

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 23 February 2011.

PRESENT: Councillor J J Dutton – Chairman.

Councillors J D Ablewhite, M G Baker,
K M Baker, I C Bates, J T Bell,
Mrs B E Boddington, P L E Bucknell,
E R Butler, S Cawley, B S Chapman,
K J Churchill, W T Clough, S J Criswell,
J W Davies, Mrs J A Dew, D B Dew,
P J Downes, R S Farrer, P M D Godfrey,
P Godley, S Greenall, N J Guyatt, A Hansard,
D Harty, C R Hyams, Mrs P A Jordan,
S M Van De Kerkhove, P G Mitchell,
M F Newman, P D Reeve, Mrs D C Reynolds,
T V Rogers, C M Saunderson,
Mrs P E Shrapnel, L M Simpson, P A Swales,
G S E Thorpe, R G Tuplin, D M Tysoe,
P R Ward, J S Watt and R J West.

APOLOGIES Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, Mrs K E Cooper, J A Gray, A Monk, T D Sanderson, M F Shellens and C J Stephens.

68. THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Mr N Craggs of the Humanist Society opened the meeting with a thought for the day.

69. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Holocaust Memorial Service

The Chairman reported that he had hosted a Holocaust Memorial Service on 23rd January 2011 at St. Mary's Church, Huntingdon and that a collection taken on the day had raised £250 for the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust.

In appreciation for the contribution of art work for the programme cover by Jess Loizides, the Chairman presented a framed copy of the picture to her Grandad, Councillor L M Simpson to deliver to her on his next visit to South Africa.

(b) Heroes Welcome

Having become the first authority in the country to launch the "Heroes Welcome" scheme on 7th January 2011, the Chairman was pleased to report that the scheme now was supported by the Hunts Post and 130 businesses in the District.

(c) **Civic Dates**

The Chairman gave notice of two forthcoming events which he would host in Huntingdon in April and added that invitations and further details about a charity fund raising dinner and the St. George's Day Celebration would be issued shortly.

(d) **Royal Town Planning Institute Award**

On behalf of the Council, the Chairman congratulated those Members and employees who had contributed to the Great Fen Project which had been awarded the Silver Jubilee Cup for the most outstanding project nationally by the Royal Town Planning Institute.

(e) **Mr R Reeves**

The Chairman announced that Mr R Reeves, Head of Democratic and Central Services would be retiring from the District Council after 38 years service in local government and 24 years with Huntingdonshire. On behalf of the Council, the Chairman thanked Mr Reeves for the help and advice he had given to all Councillors during this time. Councillors I C Bates and P J Downes paid their own tribute to Mr Reeves on behalf of existing and former Members and in particular, thanked him for his professionalism, kindness, courtesy and clarity in giving advice on complex matters. The Chief Executive added that Mr Reeves had been a valued officer, one who had shown great commitment to the public service, and who he would miss as a colleague and friend. Following a round of applause, it was

RESOLVED

that the Council place on record its sincere gratitude to Mr R Reeves, Head of Democratic and Central Services for his contribution to the work of Huntingdonshire District Council and to local government generally during 38 years of service.

70. **MINUTES**

Subject to the following amendments –

- ◆ in Item No. 53 (d), the insertion of the following words after the word "meeting" – 'but that he had been acting on advice given to him by the Chief Executive';
- ◆ in the fourth paragraph of Item No. 55 – the insertion of the word "volunteer" in place of the word "youth";
- ◆ in the sixth paragraph of Item No. 55, the insertion of the word "Vice" before the word "Chairman";

the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 15th December 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

71. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors I C Bates, K J Churchill, S J Criswell, P J Downes, J J Dutton, R S Farrer, N J Guyatt, D Harty, P D Reeve and R J West declared a personal interest in Minute Nos. 77(c), Item No. 37 and Minute No. 77(d) Item Nos. 61 and 62 by virtue of their membership of Cambridgeshire County Council.

