

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Burgess Hall, St Ivo Leisure Centre, Westwood Road, St Ives, PE27 6WU on Wednesday, 17 February 2010.

PRESENT: Councillor J W Davies – Chairman.

Councillors J D Ablewhite, M G Baker, K M Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, I C Bates, J T Bell, Mrs B E Boddington, P L E Bucknell, E R Butler, K J Churchill, Mrs K E Cooper, S J Criswell, D B Dew, P J Downes, J J Dutton, R W J Eaton, R S Farrer, J E Garner, A N Gilbert, P M D Godfrey, P Godley, A Hansard, D Harty, C R Hyams, Mrs P A Jordan, L W McGuire, P G Mitchell, A Monk, M F Newman, D J Priestman, P D Reeve, Mrs D C Reynolds, T V Rogers, J M Sadler, T D Sanderson, M F Shellens, Mrs P E Shrapnel, L M Simpson, C J Stephens, P A Swales, Ms M J Thomas, G S E Thorpe, R G Tuplin, P K Ursell, P R Ward, J S Watt and R J West.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors W T Clough, Mrs J A Dew and J A Gray and Mr D L Hall.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms R Harrison, Head of Contracts at NHS Cambridgeshire and Mr M Winn, Managing Director of Cambridge Community Services.

71. PRAYER

Councillor J E Garner opened the meeting with prayer.

72. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) New Year's Honours

On behalf of the Council, the Chairman congratulated those either residing or working in the District who had been honoured by the New Year's Honours in January 2010 –

Julie Spence, Chief Constable of Cambridgeshire Constabulary – Queen's Police Medal

Dr Angela Owen Smith for services to medicine and the community in Huntingdon – MBE

Ivy Sturgeon for services to the Prison Service – MBE

(b) Parking Award

The Chairman announced that all 28 of the Council's car parks had recently been re-assessed and that each had achieved the Park Mark Award for safer parking issued by

the British Parking Association.

(c) **Little Paxton Visitors' Centre**

The Chairman reported that he had been pleased to welcome guests to the official opening of the Little Paxton Visitors' Centre extension on 29th January 2010 and he thanked Jonathan Djanogly, MP for unveiling a special benefactor's board.

(d) **Neighbourhood Forums**

The Chairman extended his appreciation to those involved in the first round of neighbourhood forum meetings in Huntingdonshire which had taken place in January and had attracted over 200 people.

(e) **New Pathfinder House**

The Chairman updated Members on the progress of the new headquarters project and reported that the Customer Services Centre would open to the public on 23rd February 2010.

(f) **Receptions**

The Chairman announced that he would be hosting two receptions in the new Civic Suite to celebrate St George's Day and the end of his term of office and that details of both events would be forwarded to Members shortly.

73. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 22nd December 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

74. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

75. COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

The Chairman reminded Members of the decision made by the Council to suspend Council Procedure Rule 11 (Rules of Debate) to enable headline debates and "white paper" proposals to be discussed by Members in an open manner. The Council therefore

RESOLVED

that Council Procedure Rule 11 (Rules of Debate) be suspended for the duration of the discussion on Minute Nos 76 and 78, during which time the common law rules of debate be observed by Members and applied by the Chairman.

76. COUNCIL DEBATE

By reference to a powerpoint presentation, a copy of which is

appended in the Minute Book, Councillor K J Churchill, Executive Councillor for Housing and Public Health opened the Council debate on –

“Is enough being done to tackle the occupational therapy waiting list in Huntingdonshire?”

In his opening remarks, Councillor Churchill introduced Ms Rachel Harrison, Head of Contracts, NHS Cambridgeshire and Mr Matthew Winn, Chief Executive of Community Services who also gave presentations to the Council (copies of the speakers' presentations also are appended in the Minute Book).

Councillor R W J Eaton opened the debate by stating that occupational therapy provision was integral to social services and that the current system was failing a number of people.

