

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Aquarius Room, St Ivo Leisure Centre, Westwood Road, St Ives on Thursday, 22 October 2009.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.

Councillors D B Dew, J A Gray, 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 K J Churchill.

49. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17th September 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

50. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

51. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2009/10 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 was drawn to variations amounting to £1,423k as a result of the renegotiation of the recycling gate fees, delay in the A14 enquiry and lower interest rate charges. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the report be received and the expenditure variations and capital and revenue impact noted.

52. 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 23rd July 2009 (Minute No 09/31).

Whilst welcoming a reduction of £505k in planned expenditure, the Cabinet expressed concern over the increasing cost to the Council of concessionary fares and the likely financial implications of the

Cambridgeshire Guided Bus Scheme. Executive Councillors commented that this could have a detrimental effect on town centre parking with users switching to the availability of free parking given the close walking distance to the town centre. Under the circumstances, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the report be received and spending variations noted; and
- (b) that representations be made to Cambridgeshire County Council over the likely adverse effects of the Cambridgeshire Guided Bus Scheme/park and ride arrangements on the concessionary bus fare budget and car park income.

53. HUNTINGDON TOWN HALL - THE WAY FORWARD

Consideration was given to a report by the Director of Environmental and Community Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a report by E W Consultancy (EWC) Ltd setting out potential project management arrangements, including an action plan, for the long-term sustainable use of Huntingdon Town Hall.

In noting the background to the report, Members were reminded that the Town Hall was a Grade 2* listed building which the District Council holds the freehold ownership in trust for the "public good" of the people of Huntingdon. Leasehold including responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of the building lies with Her Majesty's Court Service (Ministry of Justice), as successors of the County Council, except for the second floor which is occupied by the Town Council. Her Majesty Courts Service had vacated the building in 2007. In view of the importance of the building, the District Council commissioned a review, including consultation with stakeholders to identify recommendations for the future arrangements for the building.

Having considered the proposals put forward by EWC, the financial implications; the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) and Huntingdon Town Council on the matter; the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the findings of the Consultant's report be noted;
- (b) that the key recommendations of EWC consultancy, as set out in paragraphs 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 of the report now submitted be accepted for implementation including the principle of transferring the ownership of the freehold of Huntingdon Town Hall to a Building Preservation Trust when a long term solution has been identified through a options appraisal, subject to appropriate arrangements for the surrender of the current lease; and
- (c) that, in parallel, the suggestion by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) to investigate

the possibility of transferring the building to Huntingdon Town Council in exchange for land currently owned by them be investigated;

- (d) that further reports addressing the above issues be submitted to future meetings of the Cabinet.

54. NEW STARTER UNITS, CAXTON ROAD, ST. IVES

By way of a report by the Head of Law, Property and Governance (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 for the development of the former depot at Caxton Road, St Ives with new industrial and commercial premises.

In considering the contents of the report, Executive Councillors acknowledged the contribution the scheme would make in achieving the targets in the Council's Corporate Plan, the Local Economy Strategy and the Environmental Strategy. The scheme would provide a flexible, mixed development of workspaces and small offices for new and small businesses. In discussing the financial costs associated with the scheme Members' attention was drawn to an offer of capital funding from Cambridgeshire County Council, amounting to £150k, for a partnership scheme supporting employment generation, to help in the recovery from the current recession. Having noted that this funding would only be available during the current financial year, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the relevant funding be released for the scheme to provide new starter units in St. Ives; and
- (b) that the Director of Central Services be authorised to accept a contribution of £150k from Cambridgeshire County Council subject to the agreement of the partnership terms.

55. SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP

RESOLVED

that Councillor P L E Bucknell replace Councillor P H Dakers on the Safety Advisory Group.

Chairman