Councillor P L E Bucknell declared a personal interest in Minute No. 75 by virtue of his appointment as Director of a wind farm organisation.

Councillors P J Downes and N J Guyatt declared a personal interest in Minute No. 76 and 78 (a) by virtue of their appointments as Corporate Trustees of the Trustee Fund, Cambridgeshire County Council.

Councillor L M Simpson declared a personal interest in Minute No. 76 by virtue of his appointment as Trustee of the Huntingdon Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillor P D Reeve declared a personal interest in Minute No. 76 by virtue of his appointment as Governor to Ramsey Spinney Infants and Ramsey Community Junior Schools and as a Member of the Ramsey Neighbourhood Board and Ramsey Town Centre Initiative.

72. PETITIONS

(a) Keeping the Village Identity

The Chairman invited Mr A Garside to present a petition to the Council on behalf of "SHED - Stop Houghton East Development" containing 731 signatures objecting to housing development between the east of Houghton and Wyton village and the west of St. Ives.

By reference to a powerpoint presentation (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), Mr Garside indicated that it was the primary concern of the action group to seek to protect the green space between Houghton and Wyton village and St. Ives town and prevent the proliferation of ribbon development and the consequences thereof. A supporting letter from the petitioners also had been circulated to Members in advance of the meeting. Mr Garside reminded the Council of the status of the land within the Core Strategy and the issues which would arise should sites STIV4 and STIV5 be developed. Issues highlighted related to traffic on the A1123, including its effect on pedestrians, the generation of pollution, the demand for increased education places, protection of the environment, ecology matters and a request for the consultation being undertaken by the District Council and St. Ives West Working Party to be suspended to enable information on these issues to be compiled and for representatives of SHED to become involved in the process to resolve these matters in an open and transparent way.

In the questions that followed from Members, it was stated that the Core Strategy had established a “direction of flow” for development activity rather than exact site boundaries and that it was likely that Houghton Grange would be developed with open space on either side of the site.

As Executive Member for Planning Strategy and Transport, Councillor D B Dew responded formally to the petition on behalf of the Council. Councillor Dew reminded the Council that the Core Strategy had been found to be sound by the Planning Inspectorate following considerable consultation and scrutiny by interested parties. The Strategy had indicated a direction of growth to the west of St. Ives which would deliver approximately 400 dwellings. A detailed urban development framework for the site was in preparation through a process overseen by a Working Group comprising various local representatives. As one of the few local planning authorities to have a Core Strategy in place, Councillor Dew advised that it would be unwise to re-visit its conclusions. Councillor Dew addressed each of the petitioners’ concerns in turn and confirmed in response to further questions from Members that the Core Strategy had been subject to consultation with Town and Parish Councils, that the urban development framework would seek to ensure that detailed planning applications would protect the green space and that the Working Group comprised elected, parish, district and county councillors.

Having expressed his confidence in the adopted Core Strategy, the Executive Councillor invited the Council to indicate its support for the ongoing delivery of the strategic planning proposals which would deliver the “balanced” growth desirable in the District. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Council’s support for the content of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (“DPD”) be reaffirmed.

(b) **Ramsey Community Information Centre**

The Chairman invited Mr I Curtis to present a petition on behalf of 819 signatories objecting to the District Council’s proposals to close the Ramsey Community Information Centre. In support of the petition, Mr Curtis explained that the Centre represented the heart of the community, enabled face to face contact with sympathetic staff and encouraged community development. Its closure would harm the most vulnerable people in the town including the elderly, the unemployed and those unable or prohibited, because of the cost involved, to travel to Huntingdon for advice.

In the questions that followed to the petitioner, Mr Curtis acknowledged that whilst the information centre would be moving into the new library building, residents feared that its closure would result in the loss of personal contact with a

member of staff which was of greater benefit than advisory leaflets. Councillor J D Ablewhite drew the petitioners' attention to the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) that the Ramsey Centre be retained and attended by District Council staff on two full days a week or part thereof hoping that this arrangement would allay the fears of the petitioners.

