMPROVEMENTS**

Further to Minute No. 04/81, the Cabinet considered a joint report by the Heads of Planning Services, of Operations, of Environmental Management and of Legal & Estates (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining a scheme to enhance the Riverside Park, Huntingdon.

Executive Councillors were advised that this entailed a series of improvements to the park including new planting, footpaths and cycleways, additional recreational areas, new hard surfacing, moorings and signage. In discussing the overall cost of the proposals, it was suggested that investigations should be undertaken into the possibility of external funding for the scheme. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the master plan for the Riverside Park, Huntingdon be approved as a basis for further discussion and consultation; and
- (b) that the ensuing report on the outcome of the consultation exercise include information on the inquiries into external funding sources.

**108. MEDIUM TERM PLAN: RELEASE OF FUNDS: IT NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE**

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 replacement of IT network and server equipment.

**109. STATE OF THE DISTRICT: ENGAGEMENT EVENTS**

A report by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which summarised the findings of a review by a Working Group into the principle and potential benefits of holding events to engage Huntingdonshire residents in discussing the Council's strategies and services.

In considering the Working Group's proposals, Executive Councillors recognised that these far exceeded the original concept of a biennial "State of the District" half-day conference. Having questioned the accuracy of the predicted resource and financial implications of holding four events per annum around the District, it was

RESOLVED

that the proposal by the Working Group be noted and a further report submitted to Cabinet addressing the financial involvement and the implications for the Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy

**110. LOCAL PETITIONS AND CALLS FOR ACTION**

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the implications for the Council's overview and scrutiny function of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Police and Justice Act 2006 which were likely to be introduced later in the year. Following receipt of anticipated regulations and statutory guidance, the Cabinet was informed that a more detailed report would be submitted.

Having been acquainted also with a consultation paper from the Department for Communities and Local Government on local petitions and calls for action, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

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

- (b) that the Head of Administration be authorised to respond to the Department of Communities and Local Government consultation paper in as outlined in Annex A of the report now submitted.

## **111. ENFORCEMENT POLICIES**

By way of a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was informed of the publication of a Regulators' Compliance Code by the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform.

Executive Councillors were advised that the new code would form a central part of the Government's "Better Regulation Agenda" with the aim of ensuring a risk based, proportionate and flexible approach to regulatory inspection and enforcement that allowed and encouraged economic progress. Having considered the implications of the proposals on the Council's enforcement policies, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) that relevant Heads of Service be authorised to review enforcement policies having specific regard to the content of the new Regulators' Compliance Code and to approve any necessary changes after consultation with the relevant Executive Councillor.

## **112. CYCLING**

Consideration was given to a report by the Cycling Working Group appointed by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) to investigate the Council's expenditure on cycling in Huntingdonshire and its effectiveness in providing dedicated cycle paths and promoting cycling as a means of transport. A copy of the report is appended in the Minute Book.

In discussing the Working Group's recommendations, which had been endorsed by the Panel, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the recommendations of the Working Group be noted and a further report submitted to Cabinet addressing the wider issue of Section 106 funding and partnership working; and
- (b) that Cambridgeshire County Council be invited to enter into discussions regarding their offer to update the Huntingdonshire Cycling Strategy as detailed in paragraph 7.1 of the report now submitted and in the issue of partnership working for cycling provision.

## **113. TRAVEL PLAN**

The Cabinet received the report of a Working Group appointed by the Overview & Scrutiny (Service Support) to investigate the Council's Travel Plan and considered the Panel's recommendations in relation to travel allowances and incentives/disincentives for Members and Officers to use environmentally sensitive means of transport.

In reviewing the Working Group's recommendations, Executive Councillors questioned the suggestion to change mileage allowances for Members only and not employees. Members also felt that further work was required into alternative methods of transport to discourage the use of private cars by employees in travelling to and from work. Having noted that any proposals would be affected by the forthcoming Environment Strategy, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Working Group's recommendations be approved and investigated in the context of the emerging Environment Strategy, the car parking action plan and the travel plan.

**114. PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE AND OPERATION - COUNTRYSIDE JOINT GROUP**

A report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on a revised terms of reference and method of operation for the Countryside Joint Group was withdrawn from the agenda.

Chairman