Councillor G S E Thorpe added that without the assistance offered by hand held bars and rails, many elderly people were unable to bath, shower or access their homes without difficulty and that an eighteen month waiting list for such basic facilities was unsatisfactory. Having referred to a particular case, Councillor Thorpe contrasted the response he had received to a request for help from the RAF Benevolent Fund to that of Cambridgeshire Direct and had been disappointed that an assessment undertaken by the Fund had not been acceptable to Cambridgeshire Direct thus leading to further delays. He also suggested that work to fit handrails had been poorly undertaken and that it had taken nine months to achieve a response to the problem from Social Services.

As a District Council representative on the County Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Mrs M Banerjee indicated that she was aware of the problems around the OT process which were not helped by County Social Services' refusal to accept OT assessments undertaken by the NHS or private agencies.

Whilst the personal circumstances described by councillors were unfortunate, Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds urged Members to look beyond their personal issues, to focus on the problems experienced by Huntingdonshire residents and to consider how waiting lists could be reduced given the scarcity of funds to achieve this.

At this point, Councillor T V Rogers, Executive Councillor for Finance reported that the District Council spent £1.2 million per annum on disabled facility grants towards which the Government contributed approximately £500,000. The outstanding amount in the region of £600,000 had to be met by the District Council and this figure was likely to increase significantly in 2010/11. Councillor Rogers questioned whether the structure required change so that that the assessment and budget provision was the sole responsible of one organisation.

Councillor M F Shellens suggested that there was an imbalance in facilities provided by social landlords and, whilst mindful of the funding situation, Councillor Thorpe emphasised how essential it was to improve the current system for the benefit of those in need and their carers with increasing waiting lists only serving to exacerbate the situation.

Returning to his experiences in Stilton, Councillor P G Mitchell discussed how two individuals in his ward had benefited from the service but he was of the view that it was not an efficient way of working. He suggested that one body should deal with all aspects of provision and that consideration should be given to enabling the service to operate more effectively in local areas rather than from Cambridge.

Having thanked the speakers for their presentations, Councillor P D Reeve commended the Occupational Therapy service and frontline service providers and suggested that it was the administration of the service and a lack of “joined up” thinking which was hindering effective provision.

Whilst accepting that every Councillor could recount their personal experience of the service, whether good or bad, Councillor P J Downes indicated that he would prefer Members to focus on “re-ablement” of the service.

Drawing the debate to a close, Councillor Churchill thanked the speakers for attending the meeting to address the Council and he undertook to raise the issues discussed at a future meeting of the OT Working Group which he attended in his capacity as Executive Councillor. Councillor Churchill further explained that the Working Group was meeting regularly to discuss positive ways to reduce waiting times. An action plan had been adopted which he was hopeful would elicit some improvement and was already achieving some success in reducing waiting times. Lastly Councillor Churchill reported that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) also had begun to consider the extent of the waiting times for OT services and that he envisaged that further positive initiatives would emerge from this work.

77. FINANCIAL PLAN, MEDIUM TERM PLAN, 2010/11 BUDGET AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS

In conjunction with a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) and Item Nos 67 and 68 of the Report of the Cabinet, the Executive Councillor for Finance, Councillor T V Rogers addressed the Council on the Financial Plan, Medium Term Plan 2011 – 2015, 2010/11 Budget and related prudential indicators contained in the Treasury Management Strategy and moved the recommendations of the Cabinet. In accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992, the Council also considered proposals as to the levels of council tax in 2010/11 for various parts of the Huntingdonshire District.

In his opening remarks, Councillor Rogers acknowledged the contribution and support of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and members of the business community in the budgetary process. He described the approach taken by the Cabinet towards treasury management which involved an inevitable degree of risk management in balancing interest rates and prudential indicators. He suggested that the Council continued to be prudent in the management of its borrowing and investments.

In terms of the Financial Strategy, MTP and Budget, Councillor

Rogers drew attention to the requirement to fund capital expenditure from borrowing, the decrease in levels of revenue reserves, the achievement thus far in reducing spending levels, the withholding of Government grant and the continuing low level of council tax equating to Huntingdonshire being ranked the 19th lowest district of 238 authorities in terms of their council tax levels. Having described the implications of these issues in detail, Councillor Rogers concluded by advising that the Council expected to end the current financial year with revenue reserves of £11.2 million based upon an expectation that £12.9 million in revenue support would be received from Government and that £4.7 million from the reserve would be used to fund the deficit. Councillor Rogers assured the Council that he would continue to search for efficiency savings and other sources of income and he urged all Members to continue to forward any additional suggestions for savings to him so that advantage could be taken of any opportunities that arose.