Having noted that a proposal which would retain the centre for two days per week would be welcomed by the petitioners and as the subject matter related to the Council's financial position which was to be discussed later in the meeting, it was

RESOLVED

that consideration of the petition be deferred for debate under Minute No. 75 post.

73. COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

The Chairman reminded Members of the decision 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 No. 74 during which time the common law rules of debate be observed by Members and applied by the Chairman.

74. COUNCIL DEBATE

(See Minute No. 71 for Members' interests).

The Chairman invited Councillor D B Dew, Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport to open the debate on the "Planning Aspects of the Localism Bill". Councillor Dew was assisted by the Head of Planning Services, Mr S Ingram who, as part of his address referred to a power point presentation (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). Mr Ingram undertook to forward copies of the presentation to Members after the meeting.

As background, Mr Ingram outlined the aims and aspirations of the Bill in terms of planning and the underlying objective to enable local communities to take planning decisions to shape their surroundings by use of Neighbourhood Development Plans and Development Orders, Community Right to Build Orders, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and other incentives to encourage the acceptance of additional growth. Mention also was made of the requirement for pre-application consultation with local communities, increased enforcement powers and the establishment of a new major infrastructure planning unit. Notwithstanding these initiatives, it was the view of the presenters that Members and local authorities would continue to have a crucial role to play in reconciling strategic planning

with local interests and in supporting and enabling the neighbourhood planning process.

In the questions that followed from Councillors G S E Thorpe and T V Rogers, Mr Ingram explained that the term "Neighbourhood" could refer to a parish or town or community within a town. He foresaw difficulties with the process particularly in circumstances when issues arise that impact upon neighbouring communities and confirmed that the existing planning appeal system would remain unchanged although there was some debate that the current appeal process required to be streamlined. In response to a question from Councillor N J Guyatt, Mr Ingram confirmed that the principle of "Green Belt" or "Village Limits" would remain but he anticipated that this could cause difficulties if a community wished to pursue a development beyond village limits. Following a further question from Councillor P G Mitchell, Mr Ingram indicated that an application for development of agricultural land could be supported if it complied with the settlement hierarchy and was supported by a local community. In terms of the removal of illegal signs, Councillor Dew agreed with the questioner, Councillor C R Hyams that this practice and the issue of fines would be resource intensive and that if the District Council was required to manage this process then the need for additional resources would have to be addressed.

Whilst generally positive about the impact of the Localism Bill on planning, Councillor P J Downes stated that it was premature to make assumptions about potential new planning provisions without having first considered the detailed Regulations. However, he expressed concern about the potential for inter-village hostility and for an increase in house prices because of the need for developers to be able to respond financially to CIL, Section 106 Agreements and the New Homes Bonus.

Mr Ingram acknowledged the view that the Bill, whilst well-meaning, appeared to contain a complex mix of processes and procedures but he was optimistic about the significant financial benefit which might be generated by CIL.

Councillor P D Reeve contended that, in his opinion, much of the Localism Bill would not be of any advantage to local communities. He drew attention to Clause 90 of the Bill relating to the duty to co-operate on the planning of sustainable development, the potential for significant fines if this duty was not fulfilled and the impact this Clause might have on the District Council.

Councillor Dew concurred with the speaker that the implementation of the subsequent Regulations would be an extremely difficult process and that he was firmly of the view that local communities were more inclined to campaign against further development rather than seek for ways to achieve it. In terms of the weight accorded to the Localism Bill as a material planning consideration, Mr Ingram advised Councillor P L E Bucknell that a local planning authority would continue to determine development applications in accordance with local and national policy, but specific proposals would still be required to be submitted to the Department of Communities and Local Government for approval and that reference to regional spatial strategies would remain part of a local development plan.

In answer to questions from Councillors J D Ablewhite and R J West, Councillor Dew confirmed that as far as he was aware, the Localism Bill had not made any recommendations in respect of “design” nor indicated how the additional resources required to support the operating costs of the new process could be met by local authorities. However, he added that the cost of holding a local referendum would have to be met by the District Council although parishes could, be requested, to make a contribution to these costs.

