

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, 22 September 2011.

PRESENT: Councillor J D Ablewhite – Chairman.
Councillors B S Chapman, J A Gray,
N J Guyatt, T V Rogers and T D Sanderson.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor D Tysoe .

37. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 21st July 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

38. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

39. COUNCILLOR T V ROGERS

In view of Councillor T V Rogers decision to resign from the position of Executive Councillor for Resources, Members acknowledged the contribution made by him during his 9 years on the Cabinet and his commitment to Huntingdonshire. At the same time, Executive Councillors noted the intention to appoint Councillor J A Gray as Executive Councillor for Resources and Councillor D Tysoe as Executive Councillor for Environment.

40. FINANCIAL FORECAST

By way of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the present position in relation to the Council's financial forecast for the period up to 2024/25 together with the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) thereon.

In considering the information contained in the report, Members have been acquainted with progress to date in the achievement of savings and has acknowledged the uncertainty surrounding the forecast and a number of assumptions which will be clarified over the next few months. Particular mention was made of a number of options being investigated for preserving a CCTV service and to a report on the potential impact of grant reductions to the voluntary sector organisations to be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) and Cabinet in October.

In noting that there had not yet been any announcement by the Government as to the limit for Council tax increase in the current year, Members discussed the approach the Council might take and

the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) thereon. The Cabinet were of the opinion that the implications of not increasing Council Tax next year should not be included in the options under consideration given the impact on services of the additional budget cuts that would be necessary. Whereupon, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted;
- (b) that the annuity basis for the calculation of Minimum Revenue Position as set out in Annex E to the report submitted be approved; and
- (c) that Council be requested to approve the contents of the report now submitted.

41. CAMBRIDGESHIRE TRAVEL PLAN GUIDANCE

By way of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Cabinet was invited to consider the content of draft Cambridgeshire Residential Travel Plan (RTP) Guidance, together with a consultation plan, which had been developed by the County Council in discussion with the City and District Councils in Cambridgeshire.

Members were advised that the document was intended to clarify the process for RTPs which would require developers to introduce a package of measures that promote sustainable travel within new residential developments by encouraging the use of more sustainable travel options such as walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing and thus assist in improving health and community well-being. It was explained that all developments which could potentially generate significant amounts of movement would have to be accompanied by a RTP.

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

RESOLVED

- that the draft Cambridgeshire Residential Travel Plan Guidance be endorsed as a basis for public consultation.

42. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT BUDGET

By way of a report by the Head of Housing Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the implications for the Council's 2011/12 budget provision of an increase in the take up of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) and options available to address the situation.

Executive Councillors were advised that there was insufficient funds to progress a number of cases in the current year and in order to maintain the present level of service, an increase of £1.116m would

be required. In considering the reasons for the increased demand and cost, Executive Councillors were advised of an option for authorities to defer payment of approved cases for up to 12 months so long as it is not used to limit demand or reduce expenditure. In noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being), Members acknowledged that any delay in providing such grants would have a detrimental impact on the quality of life of those requiring adaptations to their home. Having expressed the need for the Government to recognise the cost to authorities of providing these grants when considering any new funding systems, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the current level of service for Disabled Facilities Grants be maintained and a supplementary capital estimate approved immediately to meet the increase in demand.

43. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to individuals/organisations and is likely to reveal the identity of those organisations.

44. CALL CENTRE OPTIONS BEYOND 2012

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Information Management (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) outlining a range of options for managing the District Council's Call following the expiry of the main IT contracts in December and the lease for the Speke House premises in June 2013. The report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

Particular reference was drawn to the future location of the Call Centre, Members concurred with the Panel that given the potential for sub-letting was likely to be reduced in the current economic climate, further consideration should be given to utilising the District Council's own property portfolio and that further information should be provided with regard to the options available.

Having concurred with the Panel that the Call Centre continued to provide an excellent service and that the Council should retain a District Council operated and staffed Call Centre beyond December 2012, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that an Huntingdonshire District Council operated and staffed Call Centre be retained beyond 2012;
- (b) that a further report on the location of the Call Centre, including a more robust risk assessment and a detailed comparison of options available and costs involved, be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel

(Economic Well-Being) and Cabinet in January 2012;

- (c) that the Project Team be authorised to commence a formal procurement process for a replacement Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) to include discussions with South Cambridgeshire and Fenland District Councils regarding the possible collaboration on procurement or sharing of technology;
- (d) that the Project Team be requested to continue to communicate and monitor Cambridgeshire County Council's position in relation to the CRM technology prior to any final decision;
- (e) that, on the basis that the cost of the CRM system will be cost neutral, the Managing Director (Resources), after consultation with the relevant Executive Councillor, be authorised to approve the final decision on the CRM; and
- (f) that the current Avaya System Automated Call Distribution System used by the Call Centre be retained and negotiations initiated with Cambridgeshire County Council to extend the current agreement.

45. OFFICER EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURE RULES

Having been acquainted with the requirements of paragraph 4(e) of the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Cabinet confirmed that there was no material or well-founded objection to the proposals to establish a Corporate Support Office and the consequential impact on the People, Performance and Partnerships Division and Central Services Directorate.

Chairman