

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.

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

22. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17th June 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Bates and Churchill declared personal interests in Minute No 26 by virtue of their membership of Cambridgeshire County Council. Councillor Hyams declared a personal interest in Minute 27 by virtue of his membership of Godmanchester Town Council.

24. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING: 2009/10 OUTTURN AND 2010/11 BUDGET

A report by the Head of Financial Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of the final outturn for revenue expenditure for 2009/2010 and the variations between the original and the outturn budget for that year.

Members noted that £1913,000 had been transferred to a Special Reserve to finance any "invest to save" proposals. In discussing the main variations in the programme, Executive Councillors mentioned the reduction in income from schools using the leisure centre facilities. The Cabinet also noted the position in terms of the monitoring of the revenue budget in the current year to date and the impact of the Government's announcement that a number of grants already awarded for 2010/11 would now be withdrawn. Their attention having been drawn to an increase in the total amount of payments written-off during April to June 2010 for Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates, Members were advised that this was a consequence of the downturn in the economic climate.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the spending variations for the revenue budget for 2009/2010 be noted;

- (b) that the present position in terms of the revenue budget for 2010/2011 outturn be noted; and
- (c) that the position on debts collected and written-off as set out in Annex C to the report now submitted be noted.

25. CAPITAL MONITORING: 2009/10 OUTTURN AND 2010/11 BUDGET

A report by the Head of Financial Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) detailing the outturn for capital expenditure in 2009/10 and adjustments for 2010/11 budget.

In noting variations in the programme, Executive Councillors were advised that the level of Local Public Service Agreement performance reward grant was likely to be considerably less than had been budgeted. At the same time, Members noted plans announced by the Government to abolish Go-East and the possible implications for the authority. Whereupon, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the report be received and the expenditure variations noted; and
- (b) that a further report be submitted to Cabinet evaluating the implications of the closure of Go-East and other regional organisations and plans.

26. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT

By way of a report by the Heads of Planning Services and of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the background to the option of introducing Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) as a way of improving the level of on street parking enforcement throughout the County.

Members were reminded that the District Council's management of the off-street parking arrangements was to a high standard, but that there was little enforcement of on-street restrictions by the Police, with no likelihood of any improvement unless CPE was introduced.

In discussing the implications for the District Council, Executive Councillors were advised that the Department for Transport preferred a co-ordinated approach to on and off-street parking enforcement. With this in mind, initial discussions had been held with Cambridgeshire County Council to explore possible operational scenarios for a joint scheme. In that respect, Executive Councillors were of the opinion that any change should not be to the detriment of the existing off-street arrangements and mention also was made to the potential impact on the street ranger service which currently combined parking enforcement with a range of other front line services, the cost effectiveness of which could be affected by its separation from parking enforcement.

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

RESOLVED

that further negotiations be held with Cambridgeshire County Council and other authorities over the possible introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement and a further report submitted to the Cabinet when appropriate.

27. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES - RESPONSE TO PETITION

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report by the Director of Environmental and Community Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) drawing attention to three petitions from the Shopmobility Group in Huntingdon, Godmanchester Community Association and Ramsey residents regarding the closure of public conveniences across the District. Two of the petitions had been presented to Council and referred to the Cabinet, while the person submitting the third petition had agreed that it could be submitted to Cabinet in conjunction with the others on the same subject.

Executive Councillors were reminded that the decision to reduce expenditure on the maintenance public conveniences had been taken on financial grounds and as a result of an acknowledgement that the service should be more appropriately dealt with by town and parish councils.

Particular mention was made of the town councils' ability to raise their precept in the present economic climate whereas the level of council tax for district and county councils had been frozen for 2011/12 by the Government.

Having been advised of the views expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) and in stressing that officers were available to offer advice and assistance to the town councils on the matter, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the current position with regard to the transfer and closure of public conveniences across the District be noted;
- (b) that the petitions from the Shopmobility Group in Huntingdon, Godmanchester Community Association and the residents of Ramsey be received; and
- (c) that a further report be submitted by the Director of Environmental and Community Services on the future of the conveniences in Huntingdon bus station in October 2010.

(Councillor Hyams requested that his name be recorded as voting against the motion)

28. 2009/10 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which reviewed the Council's performance against the targets within the Corporate Plan for the year ending 31st March 2010.

Having been informed that the data would be reported to local residents via the District Wide newsletter and the Council's website, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the contents of the annual performance data for 2009/2010 be approved.

29. RISK REGISTER

By way of a report by the Audit and Risk Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was reminded that a register had been developed to identify corporate risks. Four risks had been identified as very high or red which needed to be brought to the attention of the Cabinet under the Risk Management Strategy.

In considering the information contained in the report, Executive Councillors were advised of the options available to manage the risks to reduce their likelihood and severity and the associated financial implications. In that respect, Executive Councillors noted that the cost of complying with the requirements imposed by the Government Connect secure network had been drawn to the attention of the Secretary of State.

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted and the actions proposed approved within existing resources.

30. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

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

31. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIRECTORATE - HEAD OF OPERATIONS

Councillor L M Simpson reported on the outcome of a meeting of the Appointments Panel which had interviewed short-listed candidates for the post of Head of Operations at a meeting held earlier that day.

Having been acquainted with the requirement of paragraph 4 (e) of the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Cabinet confirmed that

there was no material or well founded objection to the Panel's proposals with regard to the offer of an appointment to fill the vacancy.

32. FORMER FIRE STATION SITE AND WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE, HUNTINGDON STREET, ST NEOTS

(Councillor B Chapman – Ward Member for St Neots Priory Park was in attendance and spoke on this item)

Further to Minute No. 33/09 and 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 was apprised of the tenders received for the leasehold interest of land at the former fire station site and waste recycling centre, Huntingdon Street, St. Neots.

In so doing, Members' attention was drawn to the views of the Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) Panel regarding the importance of complying with the Planning Brief for the site and the need for the developer to secure the agreement of the St Neots Town Council over the release of land in that authority's ownership to facilitate the development proposed.

In the discussion, it was suggested that any future assignment of the lease to the successful tender should be subject to a condition that this should be limited to future leisure use only.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) that the Director of Central Services after consultation with the Executive Councillors for Finance and Customer Services and for Leisure, Law, Property and Governance, be authorised to approve the terms for the disposal of the land at the former fire station site and waste recycling centre, Huntingdon Street, St. Neots to the developer named in the recommendation in paragraph 7.1 (ii) of the report now submitted.

Chairman