In response to a question from Councillor S M Van De Kerkhove as to whether it was the intention for the financial rewards arising under the New Homes Bonus to be directed towards those wards where a greater number of housing development had taken place, Councillor Dew replied that although having some sympathy with the questioner, he was not aware that there was a specific directive in this regard although the issue required further clarification.

Councillor J W Davies suggested that whilst the topic had been appropriate for debate, it was premature to make assumptions about the future of planning in the community without further detail and clarification.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor I C Bates, made reference to the extent of the Localism Bill and the need to keep its content under review given the likelihood of change as it progressed through Parliament.

To conclude the debate, Councillor Dew indicated that he would welcome the opportunity to discuss any issues which Members might wish to raise on the planning aspects of the Localism Bill outside of the meeting.

75. EXECUTIVE POLICY ISSUES: WIND TURBINES

(See Minute No. 71 for Members' Interests.)

Councillor D B Dew, Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport updated the Council with regard to the current position in respect of wind energy policy and proposals for wind farm developments in Huntingdonshire.

Councillor Dew reiterated that the Council's position still was supported by national policy confirmed in Planning Policy Statement Nos. 1 and 22 relating to “Delivering Sustainable Development and Renewable Energy” and by local policy in terms of the East of England Plan and Core Strategy. Members were informed of the Government's intention to review all of its current national planning policy guidance and to subsume this advice within a National Planning Policy Framework. In the interim, Councillor Dew assured Members that the Council would continue to act robustly in its determination of proposals having regard to all relevant material planning considerations.

As it was anticipated that further wind farm proposals would be submitted in Ellington Ward, Councillor M G Baker asked whether the Council Wind Power SPD 2006 still was sufficiently robust to respond

to the applications received. In response, Councillor Dew confirmed that the guidance contained in the SPD was still valid but that it might need to be reviewed in the future. Councillor Dew added that whilst the decision in the appeal at Cotton Farm, Offord D'Arcy was disappointing, the Inspector had indicated support for that part of the Council's case which related to heritage issues.

In commending the SPD, Councillor P G Mitchell accepted that while it might require to be amended in the future he was of the opinion that it was important to have guidance in place as a basis for determination of those applications which were currently under preparation.

Given an increase in interest in community wind turbines, Councillor S J Criswell asked whether it was the intention to draft a policy for dealing with development of this nature.

In reply, Councillor Dew assured the questioner that the existing SPD prescribed those locations where community wind turbines might be acceptable but he acknowledged that any proposal of this nature would require to be considered carefully should one come forward.

In conclusion, Councillor Dew confirmed that the Council would continue to determine applications for wind turbines on the basis of national and local policies including the 2006 Supplementary Planning Document.

76. MEDIUM TERM PLAN, 2011/12 BUDGET AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS

(See Minute No. 71 for Members' interests.)

In conjunction with a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) and Item Nos. 57 and 58 of the Report of the Cabinet, the Executive Councillor of Finance and Customer Services addressed the Council on the Medium Term Plan, 2011/2012 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 for the levels of council tax in 2011/2012 for various parts of the Huntingdonshire District. Councillor Rogers also drew the Council's attention to a further document (a copy of which also is appended in the Minute Book) regarding the adjustments to the Council's budget which had been required because of subsequent announcements by Government in respect of the formula (RSG) and New Homes Reward grants.

In his opening remarks, Councillor Rogers acknowledged the contribution made to the budgetary process by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being), members of the Business Community and Town and Parish Councils. He also described the approach taken by the Cabinet towards Treasury Management which involved a degree of risk management in seeking to achieve a balance between investment and return. He suggested that the Council continue 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 those issues underlining the recommendations of the Cabinet. He explained that the proposal not to increase the council tax in 2011/2012 would require a reduction of £3.6m from revenue reserves, that the Government had now confirmed Revenue Support Grant of £10.5m in 2011/2012, an indicative figure of £9.3m for 2012/2012 and a New Homes Bonus of £800,000 in 2011/2012. Councillor Rogers assured the Council that Executive Councillors, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) and Heads of Service had continued to search for efficiency savings and that those identified had either been incorporated into the budget or were the subject of further consultation and debate.

