

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the The Aquarius Room, St Ivo Leisure Centre, St Ives on Thursday, 18 June 2009.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor P G Mitchell.

15. MINUTES

Subject to the deletion of Councillor K J Churchill and the inclusion of Councillor Mrs M Thomas in the list of appointees to the Members Car Parking Working Group, the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 14th May 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

17. BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM PLAN PROCESS 2010-2015

By way of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the process and timing for the review and approval of the Financial Strategy, the 2010/2011 Budget and the 2011/2015 Medium Term Plan(MTP). At the same time, Members' attention was drawn to a report of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well Being) on the outcome of a review undertaken by their Budget Working Group following an expenditure review, the contents of which will form part of the Cabinet's future deliberations on the Budget and MTP process 2010-2015.

In considering the contents of the report, Members acknowledged that the Budget and MTP process will face increasing challenge due to inflationary pressures, likely reductions in public expenditure and savings which need to be identified over the coming years. Having considered proposals to deal with immediate, short term pressures arising from the current economic climate, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the process and timetable for the review and approval of the Financial Strategy, the 2010/11 Budget and 2010-15 Medium Term Plan be approved;
- (b) that the temporary appointment of two posts in Housing Services Division to deal with homelessness at a cost of £70,000 in 2009/10 and £80,000 in

2010/11 be endorsed and officers requested to meet these additional costs from within existing approved budgets;

- (c) that a supplementary estimate of £25,000 to meet the costs of additional awards of discretionary hardship relief from business rates be approved; and
- (d) that a transfer of unused capital leisure grants to the general revenue grants budget be approved to facilitate additional grants of £20,000 in 2009/10 and £14,000 in 2010/11 to be made to the Citizens Advice Bureaux to enable them to respond to the increased service demands.

18. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2008/09

A report by the Head of Financial Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which reviewed the respective levels of performance for the year ending 31st March 2009 by fund managers in the investment of the Council's Capital Receipts.

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report now submitted be noted.

19. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT 2007

By way of a joint report by the Heads of People, Performance and Partnerships and of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Cabinet were acquainted with the background to the introduction of legislation designed to enable the Council and other organisations to promote the sustainability of local communities.

RESOLVED

that the development of procedures and processes to generate and consult on ideas and proposals in relation to the Sustainable Communities Act, in conjunction with the implementation of neighbourhood panels/forums, be noted.

20. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Cabinet received and noted a report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which reviewed the Council's performance against the targets within the Corporate Plan - "Growing Success". The report which included data and narrative on the achievement against targets for each of the Council's priority objectives had been considered also by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel's whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet. Members were advised that progress in the achievement of the Plan continues to be monitored by a Working Group jointly appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

21. GRANT AID

(Councillor P J Mitchell, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel

(Social Well-Being) was in attendance and spoke on this Item).

Further to Minute No 08/114 and by way of a report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet reconsidered the updated findings of the Panel on the capital and revenue grants scheme operating across the Council.

The Cabinet were informed that the study had involved discussions with the Lead Member of the Grant Aid Working Group and the Executive Councillors for Finance and Transportation and for Housing and Public Health. Having concurred with the Panel that the current process was working well, although some areas relating to service level agreements and external funding schemes would benefit from further investigations, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the availability of all grants be published more extensively, particularly to all District Councillors, and a list included on the Council's website;
- (b) that the returns submitted by organisations covered by service level agreements be reviewed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panels to achieve greater transparency;
- (c) that the work with and assistance to community groups/organisations to obtain funding be co-ordinated by the Head of Community and Environmental Health;
- (d) that further investigation be carried out into the availability of funding from the East of England Regional Assembly, for example, for housing and gypsy and traveller sites in the District; and
- (e) that the Council's various grant schemes be kept under review.

22. CORPORATE EQUALITY POLICY - PROCESS

Further to Minute No. 08/31 and by way of a report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were updated on progress made to date on the delivery of actions and targets set out in the Corporate Equality Policy Action Plan.

Having considered the information contained in the report, an updated action plan, the findings from equality impact assessments conducted in 2007/08, a revised assessment timetable for 2009/2010 and the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-being) on the matter, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the progress made with the Corporate Equality

Action Plan be noted;

- (b) that the 2009/2010 action plan as set out in Appendix 2 to the report now submitted be approved;
- (c) that the findings from the Equality Impact Assessments conducted in 2007/08 summarised in Appendix 3 be noted; and
- (d) that the revised timetable for Equality Impact Assessments set out in Appendix 4 to the report now submitted be approved.

23. REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY SINGLE ISSUE REVIEW ACCOMMODATION FOR GYPSY AND TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE IN THE EAST OF ENGLAND - THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S PROPOSED CHANGES MARCH 2009.

By means of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the content of the Council's response to the Secretary of State's proposed changes to the draft policy put forward by the East of England and Regional (EERA) for gypsy and traveller accommodation.

In considering the contents of the response, Executive Members concurred with officers that there was insufficient information or evidence to make specific District of County-based requirements and therefore suggested that this should be the subject of further research. Having reiterated that the 3% compound increase in pitch provision up to 2021 appeared to be based on inadequate evidence and that the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments would be better placed to establish the level of longer term need, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted and the Council's response to the Government's proposals endorsed.

24. CARBON MANAGEMENT PLAN

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Environmental Management (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached the final draft of a five-year carbon management plan for the Council.

Members were informed that the draft plan identified some 39 carbon reduction projects aimed at reducing the Council's carbon dioxide emissions by 30% over the next five years and in so doing create an estimated net financial saving of almost £1.1m. Having been advised that some of the projects identified had received funding through the Medium Term Plan process, while others may attract external funding for implementing energy efficiency and renewable technology projects, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the five-year Carbon Management Plan for the Council

be approved.

25. REPRESENTATIVE ON ORGANISATIONS 2009/10

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding the Council's representation on a variety of organisations/partnerships, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that, with exception of (b) below, nominations be made to the organisations as set out in the Appendix to the report now submitted;
- (b) that Councillor P L E Bucknell be nominated the Council's representative on the Red Tile Wind Farm Community Fund for 2009/10;
- (c) that the appointment of Councillors to the Luminus Group be on the basis that they receive no remuneration from the respective companies until such time as the implications of Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 have been identified;and
- (d) that, in the event that changes are required to the Council's representatives during the course of the year, the Head of Democratic and Central Services, after consultation with the Deputy Leader and Vice-Chairman of the Cabinet, be authorised to nominate alternative representatives as necessary.

26. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to an individual/organisation and is likely to reveal their identity/terms of a contract.

27. ST. NEOTS LEISURE CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

With the assistance of a report by the Leisure Centre's General Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a proposal to extend and remodel the existing facilities on the St. Neots Leisure Centre and College Campus.

Having considered the information contained in the report, the need for expansion, projected user and income figures and a supporting business case for the project, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the relevant funding be released for the scheme to extend and remodel the existing facilities on the St. Neots Leisure Centre and College Campus and a further report on its progress submitted to a future meeting .

28. TENDER FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF TEMPORARY MANUAL EMPLOYEES

By means of a report by the Head of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the circumstances in which the acceptance of a tender other than the lowest received had been recommended for the provision of temporary manual employees.

Having considered the information contained in the report, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the tender from Qubic Limited, as detailed to in the report now submitted, for the supply of temporary manual employees to the Operations Division be accepted in accordance with paragraph 6.4 of the Council's Code of Procurement.

Chairman