Accordingly, Councillor Rogers reported that, if supported by the Council, the budget would be increased by 2.49% resulting in a band D council tax of £124.17 or £2.39 per week. He therefore commended the recommendations of the Cabinet to Council as set out in report by the Head of Financial Services.

In response, Councillor P J Downes, on behalf of the Liberal Democrat group, drew the Council's attention to a paper circulated at the meeting which described a series of amendments proposed to the budget by his group. A response by the Conservative group to these proposals also had been circulated (copies of both documents are appended in the Minute Book).

Councillor J D Ablewhite expressed the view that the Liberal Democrat group had had ample opportunity to identify proposals for savings through the budgetary process and to raise these at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being).

With reference to the Liberal Democrat proposals and with the consent of Councillor Downes, Councillor I C Bates moved and it was duly seconded -

“That all the words in the first bullet point (on page 3 of the Liberal Democrat proposals) after the word ‘below’ in the first line be deleted and replaced with the words ‘be referred to the Employment Panel in the case of item 2 and to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being)’ in the case of items 1 and 3 - 10 inclusive so that they can be investigated, implemented if appropriate or referred back for consideration as part of the budget process for 2011/12’,

that all of the words in the second bullet point, be deleted;
and

that all of the words in the third bullet point be deleted,

so that the amended Motion would read –

‘It is proposed that the amendments detailed in the table below be referred to the Employment Panel in the case of item 2 and to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel

(Economic Well-Being) in the case of items 1 and 3 – 10 inclusive so that they can be investigated, implemented if appropriate or referred back for consideration as part of the budget process for 2011/12.’ ”.

Upon being put to the vote, the amendment was declared to be CARRIED.

In terms of the proposed level of council tax, Councillor Downes proposed that it be increased by an additional 0.5% to 2.99% to raise additional income and the baseline for future years should the Government grant be even lower. He added that the additional 0.5% would add less than 1p per week to the average council taxpayer.

In response, Councillor Mrs M Banerjee encouraged Members to be mindful of the impact of any increase on the low paid and those on low incomes and indicated her support for the proposed increase of 2.49% only.

Councillor G S E Thorpe indicated his support for the higher level suggesting that the increased revenue that would be generated would avoid the necessity to introduce additional charges for car parking and enable the retention of the public conveniences in St Neots.

As Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being), Councillor Ablewhite re-affirmed the opportunity that the Liberal Democrat group had had to raise their proposals on the budget at the Panel meeting. He indicated his preference for a prudent and consistent approach to the tax base which had been recommended following detailed consideration by the Scrutiny Panel.

As Leader, Councillor Bates thanked those Officers who had contributed to the preparation of the budget, encouraged the Liberal Democrat group and other Members to bring forward their budget proposals at an earlier stage in the process, indicated that it was his belief that the budget was sensible, prudent and balanced and that it demonstrated the District Council's commitment to the people in Huntingdonshire.

Following closing remarks by Councillor Rogers, Councillor Downes moved and it was duly seconded –

“That the proposed council tax level be increased by 0.5% to 2.99% giving a council tax rate of £124.77 for 2010/11, that Appendix C (pages 73 – 78) be replaced with the revised version attached and required consequential adjustments are made to the MTP, Budget and Financial Plan and the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators;

that the recommendations from Cabinet are revised to read -

- ◆ approve the proposed MTP, Budget and Financial Plan as amended by the proposals in the paper submitted by the Liberal Democrat group;
- ◆ approve the Treasury Management Strategy for 2010/11 as amended by the proposals in the paper submitted by the Liberal Democrat group; and

- ◆ approve the Treasury Management Indicators and Prudential Indicators for 2010/11 as amended by the proposals in the paper submitted by the Liberal Democrat group; and

that the final recommendation of page 1 of the Council Book is revised to read –

‘approve a band D council tax of £124.77 for 2010/11 and the formal resolutions shown in Appendix C as amended by the Liberal Democrat proposals’.”.