Brief reference also was made by Councillor Rogers to other issues which would impact on the budget. These related to the review of pay and allowances which it was anticipated would be reported to the Employment Panel shortly and the review of the income and operation of the voluntary sector. Following representations made to the Council by petitioners, Councillor Rogers announced that St. Ives Customer Service Centre would close, that St. Neots Centre would remain open three days per week and that the Yaxley and Ramsey Centres would be retained for two days per week. In the latter case, the offices would remain available for use by voluntary organisations throughout the week. The hours and establishment of the Huntingdon Office and Call Centre still was subject to review.

In response, Councillor P J Downes on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group acknowledged that the current economic situation would impact significantly on the public sector. He was doubtful whether town and parish councils would be able to reduce the impact of the savings proposals on their areas given the limited opportunities they had to raise precepts.

Councillor Downes commended the manner in which the budgetary process had been conducted and the opportunities it offered to his group to contribute. He also expressed some disquiet at the notion of "Big Society" and although hopeful that the public would respond, he was of the view that such volunteers and groups would require to be managed and administered. In urging the Council to continue to support the voluntary sector, Councillor Downes moved and it was duly seconded –

"that the following words be added after the second bullet point on the yellow page of the supplementary document –

"and subject to –

- (a) the Council acknowledges the invaluable role of the voluntary sector in promoting well-being in Huntingdonshire;
- (b) the Council welcomes the intention of the Executive Councillor for Finance and Customer Services to undertake a review of the way in which the Council offers support to local voluntary organisations;
- (c) the Council recognises the need for the voluntary sector to

have long-term security for its forward planning and activity development; and

- (d) the Council requests the Cabinet to identify alternative savings to allow the financial support for the voluntary sector to be retained when the MTP is reviewed during the coming year.”

Upon being put to the vote, the proposed amendments in (a), (b) and (c) were declared to be CARRIED and the proposed amendment in (d) was declared to be LOST.

Councillor C R Hyams made reference to the proposals for the CCTV service and the extensive use of the service by the police and he informed the Council that discussions were continuing with Cambridgeshire Police to seek a satisfactory new arrangement.

Councillor J D Ablewhite commended the recommendations of the Cabinet to the Council and the contributions made by Officers and Members to the budgetary process. He welcomed the opportunity to recommend a budget which would not involve an increase in council tax nor impose any additional burden on Huntingdonshire residents.

Referring to the obligation placed on the Council to publish items of expenditure over £500, Councillor S Greenall requested the Executive Councillor to advise the Council how much was spent on specific expenditure headings. In reply, Councillor Rogers advised the Council of the following:-

£506,000 on consultants
£369,000 on hired staff
£ 49,000 on mobile 'phones
£375,000 on training
£212,000 on advertising.

Councillor J D Ablewhite advised the Council that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) currently were undertaking a study on the use of consultants and it was anticipated that a report on their findings would be available shortly. Further to the future of the customer services centre, Councillor P A Swales asked to be advised in writing as to which days or part-days the Ramsey Office would be opened. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the proposed budget for 2011/2012, Medium Term Plan for 2012 – 2016 and Financial Strategy as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Head of Financial Services now submitted be approved;
- (b) that the Director of Commerce and Technology be authorised to adjust the budget and Medium Term Plan using revenue reserves to respond to the Government's announcements in respect of the Government Formula Grant (RSG) and New Homes Reward Grant;
- (c) that the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential

Indicators as set out in Appendix B to the report of the Head of Financial Services now submitted be approved;

