

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, 6 November 2008.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.

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

76. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 16th October 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

77. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors I C Bates, K J Churchill and C R Hyams declared personal interests in Minute No 80 by virtue of their membership of Cambridgeshire County Council.

78. 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 budgetary variations in the current year in addition to those already identified and reported to Cabinet at its meeting held on 17th July 2008 (Minute No 08/44).

Having drawn attention to a summary of income collected and amounts written off during April to September 2008, Councillor T V Rogers, as Executive Councillor for Finance and Environment referred to the difficulties presented by the increasing level of fuel and utility costs and the current economic downturn. In particular, he expressed concern over the impact of the recent introduction of empty property rating on local business interest and commercial concerns. Under the circumstances, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the report be received and spending variations noted; and
- (b) that representations be made to the Local Government Association over the adverse effects of the empty property rating with a request that the Association lobby the Government for its removal.

79. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - 2008/09 BUDGET

A report by the Head of Financial Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) detailing variations in the Capital Programme in the current year.

In discussing the main variations in the programme, Executive Councillors' attention also was drawn to four new proposals identified in the Medium Term Plan process that would have an impact in the current year but which would not be formally approved by Council until February 2009.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the report be received and the expenditure variations and capital and revenue impact noted;
- (b) that the commencement of the Medium Term Plan schemes for St Ivo Leisure Centre – Football Improvement, Huntingdon West Development and St Neots Green Corridor referred to in paragraph 2.2 of the report now submitted be approved; and
- (c) that the commencement of the Sustainable Homes Retro-Fit scheme be approved, subject to the Executive Councillor for Finance and Environment being consulted on the scheme's timing in relation to the ongoing housing market.

80. CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE STRATEGY

By way of a report by the Head of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the contents of a revised Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy. The Cabinet were reminded that the original Strategy had been adopted by Council in 2002 and was to be reviewed after 5 years, although the recycling plans appended to the Strategy had already been dealt with in 2005.

With regard to the changes proposed, Members noted that the revised document had retained the original principles and addressed the following key themes and associated objectives and actions:-

- Underlying strategic principles for the Waste Strategy
- Joint working
- Climate change
- Protection of the environment
- Waste prevention and reuse
- Recycling and composting
- Management of residual waste
- Wider waste roles; and
- Stakeholder engagement

Members were advised that the adoption of the new Strategy would have no additional financial implications for the Council. Having noted the comments of the Overview & Scrutiny (Service Delivery) Panel on the matter and in congratulating residents for their continuing efforts in recycling which had resulted in the Strategy target for 2010/11 of 55-60% already having been achieved, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the revised Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Municipal Waste Strategy be approved.

81. ENHANCED CLEANSING SERVICES

Further to Minute No. 08/59, Councillor J A Ablewhite presented a further report by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) addressing the issues raised by Cabinet on the proposed introduction of additional cleansing services in the town centres on Sunday mornings to deal with the effects of the Saturday night time economy.

In discussing those matters further, Members felt that the Panel still had failed to explain sufficiently the scope for any redistribution of cleansing schedule in the operations division, the precise extent of the streets to be cleaned and whether financial contributions were likely to be forthcoming from the Town Councils towards an enhanced service. Nevertheless Cabinet expressed support for the principle of a cleansing service on Sundays to improve the appearance of town centres for shoppers and tourists, subject to agreement on the costs involved, it was therefore

RESOLVED

- (a) that the introduction of cleansing services on Sundays in the market towns across the District be accepted in principle;
- (b) that financial contributions towards the cost of implementing additional cleansing be sought from the relevant town Councils;
- (c) that the Head of Operations be requested to investigate the feasibility of rescheduling cleansing rotas within existing resources; and
- (d) that a further report on the investigations undertaken be submitted to a future meeting.

82. SUPPORTING LOCAL RETAILERS

(The Chairman announced that he proposed to admit the following urgent Item in accordance with Section 103(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 given the need to meet the publication deadline for District Wide.)

Consideration was given to a report by Chief Officers Management Team (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) proposing the introduction of a car parking voucher scheme aimed at supporting local retailers by increasing the number of people who choose to shop in Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives during the present economic climate.

In discussing the scheme, Cabinet noted that intention to print a voucher in the next edition of Districtwide which would entitle the holder to park free of charge for up to four hours in any long stay car park on Saturdays in December or January. In expressing support for the proposal in terms of its benefits for both retailers and Huntingdonshire residents, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that action taken by Management Team to introduce a car park voucher scheme for use in December 2008 and January 2009 be endorsed.

Chairman