Upon being put to the vote, the amendment was declared to be LOST.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the proposed Budget for 2010/11, Medium Term Plan for 2011 – 2015 and Financial Strategy as set out in Annexes D, G and H to the Report of the Head of Financial Services now submitted be approved;
- (b) that the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators as set out Appendix B to the Report of the Head of Financial Services now submitted be approved;
- (c) that a Council Tax increase of 2.49% representing a Council Tax of £124.17 for a Band D property in 2010/11 be approved;
- (d) that the amendments detailed in the table on page 3 of the Liberal Democrat proposals be referred to the Employment Panel in the case of item 2 and to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) in the case of items 1 and 3 – 10 inclusive so that they can be investigated, implemented if appropriate or referred back for consideration as part of the budget process for 2011/12; and
- (e) that the following amounts be calculated by the Council for 2010/11 in accordance with Section 32 and 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992:-

		£
(i)	the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2) (a) to (e) of the Act <i>(Gross revenue expenditure including benefits and Town/Parish Precepts.)</i>	83,793,841
(ii)	the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (3) (a) to (c) of the Act <i>(Gross revenue income including reimbursement of benefits and use of reserves.)</i>	59,427,289
(iii)	the amount by which the aggregate at (b) (i) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) (ii) above in	24,366,552

accordance with Section 32 (4) of the Act

(Budget requirement plus Parish/Town Precepts [item i minus item ii].)

- (iv) the aggregate of the amounts payable into the General Fund for the items set out in Section 33 (1) of the Act. **12,939,338**
(Government support.)
 - (v) the aggregate of the amounts payable to the General Fund for the items set out in Section 33 (3) of the Act **34,756**
(Collection Fund deficit.)
 - (vi) the basic amount of Council Tax for 2010/11 in accordance with Section 33 (1) **195.66**
(District plus average Town/Parish Council Tax.)
 - (vii) the aggregate of special items referred to in Section 34 (1) **4,188,356**
(Total Town and Parish Council precepts)
 - (viii) the basic amount of Council Tax for 2010/11 for those parts of the District to which no special item relates **124.17**
per band D property (District Council Tax.)
 - (ix) the basic amounts of Council Tax for 2010/11 for those parts of the District to which one or more special items relate in accordance with Section 34 (3) of the Act are shown by adding the Huntingdonshire District Council amount to the appropriate Parish Council amount in column "band D" set out in table 1 attached.
 - (x) the amounts to be taken into account for 2010/11 in respect of categories of dwellings listed in the different valuation bands in accordance with Section 36 (1) of the Act are shown by adding the Huntingdonshire District Council amount to the appropriate Parish Council amount for each of the valuation bands in the columns "bands A to H" set out in table 1 attached.
- (f) that the amounts of precept issued to the Council by Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Police Authority and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority for each of the categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands in accordance with Section 40 of the Act shown in table 1 attached be noted.
- (g) that, having regard to the calculations above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the figures shown in table 2 as the amounts of Council Tax for 2010/11 for each of the categories of dwelling shown.

78. EXECUTIVE POLICY ISSUES: THE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

Councillor K J Churchill, Executive Councillor for Housing and Public Health, informed the Council that consultation was shortly to commence on a review of the Council's Homelessness Strategy under the Homelessness Act 2002. He envisaged that policies within the new Strategy would seek to reduce reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation, reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation and prevent homelessness. The new Strategy would include reference to the prevention of homelessness, work with private sector landlords and housing advice services. It was anticipated that the draft would be published for consultation in March and be circulated widely for comment with a view to its consideration by the Cabinet in July and Council in September 2010. Councillor Churchill urged all Members to respond to the consultation.

Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds indicated that she wished to congratulate the Housing Division for their achievement in reducing the number of homeless households during difficult economic circumstances, a sentiment which was endorsed by the Executive Councillor.

79. REPRESENTATION OF POLITICAL GROUPS ON DISTRICT COUNCIL PANELS

Following consideration of a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) and with the support of all Group Leaders, the Council

RESOLVED

that further variations to Panel memberships be deferred and the Council be invited to determine the allocation of seats to Panels, etc at the Annual Meeting on 19th May 2010.

