

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 17 March 2011.

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.

84. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17th February 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

85. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors I C Bates, K J Churchill and N J Guyatt declared personal interests in Minute No. 10/86 by virtue of their membership of Cambridgeshire County Council. Councillor C R Hyams declared a personal interest in Minute No. 10/86 by virtue of his membership of Godmanchester Town Council.

86. PAYMENT OF RECYCLING CREDITS

Further to Minute No 85/10 and by way of a report by the Head of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered proposals to change payments to owners of recycling sites.

By way of background, Members were reminded of their previous decision to remove glass recycling banks from brings sites and introduce the collection of new types of materials such as textiles, books and shoes, using third party providers from either the private, public or the third sectors. Executive Councillors were reminded that the tonnage of glass from mini bring sites had reduced to such a level that the council's costs were greater than the income being received from the recycling credit payment and alternative banks needed to be investigated to maximise income for parish and town councils.

Having considered arrangements for the siting of textile recycling banks and in receiving the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) on the matter, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that payment of £150 per tonne to owners of land where textile recycling banks are situated be approved, subject to pro rata fluctuations in the amount the Council receives per tonne

87. NEW COUNCIL PLAN

(Councillor J D Ablewhite and N J Guyatt, Chairman and member respectively of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) were in attendance and spoke on this item).

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 content of a revised Council Plan, which set out the Council's vision and priorities for the 2011 to 2015 period.

The Cabinet were reminded that the original Plan had been adopted by the Council in December 2006. Executive Councillors were informed that the document had been revised in response to changes to the national performance framework for local authorities, the abolition of the Comprehensive Area Assessment and the challenges being faced as a result of the budgetary cuts.

In discussing the process undertaken to develop the Plan, the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy explained that all Members had been invited to comment on the proposed priorities and targets in advance of the meeting and that they had been considered also by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

In relation to the proposed Vision for the Council Plan, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) were of the opinion that this should recognise the position of the Council in terms of the Localism Bill, as a competent authority" and refer to the importance of working in partnership.

Having considered the Panels' views on the proposed targets, particularly those which had been set for waste collection, the Cabinet noted that the figures were floor targets, as opposed to aspirational targets which had been previously used and therefore indicated the minimum performance the Council would tolerate. It was reported that the waste per household collection figure represented a County target and had been negotiated with partners.

Having noted that it was anticipated that developer contributions would, in time, be managed under the new Community Infrastructure Levy, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Head of People, Performance and Partnership be authorised, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy, to make any minor textual amendments to the Plan and submit the document to Council for approval.

88. 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 the targets within the Corporate Plan. The report which included data and narrative on the achievements against targets for each of the Council's priority objectives had been considered also by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

89. THE GREAT FEN PROJECT

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) on progress in implementing the Great Fen Masterplan.

In so doing, Executive Councillors were advised that in discussing the timescales and targets dates that the Great Fen Steering Group were working towards the Panel had noted concerns locally about the pace of change from arable production which they thought was occurring more rapidly than had been envisaged. Mention was made to the length of time that might ensue before some of the predicted peripheral benefits for local communities such as tourism and employment came to fruition. Whilst appreciating the overall aims and objectives of the Great Fen Project, as promoted by the Great Fen Partners and endorsed by Council, the Panel felt that it would be appropriate to review the pace of change envisaged by the project and, given the importance and value to the local and national economy of arable food production, to retain the land in the project area for that purpose whilst the review was undertaken.

The Cabinet were advised that there were contractual issues between the Wildlife Trust, on behalf of the partners, and the Heritage Lottery Fund concerning conditions attached to the major grant which had been received, in terms of land that was required to be brought into restoration.

Having considered the request by the Panel it was felt that the issues should be explored with the Great Fen partners, whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the report be received and the Director of Environment and Community Services requested to explore with the Great Fen Partners the possibility of land within the area currently in arable production and not yet sown to grass remaining in use for that purpose, pending a review being undertaken of the land that is already under restoration, the development proposals for the visitor facilities and the creation of associated employment opportunities.

Chairman