

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the The Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 16 February 2012.

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

87. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th January 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

88. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

89. BUDGET 2012/13 AND MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2013 TO 2017

Further to Minute No.11/73 and 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 a number of variations to the assumptions made previously for the purpose of preparing the draft Financial Strategy, Medium Term Plan (MTP), the budget and the associated level of Council Tax for 2012/13.

Attention was drawn to the latest government grant figures, Executive Councillors noted that the Formula Grant was as predicted and the proposed New Homes Bonus for 2012/13 was now £1.913m, an increase of £37K on that previously forecasted.

In discussing the contents of the report, Members' attention was drawn to the conclusions reached by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being). In that respect, Members concurred with the Panel that Council Tax levels should be increased by 3.5% in order to meet unavoidable inflation and preserve valued services as far as possible both this year and in the future.

On the subject of funding for the voluntary sector, the Cabinet confirmed that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) would be examining in detail the policies and mechanisms proposed between the sector and the Council given that it falls under their remit.

In noting the Council's level of revenue reserves, including its relativity to other District Councils, Executive Councillors were reminded that the level will be reviewed as part of the Council's financial forecast each September.

The Head of Financial Services drew Members' attention to the Overview and Scrutiny's comment that a saving had not been

included in a section's budget, he explained that the issue related to confusion as to whether a saving had been achieved, rather than to whether the budget had been reduced by the relevant savings target. Furthermore, the final phase of the annual budget process when budgets are disaggregated to a lower level would clarify and resolve such issues.

In response to a question by the Panel as to whether certain corporate budgets should be shown in the unallocated section rather than under the Head of Financial Services in Annex G, the Executive Councillor for Finance undertook to discuss this with the Managing Director (Resources) before responding to the Panel.

Having noted the comments arising from the consultation with the business community on expenditure proposals and in acknowledging the contributions of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the work of staff for achieving the budget outcomes, the Cabinet

RECOMMENDED

- (a) that the proposed budget, Medium Term Plan and Financial Plan appended to the report now submitted be approved; and
- (b) that an increase of £4.34 (3.5%) in Council Tax, representing a level of £128.51 for a Band D property for 2012/13 be approved.

90. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2012/13

By way of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was invited to consider the contents of the Treasury Management Strategy for 2012/13. The Strategy had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Council be recommended to approve:-

- the Treasury Management Strategy for 2012/13 as appended to the report now submitted; and
- the Treasury Management Indicators and Prudential Indicators for 2012/13.

91. ROLL FORWARD OF CORE STRATEGY - LOCAL PLAN PROJECT PLAN

Further to Minute No.11/70, and by way of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Cabinet were acquainted with the content of a new Local Development Scheme for Huntingdonshire. The Strategy had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

Members were advised that the document outlined the proposed

programme for the production of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and includes key milestones to inform people about opportunities to be involved in the process. The new Scheme had arisen as a result of amendments to the plan-making process in the Localism Act, the draft National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Regulations consultation.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the new Local Development Scheme, appended to the report now submitted, be endorsed for publication and commencement on 24th February 2012.

92. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

that the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to the financial and business affairs of a particular person (including the authority that holds that information) and to terms proposed in the course of negotiations for the acquisition or disposal of property.

93. CASTLE HILL HOUSE - FORMER HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES - HIGH STREET, HUNTINGDON

(During discussion of this item, the Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) left the meeting)

Further to Minute No 09/37, the Cabinet considered a joint report by the Corporate Team Manager and Facilities & Administration Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) detailing progress to date in relation to the marketing of Castle Hill House, Huntingdon.

In considering the contents of the report, Members were disappointed that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) had not been given an opportunity to consider details of an offer received for the former Council offices. Having requested further information on the options available to the Council, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the matter be deferred to a special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) and of Cabinet to be held on 28th February 2012.

Chairman