- (d) that no increase be made in Council Tax for 2011/2012;
- (e) that the Council acknowledges the invaluable role of the voluntary sector in promoting well-being in Huntingdonshire;
- (f) that the Council welcomes the intention of the Executive Councillor for Finance and Customer Services to undertake a review of the way in which the Council offers support to local voluntary organisations;
- (g) that the Council recognises the need for the voluntary sector to have long-term security for its forward planning and activity development;
- (h) that the following amounts be calculated by the Council for 2011/2012 in accordance with Sections 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 **86,989,423**
Gross revenue expenditure including benefits and Town/Parish Precepts
- (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 **64,446,217**
Gross revenue income including reimbursement of benefits, special grants and use of reserves
- (iii) the amount by which the aggregate at (a) (i) above exceeds the aggregate at (a) (ii) above in accordance with Section 32 (4) of the Act **22,543,206**
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. **10,522,100**
Government support

- (v) the aggregate of the amounts payable from the General Fund for the items set out in Section 33 (3) of the Act **104,903**
Collection Fund surplus
 - (vi) the basic amount of Council Tax for 2011/12 in accordance with Section 33 (1) **200.41**
District plus average Town/Parish Council Tax
 - (vii) the aggregate of special items referred to in Section 34 (1) **4,533,055**
Total Town and Parish Council precepts
 - (viii) the basic amount of Council Tax for 2011/12 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 2011/12 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 to the Agenda.
 - (x) the amounts to be taken into account for 2011/12 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 to the Agenda.
- (i) 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 the Agenda be noted.
 - (j) 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 2011/12 for each of the categories of dwelling

shown.

77. HEAD OF PAID SERVICE AND CHIEF OFFICERS - DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

A report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services was presented to the Council by the Chairman of the Employment Panel, Councillor P A Swales (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book).

The report summarised the series of changes required to ensure appropriate disciplinary arrangements were in place to respond to circumstances that might arise with respect to the senior management of the Council. In brief, these changes involved:-

- ◆ adopting and applying the model disciplinary procedure for Chief Executives;
- ◆ adopting and applying the separate model procedure for Chief Officers;
- ◆ applying the special protection available to Heads of Service occupying certain statutory posts to the Council's existing disciplinary policy;
- ◆ re-naming the Employee Selection Panel as the Senior Officers Panel and extending its remit to include disciplinary matters for Senior Officers; and
- ◆ clarifying the role of the Appeals Sub-Group.

As the changes involved various amendments to the Constitution and terms of reference of a panel and sub-group, the Council

RESOLVED

that the recommendations contained in Appendices A to C to the report now submitted be approved.

78. REPORTS OF THE CABINET, PANELS AND COMMITTEES

(See Minute No. 71 for Members' Interests.)

(a) Cabinet

Councillor I C Bates, Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Cabinet, presented the Report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 15th December 2010 and 20th January and 17th February 2011.

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In connection with Item No. 52 and in response to a question from Councillor P J Downes, Councillor D B Dew assured the Council that the working groups established to consider the Urban Design Framework for St. Ives West and RAF Brampton areas included local council representatives but he accepted that the membership might need to be reviewed to consider the necessity for representation from adjacent wards.

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In connection with Item No. 57, it was noted that the recommendations had been considered previously under Minute No. 76.

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In connection with Item No. 58, it was noted that the recommendations had been considered previously under Minute No. 76.

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Upon being put to the vote, the recommendation contained in Item No. 59 was declared to be CARRIED.

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Upon being put to the vote, the recommendations contained in Item No. 60 were declared to be CARRIED.

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In connection with Item No. 63 and in response to a question from Councillor P J Downes, Councillor I C Bates advised the Council that the report on the conclusions of the Working Group established by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) to undertake a study on the Council's planning conservation team were included in the Report of that Panel under Minute No. 78(c) post.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that, subject to the foregoing paragraphs, the Report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 15th December 2010 and 20th January and 17th February 2011 be received and adopted.

(b) **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 9th December 2010 and 13th January and 10th February 2011.

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In connection with Item No. 41 and in response to a question from Councillor P J Downes, Councillor J D Ablewhite undertook to forward to all Members any updates received following the Government's decision not to proceed with improvements to the A14.

