

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Aquarius Room, St Ivo Leisure Centre, St Ives on Thursday, 2nd April 2009.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.

Councillors K J Churchill, D B Dew,
A Hansard, C R Hyams, 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 P L E Bucknell.

135. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th February 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

136. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

137. STRUCTURE REVIEW WORKING GROUP - FINDINGS

The Cabinet received a report by the Structure Review Working Group (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) summarising the findings of an extensive review of the Council's democratic structure.

While Executive Councillors supported many of the Group's recommendations, concerns were expressed in relation to the balance of day and evening meetings and the funding of the costs of the exercise. Specifically Members did not support the proposals to give voting rights to co-opted members on the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and the adoption of a Speaker at Council meetings. At the same time, the Cabinet recognised the need for further discussions with partners over the implementation, funding and boundaries of the proposed neighbourhood forums.

Having thanked the Working Party for their efforts in producing a thorough and comprehensive report, it was noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and the Corporate Governance Panel had been invited to comment on the report prior to final considerations by Cabinet at a special meeting on 17th April 2009.

RESOLVED

that the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and the Corporate Governance Panel be advised that, with the exception of points listed below, the recommendations of the Structure Review

Working Group, as summarised in the report now submitted, be endorsed:

- recommendation (b) – subject to a detailed consideration of the relative workloads of portfolios and the funding of the financial implications;
- recommendation (e) – subject to further consideration as to the balance between evening and day time meetings;
- recommendation (h) – the proposal to give voting rights for co-opted members is not supported;
- recommendation (n) – subject to the opportunity for Independent members to choose the subject of debate alongside opposition parties;
- recommendation (o) – subject to the deletion of the word “annual”;
- recommendation (p) – is not supported and further consideration should be given to member support/training;
- recommendation (q) – subject to questions being addressed to all elected members;
- recommendation (s) – subject to the prior setting of evaluation criteria for the trial;
- recommendation (w) – that the Standards Committee continue to meet at 4.00pm and retain the flexibility to change this if necessary;
- recommendation (z) – that the Corporate Governance Panel continue to meet at 6.00pm and retain the flexibility to change this if necessary;
- recommendation (aa) – that further consideration be given to the membership of the panel and the views of ELAG;
- recommendation (dd) – that in the meantime members be encouraged to attend current neighbourhood policing panels;
- recommendation (rr) –that the Working Group be invited to consider alternative options for funding the proposed changes.

Chairman