

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 March 2012.

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

98. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 16th and 28th February 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

99. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

100. CAMBRIDGESHIRE RENEWABLES INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK (CRIF) AND CAMBRIDGESHIRE COMMUNITY ENERGY FUND (CEF)

With the aid of a joint report by the Heads of Environmental Management and of Planning (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet gave consideration to the Cambridgeshire Renewables Infrastructure Framework (CRIF) and the Cambridgeshire Community Energy Fund (CEF). In introducing the report, the Executive Councillor for Environment confirmed that 1169 solar panels had been installed at Eastfield House which would provide the Council with significant energy efficiencies.

The Head of Environmental Management, in the course of a presentation to the Cabinet, clarified a number of matters on what was a complex and technical subject.

Executive Councillors were advised that the CRIF Project aimed to provide a robust evidence base to promote and increase the implementation of renewable energy projects for the benefit of the public sector, community and business. It was designed to help Cambridgeshire meet carbon and climate change targets by maximising energy opportunities. The Cabinet were reminded that Cambridgeshire was required to deliver 28% of its energy from onshore renewable by 2030.

Members' attention was drawn to the CEF project, a mechanism to support developers to achieve their zero carbon obligations, which was being explored as an option for Cambridgeshire by the CRIF/CEF Steering Group. It was reported that developers would be able to offset the balance of their emissions by contributing into a fund. The money would then be invested into low carbon

infrastructure projects to deliver carbon emissions savings. The Cabinet stressed the need to ensure that CEF income is retained locally through appropriate planning policy provision.

In discussing planned renewable energy capacity, Members' attention was drawn to the conclusions reached by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being). In that respect, Members concurred with the Panel that the Council should try to influence where wind turbines were located given that some wind farms work better in some locations than in others. Furthermore, the Cabinet were of the opinion that the delivery of wind farms should not be restricted to private developers and that CRIF should recognise the commercial opportunities for public sector organisations.

Having thanked officers for their comprehensive presentation, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Cambridgeshire Renewables Infrastructure Framework (CRIF) and the Cambridgeshire Community Energy Fund (CEF) be supported and the future approach to energy and renewables outlined in the report now submitted endorsed;
- (b) that the Managing Directors (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) and (Resources) be authorised, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Environment, to carry forward work on energy and renewables in the District, to deliver the best possible outcomes for Business, the Community and Public Sector, within the Framework of the CRIF; and
- (c) that the Managing Directors (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) and (Resources) be requested to consider the merits of setting up a CEF.

101. GREATER CAMBRIDGE - GREATER PETERBOROUGH LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP: INCORPORATION AS A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

Further to Minute No 11/17, the Cabinet considered a report by the Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships & Projects) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking approval for the District Council to become a corporate member of the Greater Cambridge – Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) as part of its incorporation as a company limited by guarantee.

It was explained that corporate membership would expand the Board's remit and enable it to enter into contracts. Having been advised that corporate membership would formally acknowledge the role of the LEP area local authorities and would not lead to any financial commitment for the Council, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the incorporation of the Greater Cambridge – Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) as a Company Limited by Guarantee be supported and the District Council's involvement approved; and
- (b) that the Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to complete the appropriate legal documentation and processes.

102. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT - HUNTINGDON

A report by the Economic Development Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) was submitted detailing proposals to establish a Business Improvement District (BID) in Huntingdon. The report had been submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being).

By way of background, Members were advised that a BID was a defined area within in which businesses would pay an additional levy to fund improvements within that area. For a bid to be successful the agreement of a majority of those businesses affected must be received by number and rateable value. With regard to the extent of the proposed BID area, Members were advised that the area focused on the town centre and was essentially the area circumscribed by the ring road covering 369 businesses across the retail and office sectors.

It was noted that those businesses identified within the proposed bid area had been consulted as part of a feasibility study prior to the proposal moving onto the second phase of consultation.

Executive Councillors were advised that a suggested bid levy of 1.5% of the rateable value of the businesses would raise approximately £200,000 per annum. It was reported that under this rate the Council would be subject to an annual levy of £11,320 for the 14 premises/areas under its ownership that fall within the BID boundary.

Having referred to the potential impact an additional cost could have on small businesses and charities Executive Councillors were advised that, subject to the agreement of those liable, the BID Regulations 2004 would allow for these vulnerable groups to be excluded from the charge.

In discussing issues surrounding the collection of the levy and in noting the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel thereon, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Head of Customer Services be authorised to enter into the BID Levy Operating Agreement required in order to meet the Council's obligations under the Local Government Act 2003; and
- (b) that the Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships

& Projects) after consultation with the Executive Leader, be authorised to cast any votes to which the District Council is entitled in the ballot.

103. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information).

104. LOCATION OF THE CALL CENTRE

Further to Minute No. 11/44, consideration was given to a report by the Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships & Projects) (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) summarising a range of options for the future location of the District Council's Call Centre. The report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

In discussing the options available, Executive Councillors were reminded that the Council was a full partner in the Making Assets Count Project which guides asset management planning across the partnership.

With regard to the technically and financial impact of any move, the Cabinet concurred with the Panel that the Call Centre currently worked well and that there were no apparent advantages to changing the current arrangements and that it would therefore be appropriate to negotiate a new lease for Speke House for up to 5 years with a break after 3 years. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Call Centre be retained at Speke House; and
- (b) that the Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) be authorised to negotiate the best terms available for a new lease for Speke House, before its expiry in June 2013.

Chairman