

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Civic Suite, Room 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 18 October 2012.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor I C Bates for Item No. 49.

### **45. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13th September 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **46. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

No declarations were received.

### **47. FINANCIAL MONITORING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2012/13**

By means of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was acquainted with anticipated cost variations and timing changes in the Capital Programme for 2012/13 financial year. Having received clarification on the extra costs identified in the report, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the report be received and the expenditure variations noted.

### **48. FINANCIAL MONITORING - REVENUE BUDGET 2012/13**

The Cabinet received a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the projected budget outturn for 2012/13 together with details of variations from the previous forecast.

Members were advised that the expected outturn of revenue expenditure was £22m which represented a slight increase in that previously forecasted due to reductions in a number of income streams including estate properties, planning fees, car parks, markets and search fees. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report now submitted be noted.

#### **49. CHARGING FOR SECOND GREEN BIN**

(Councillor I C Bates, Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) was in attendance and spoke on this item).

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) setting out a case for reducing the cost of the refuse and recycling service by introducing an annual charge of £40 for an additional green waste bin. The document had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet. The Panel were of the opinion that the Council should not introduce a charge.

The Executive Councillor for Environment reported that the Operations Team was looking at ways to reduce its costs while maintaining service standards and raising revenue. He explained that the free collection of the first green bin for all residents would remain but the collection of additional green bins would be regarded as a premium service and therefore should attract a charge. This would be fairer to all residents and would provide a significant return for the Council.

Having regard to the practicalities of the proposals and the set up costs, the Executive Councillor for Environment expressed a view that it would be more cost effective to remove unwanted additional bins from those households not wishing to take up the premium service rather than changing the colour of the bin lid.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor I C Bates, Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well Being) addressed the Cabinet. Councillor Bates explained that the waste collection service was a highly valued service and any charge for an additional bin would damage the public perception of the Council. He stressed that the proposal could impact on the level of green waste collected at a time when the Council should be looking to increase performance by promoting recycling. He argued that the implementation of the proposal would lead to an increase in fly-tipping. Councillor Bates acknowledged that the Council needed to make further savings but was of the opinion that these should be focused on non-statutory services such as leisure. In response to which, the Executive Leader reiterated that the Council was constantly reviewing all services to identify savings as part of the budget process. He also reported that the proposal would impact on a very small percentage of the district's population. With regard to alternative saving streams, the Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities reminded Members that a Business Plan for the future of the One Leisure Service would be considered at the December Cabinet meeting. Finally, the Executive Councillor for Environment assured Members that as fly-tipping was a criminal offence enforcement action would be undertaken where necessary.

Having received a request from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) that the Panel be given an opportunity to consider details of the proposal, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the matter be deferred to the next meeting of the Cabinet to able the report of the Head of Operations to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being).

**50. LEADERSHIP DIRECTION**

By way of a report by the Corporate Team Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Cabinet was invited to consider the content of the Leadership Direction Plan.

Having noted the plan's main aims and objectives and the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels thereon, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that full Council be recommended to endorse the Leadership Direction Plan.

**51. PROPOSED CIL GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES**

Further to Minute No. 11/109 and by means of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with progress being made with the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for Huntingdonshire and a proposed governance structure for dealing with CIL spend.

In so doing, Executive Councillors were advised that a business plan would be created by the Growth and Infrastructure Group of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership. The Plan would be a living document responding to the emerging development proposals coming forward to the implementation phase. Infrastructure providers could then bid for funding as infrastructure proposals came forward. The Plan would be endorsed by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership Board prior to it being formally signed off or renegotiated by the Cabinet.

Having referred to the need to continue to monitor the spend of Section 106 monies and in noting the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being), the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the proposed CIL Governance Structure, appended to the report now submitted, be approved;
- (b) that further work be progressed with partners through the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership to develop the framework and draft business plan, to take forward the next stages required in the Governance process;
- (c) that the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy be requested to liaise with the Heads of Finance and of Legal and Democratic Services to agree draft

procedural and management protocols; and

- (d) that a further report be submitted to the Cabinet as procedural and management protocols become clearer.

## **52. HOUSING STRATEGY 2012-2015**

Consideration was given to a report by the Housing Strategy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a copy of the Housing Strategy 2012/2015.