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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 9th December 2010 and 13th January and 10th February 2011 be received and adopted.

(c) **Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being)**

Councillor P M D Godfrey presented the Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) held on 8th February 2011.

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Councillor Godfrey drew the Council's attention to Item No. 39 and the comprehensive report produced by the Working Group established to consider and evaluate the role of the Council's planning conservation team and he extended his appreciation to members and officers who had contributed to it.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) held on 8th February 2011 be received and adopted.

(d) **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 4th January and 1st February 2011.

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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 4th January and 1st February 2011 be received and adopted.

(e) **Development Management Panel**

Councillor P G Mitchell presented the Report of the meetings of the Development Management Panel held on 20th December 2010 and 17th January and 14th February 2011.

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Further to Item No. 18, Councillor Mitchell reported that an appeal had been submitted against the District Council's refusal of the application for the erection of four wind turbines on land west of Bicton Industrial Park, Kimbolton but that he was hopeful that the reasons for refusal and the Wind Power SPD 2006 were sufficiently robust for the appeal to be dismissed.

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Referring to Item No. 20, Councillor Mitchell drew attention to the performance of the enforcement team who had visited 69% of the 269 cases requiring site visits within 10 working days despite a series of changes to the staff in the section.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Development Management Panel held on 20th December 2010 and 17th January and 14th February 2011 be received and adopted.

(f) **Employment Panel**

Councillor P A Swales presented the Report of the meeting of the Employment Panel held on 2nd February 2011.

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In connection with Item No. 20, Councillor Swales reported that six applications for voluntary redundancy still were pending although the expectation was that this figure would be further reduced by the end of the week.

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Referring to Item No. 21 and whilst commending the sentiments of the Panel to the Council with regard to all retirees, Councillor Swales wished to pay particular tribute to Mr T Amiss who had been Elections Manager in the Central Services Directorate and who had worked in the local government service for 36 years. Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds concurred in the comments made by Councillor Swales and thanked Mr Amiss for the excellent service he had given to the Council.

On the same subject, and in response to a question from Councillor M G Baker, Councillor Swales undertook to forward to all Councillors a list of those employees expected to leave the Council's service under the voluntary release scheme.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Employment Panel held on 2nd February 2011 be received and adopted.

(g) **Licensing and Protection Panel**

Councillor K M Baker presented the Report of the meeting of the Licensing and Protection Panel held on 26th January 2011.

.....
Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Licensing and Protection Panel held on 26th January 2011 be received and adopted.

79. ORAL QUESTIONS

In accordance with the Council 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 S M Van De Kerkhove to the Executive Councillor for Finance and Customer Services, Councillor T V Rogers

In response to a question requesting a break down by ward of the number of houses contributing to the new homes grant for 2011/2012, Councillor Rogers explained that he had prepared a written response for the questioner which he would hand to him after the meeting.

Question from Councillor P R Ward to the Executive Councillor for Leisure and Law, Property and Governance, Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds

In response to a question requiring an indication of the assistance which would be given to users in the event of the closure of the rifle range at One Leisure, St. Ivo given that the nearest alternative facilities were in Kimbolton, Warboys and Peterborough, Councillor Mrs Reynolds explained that proposals for the rifle range at One Leisure, St. Ivo still were under discussion and that until the matter had been resolved she was unwilling to give any further details during the meeting. However, Councillor Mrs Reynolds assured the questioner that should support be considered necessary this would be offered at the appropriate time and that she was willing to discuss the

matter further after the meeting.

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

In response to a question regarding the potential merger of East Cambridgeshire and Fenland District Councils with Huntingdonshire and the economic repercussions for Huntingdonshire of such an arrangement, the Leader undertook to respond in writing to the questioner.

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

In response to a question regarding the proposed merger of Huntingdonshire with two other neighbouring district authorities, Councillor Bates assured the questioner that an issue of such significance would be discussed more widely than had been suggested by the proposed media coverage.

The meeting ended at 10.50pm.

Chairman