80. APPOINTMENT OF CABINET MEMBERS

A report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding interim changes proposed to the formal leadership of the Council in advance of the implementation of more formal executive arrangements necessitated by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 in May 2011.

As the changes required various alterations to be made to the Constitution and to the Council Procedure Rules, Members were reminded that any Motion to vary the Rules should stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council. The Council therefore

RESOLVED

that consideration of the report and recommendations stand adjourned to the meeting of the Council to be held on 21st April 2010.

81. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS

A report was submitted by the Head of Democratic and Central Services drawing the Council's attention to the outcome of the formal process undertaken to co-opt a total of six Independent Members to serve on the Council's three Overview and Scrutiny Panels. Having been moved by Councillor S J Criswell and duly seconded, the Council

RESOLVED

that the individuals listed in paragraph 2.3 of the report now submitted be co-opted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for a period of four years.

82. REPORTS OF THE CABINET, PANELS AND COMMITTEE

(a) Cabinet

Councillor I C Bates, Leader and Chairman of the Cabinet presented the Report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 17th December 2009 and 21st January and 11th February 2010.

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In connection with Item No. 55, Councillor G S E Thorpe indicated that he wished to convey his appreciation to the Head of Planning Services for the work undertaken by the Planning Division on the St Neots "health check" and that he hoped that the recommendations would be taken forward for the benefit of the people of St Neots.

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In connection with Item Nos 67 and 68, it was noted that the recommendations had been considered previously under Minute No. 77.

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In connection with Item No. 69, Councillor D B Dew, Executive Councillor for Planning and Transport, explained that the Secretary of State would determine whether the Development Management (DDP) Submission Document was sound and upon being put to the vote, the recommendations contained in the item were declared to be CARRIED.

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In connection with Item No. 70 and in response to a question from Councillor Thorpe, Councillor Bates confirmed that the car parking review had been called in for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being).

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that, subject to the foregoing paragraphs, the Report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 17th December 2009 and 21st January and 11th February 2010 be received and adopted.

(b) Standards Committee

Councillor T D Sanderson presented the Report of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 3rd December 2009.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 3rd December 2009 be received and adopted.

(c) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being)

Councillor J D Ablewhite presented the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) held on 10th December 2009 and 14th January and 4th February 2010.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) held on 10th December 2009 and 14th January and 4th February 2010 be received and adopted.

(d) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being)

Councillor P M D Godfrey presented the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) held on 8th December 2009 and 12th January and 9th February 2010

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In connection with Item No. 34, Councillor G S E Thorpe expressed his appreciation for the views expressed by the Panel in respect of the potential redevelopment of land in and around the old Fire Station and Depot, Huntingdon Street, St Neots and the opportunities it offered to enhance

the facilities available to the people of St Neots.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) held on 8th December 2009 and 12th January and 9th February 2010 be received and adopted.

(e) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being)

Councillor S J Criswell presented the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) held on 1st December 2009 and 5th January and 2nd February 2010.

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Referring to Item No. 36, Councillor Criswell advised the Council that the Panel had discussed the level of service provided by occupational therapy within the District on a number of occasions which had prompted improvements in the service.

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In terms of Item No. 39, Councillor Criswell announced that a further Stakeholder Panel meeting would be held at Hinchingsbrooke House on 25th February 2010 to consider the new governance arrangements for Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.

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In connection with Item No. 41 and in response to a question from Councillor P J Downes regarding the extension of kerbside recycling services to include glass bottles and containers, Councillor C R Hyams, Executive Councillor for Operational and Countryside Services replied that a proportion of the recycling credits would continue to be paid to parish councils once the new arrangements were in place. Councillor I C Bates added that the improvements would enable access to the service for those who previously had been unable to visit mini-recycling sites and that there might be potential in future to share the service with neighbouring authorities.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) held on 1st December 2009, 5th January and 2nd February 2010 be received and adopted.

(f) Development Management Panel

Councillor P G Mitchell presented the Report of the meetings of the Development Management Panel held on 21st December 2009 and 18th January 2010.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Development Management Panel held on 21st December 2009 and 18th January 2010 be received and adopted.

