

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Meeting Room 0.1A, Ground Floor, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 22 April 2010.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.
Councillors K J Churchill, D B Dew, J A Gray,
Mrs D C Reynolds, T V Rogers and
L M Simpson.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors A Hansard and C R Hyams.

108. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18th March 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

109. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Bates declared a personal interest in Minute No 123 by virtue of his membership of Cambridgeshire Horizons. Councillor Simpson declared a personal interest in Minute no 123 by virtue of previously responding to consultation on the planning application for the proposal and left the room for the duration of discussion and voting thereon.

110. PROVISION OF PLAY FACILITIES IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

A report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) was submitted which summarised the findings of a study by the Panel regarding the availability of play facilities in Huntingdonshire and the ongoing revenue costs associated with such facilities.

The Cabinet were advised that the Panel had decided to focus primarily on the provision of facilities for teenagers as this had been identified in the 2008 Place Survey as the highest priority area in need of improvement in Huntingdonshire. Members have been informed of the key findings of the Panel regarding maintenance, insurance and the inspection of facilities for maintenance and safety purposes. In considering the Panel's recommendations, Executive Councillors concurred that further research into the availability of group insurance schemes with the aim of achieving a lower insurance premium and the feasibility of combining safety inspections should be undertaken. However, in discussing the suggestions on the future revenue funding of play equipment, the Cabinet were of the opinion that the provision and management of local play facilities should be undertaken at a local level by local parish councils and community organisations and that the District Council's role should be confined to

strategic, District wide initiatives and in advising on opportunities for funding.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the availability of group insurance schemes for Parishes for play and other facilities be investigated;
- (b) that the feasibility of co-ordinating safety inspections for outdoor facilities be investigated; and
- (c) that no action be taken in respect of the proposal formula for maintenance of play equipment.

111. HOUSING AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFITS ANTI-FRAUD STRATEGY AND PROSECUTION POLICY

By way of a report by the Head of Customer Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was invited to consider the content of a revised and enhanced Benefit Fraud Strategy and Policy for the prosecution and sanction of those persons found to have been committing benefit fraud.

Having considered the information contained in the report, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted;
- (b) that the revised Benefit Fraud Strategy set out in Appendix A to the report now submitted be approved;
- (c) that the revised Benefit Fraud Prosecution Policy set out in Appendix B to the report now submitted be approved; and
- (d) that staff within the Fraud Team be authorised to undertake investigations in fraud affecting Local Taxation and Housing Services and other services and to report to the relevant Head of Service on the outcomes, findings and recommendations arising from these investigations.

112. CHEQUERS COURT PLANNING BRIEF SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a schedule summarising those representations received during consultation on the draft planning brief which would guide the redevelopment of Chequers Court, Huntingdon.

Having considered the responses received along with the views of the

Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) on the matter, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the content of the planning brief for Chequers Court, Huntingdon be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document; and
- (b) that the Head of Planning Services be authorised to make any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport.

113. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

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 targets within the Corporate Plan - "Growing Success".

Having considered the information contained therein, together with a summary of achievements, service performance data for priority objectives, progress against the Council's improvement plan and the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Social Well-Being) (Environmental Well-Being) and (Economic Well-Being), on the matter, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report now submitted be noted.

114. REVIEW OF TARGETS IN GROWING SUCCESS

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 was invited to consider the revised 2010/2011 targets for the objectives in "Growing Success" – the Council's Corporate Plan.

RESOLVED

that the revised targets, objectives and measures for the Council's Corporate Plan set out in the Appendix to the report now submitted be approved.

115. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT, THE CRIMINAL LAW ACT 1977 & THE PROTECTION FROM HARASSMENT ACT 1997

The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking delegated authority for authorised officers to use provisions set out in the Criminal Law 1977 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1977 when dealing with allegations of harassment and illegal eviction in the private housing sector.

Having referred to the potential benefits of these additional powers and in noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) on the matter, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Director of Environmental and Community Services be authorised to appoint Environmental Health Officers and Environmental Health Protection Officers to enforce the relevant provisions of the Criminal Law Act 1977 and Protection from Harassment Act 1977 and to instigate the necessary legal proceedings.

116. GREAT FEN MASTERPLAN

Further to Minute No. 09/43, consideration was given to a report by the Director of Environmental and Community Services to which was attached a revised Masterplan for the Great Fen. Members were advised that the Masterplan had been the subject of extensive consultation with interested parties prior to its approval by the Project Partners (a copy of both the Masterplan, consultation key findings and the Director's report are appended in the Minute Book).

Having received the views of the Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel on the matter, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that approval of the Great Fen Masterplan by the Project Steering Committee be noted.

117. ST NEOTS EASTERN EXPANSION MEMBERS STEERING GROUP

Further to Minute No 09/97 and having reviewed Member involvement on the St Neots Eastern Expansion Steering Group, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the St Neots Eastern Expansion Steering Group be increased to six members and their appointment delegated to the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council.

118. FINANCIAL MONITORING - REVENUE BUDGET

The Cabinet received a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the projected budget outturn for 2009/2010 together with details of variations from the previous forecast.

In so doing, the Cabinet's attention was drawn to the savings likely to be achieved which would enable the contribution to the Special Reserve to be increased to the sum of £1.6m. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

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

- (b) that the actual underspend for 2009/2010 be transferred to the Special Reserve on the closure of the account.

119. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2009/10 BUDGET

By means of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) and having been acquainted with anticipated variations in the Capital Programme in the current year, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the report be received and the expenditure variations noted.

120. PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT FOR ICT DEVELOPMENT WITHIN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

With the aid of a report by the Director of Commerce and Technology (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was acquainted with the background to an Information Management and Technology Programme Board in Cambridgeshire.

Having noted details of the District Council's involvement alongside Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, Fenland District Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the principle of entering into the Information Management and Technology Partnership be approved; and
- (b) that the Director of Commerce and Technology, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Environment and Information Technology, be authorised to enter the resulting partnership agreement.

121. LAND AT CEMETERY ROAD, ST NEOTS

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Law, Property and Governance (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the formal transfer of land at Cemetery Road, St. Neots to St. Neots Town Council.

Whilst the land had been acquired by the Urban District Council of St. Neots in 1933 for the purpose of a burial ground, Members were advised that the land was never formally transferred. Having noted that the transfer would have no financial implications for the Council, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the transfer of the land to St. Neots Town Council be approved on the terms and conditions outlined in paragraph 3.1 of the report now submitted.

122. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to terms proposed in the course of negotiation for the acquisition or disposal of property.

123. WESTERN LINK ROAD, HUNTINGDON

By way of a report by the Head of Law, Property and Governance (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the proposed terms for the acquisition of properties required for the implementation of the western link road.

Having considered the information contained in the report, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) that the Director of Central Services be authorised, subject to an assessment that demonstrates there is minimal risk to the Council and after consultation with the Executive Councillors for Finance and for Resources and Policy to approve the terms for the acquisition of the property interests required for the implementation of the Western Link Road, Huntingdon.

Chairman