Members were advised that the Strategy spanned a shorter timeframe than previous documents due to the challenges and changes being experienced by the Authority including the impact of the National Planning Policy Framework, Welfare Reform Act and Localism Act and the National Housing Strategy.

Having noted the deliberations of and conclusions reached by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) on the content of the Strategy and in stressing the Council's commitment to enabling housing which meets local needs, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Housing Strategy 2012 – 2015 be approved.

## **53. DRAFT TENANCY STRATEGY**

The Cabinet considered a report by the Housing Strategy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking approval for the adoption of the draft Tenancy Strategy for Huntingdonshire. The Strategy had been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

In so doing, Members' attention was drawn to a new statutory requirement under the Localism Act 2011 to have in place a Tenancy Strategy within 12 months of the Act coming into force. Members were advised that the Strategy included seven key principles relating to the offer of fixed term tenancies, affordable rents, conversions and housing management which social housing providers would be encouraged to support within their policies. Members were advised that as part of these measure, the Council would expect all registered providers to take a pro-active approach to tackling anti social behaviour. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Tenancy Strategy 2012 be approved.

## **54. COMMUNITY RIGHT TO CHALLENGE**

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining proposed arrangements to operate the new Community Right to Challenge.

Members were advised that the Community Right to Challenge had been created by the Localism Act 2011 and introduced a right for defined organisations and persons to submit an expression of interest in taking over the provision of a service on behalf of the Council. Where a valid expression of interest is received, the Council would be required to undertake a procurement exercise for that service which may lead to the Council awarding a contract for the service's provision. Having considered the proposed process for receiving and dealing with expressions of interest and in noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) thereon, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Managing Directors, after consultation with the appropriate Heads of Service and the relevant Executive Councillor, be authorised to accept or reject an expression of interest on behalf of the Council.

## **55. UPDATE OF THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE TRAVEL PLAN**

By way of a report by the Head of Environmental Management (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was invited to consider the content of a revised travel plan for the Council. The plan sets out four main objectives aimed at lowering costs for the Council, reducing traffic congestion in the District and improving the health and well-being of the Council's employees.

The document had been discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) arising from which a suggestion was made that the Council should explore the possibility of providing a bus service from the main settlements to Pathfinder House. Executive Councillors were of the opinion that such an arrangement would not be viable in terms of its environmental impact and the percentage of employees it would reach.

Executive Councillors supported a suggestion by the Panel that greater emphasis should be placed on home working and the Plan's objectives, targets and indicators could be more robust with a greater responsibility being placed on individual managers in order for the targets to succeed.

Having referred to the considerable amount of information contained in the plan, the Cabinet suggested that future Travel Plan data be consolidated into a smaller document. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the updated Corporate Travel Plan for the period 2012 – 2018, appended to the report now submitted, be approved; and
- (b) that Officers be requested to regularly review the targets contained in the Travel Plan, as part of the annual review of the Council's Environment Strategy, reflecting the Authority's focus on continuous monitoring and improvement.

**56. GAMBLING ACT 2005 - STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES**

Given that the report of the Head of Legal and Estates and the attached revised Gambling Act 2005 - Statement of Principles would be considered by the Licensing Committee at their meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the attached Statement of Principles – Gambling Act, be deferred to the next meeting of the Cabinet to enable the deliberations of the Licensing Committee to be considered at that time.

**57. SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP**

The report of the meeting of the Safety Advisory Group held on 12th September 2012 was received and noted.

**58. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to any action taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of a crime.

**59. HOUSING BENEFIT - INTRODUCTION OF RISK BASED VERIFICATION**

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Customer Services (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) outlining a proposal to introduce Risk Based Verification for new Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims submitted through the Council's online claim facility.

In noting monitoring arrangements and the financial implications of introducing the new system, the Cabinet were advised that the process would be considered by the District Council's Auditors to ensure that it works correctly and that they would expect to see a reduction in fraud against the Council as a consequence of its implementation.

Members' attention was drawn to the conclusions reached by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) and the Corporate Governance Panel relating to the scheme's cost and implementation. In that respect, Members were advised that the scheme would apply to Council Tax support claims from April 2013 following the abolition of Council Tax Benefit as well as continuing to apply to Housing Benefit claims. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Benefits Risk Based Verification Policy, appended to

the report now submitted, be approved.

Chairman