(g) Employment Panel

Councillor Mrs B E Boddington presented the Report of the meetings of the Employment Panel held on 9th December 2009 and 2nd February 2010.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Employment Panel held on 9th December 2009 and 2nd February 2010 be received and adopted.

(h) Licensing and Protection Panel

Councillor J M Sadler presented the Report of the meeting of the Licensing and Protection Panel held on 27th January 2010.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Licensing and Protection Panel held on 27th January 2010 be received and adopted.

(i) Licensing Committee

Councillor J M Sadler presented the Report of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 27th January 2010.

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In connection with Item No. 4 and in response to a question from Councillor P J Downes, Councillor Sadler confirmed that a premises licence had been granted to the Secret Garden Parity in perpetuity as there had been no representations received from responsible authorities or interested persons which would have prompted a hearing by the Licensing Sub Committee. However there were sufficient safeguards in place to respond to any difficulties arising from the event should they occur.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 27th January 2010 be received and adopted.

(j) Corporate Governance Panel

Councillor C J Stephens presented the Report of the meeting of the Corporate Governance Panel held on 9th December 2009.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Corporate Governance Panel held on 9th December 2009 be received and adopted.

83. ORAL QUESTIONS

In accordance with the Council's Procedure Rules (paragraph 8.3 of the Rules), the Chairman proceeded to conduct a period of oral questions addressed to Executive Councillors and Panel Chairmen as follows:-

Question from Councillor A N Gilbert to the Executive Councillor for Housing and Public Health, Councillor K J Churchill

In response to a question regarding the application of the "scores on the doors" scheme to St Neots Leisure Centre, Councillor Churchill explained that the Leisure Centre had been inspected on 7th July 2008 when it had achieved three stars. At that time no significant issues had been identified although it was recognised that there were structural and food servery matters to address. A further inspection had occurred on 7th January 2010 at a time when the kitchen was being refurbished and it was the expectation that a further inspection would take place in April when the kitchen had re-opened.

Question from Councillor R J West to the Executive Councillor for Housing and Public Health, Councillor K J Churchill

In response to a question regarding the potential for review of the Council's decision to meet in the evening as recommended under the Democratic Structure Review, Councillor Churchill replied that it was the intention to review the outcome of all initiatives recommended by the Working Group after approximately one year's operation at the Council meeting to be held in September 2010.

Question from Councillor M G Baker to the Leader, Councillor I C Bates

In response to a question regarding the potential for use of the open space to the front of Pathfinder House for additional car parking, the Leader advised that planning permission had been granted for the development of town houses or further office space on the site but that he would ask the Deputy Leader and Vice-Chairman of the Cabinet to respond directly to the questioner with details of the intentions for the site. Notwithstanding that reply, Councillor Bates also indicated that the area would not be tarmaced and that access and egress from the site could prove to be problematic.

Question from Councillor G S E Thorpe to the Leader of the Council, Councillor I C Bates

In response to a question regarding the Cabinet's decision to charge for car parking in the Riverside Park, St Neots, Councillor Bates replied that the Members' Car Parking Working Group would consider all representations received to the Off Street Parking Places Order prior to its implementation and that the questioner should forward his observations to his colleague on that Working Group to raise during its deliberations.

Question from Councillor P D Reeve to the Leader, Councillor I C Bates

In response to a question regarding the closure of public conveniences and the District Council's support of the market towns, Councillor Bates replied that the Council had and would continue to work hard to promote and support the market towns.

Question from Councillor P J Downes to the Leader, Councillor I C Bates

In response to a question regarding the decision when to undertake the close of poll count, Councillor Bates replied that the decision when to hold the close of poll count was at the personal direction of the Returning Officer.

Question from Councillor R J West to the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, Councillor D B Dew

In response to a question regarding the potential for use of part of the housing and planning delivery grant to fund additional enforcement activity, Councillor Dew replied that the delivery grant already contributed to elements of the planning process.

84. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: SECTION 85

The Chief Executive reported that there were no absences of Members for consideration in accordance with Section 85 of the Local

Government Act 1972.

The meeting concluded at 9.39 pm.

Chairman