

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the THE FUNCTION ROOM, ONE LEISURE ST IVES OUTDOOR CENTRE, CALIFORNIA ROAD, ST IVES, CAMBRIDGESHIRE PE27 6SJ on Thursday, 18 July 2013.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors G J Bull and T V Rogers

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillors N J Guyatt.

20. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20th June 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

21. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors J A Gray and D M Tysoe declared non pecuniary interests in Minute No. 24 having made representations as Ward Councillors on planning applications for Bicton Wind Farm and Woolley Hill Wind Farm respectively.

22. 2012/13 OUTTURN AND 2013/14 BUDGET CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING

A report by the Assistant Director, Finance and Resources was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) detailing the outturn for capital expenditure in 2012/13 and adjustments for 2013/14.

In discussing the contents of the report, Executive Councillors questioned the use of capital expenditure rather than revenue for various schemes. Comment was made regarding the need for greater challenge of the need for each capital scheme in future and Portfolio Holders were encouraged to pursue this with managers as the Medium Term Plan is reviewed in August. Whereupon, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the report be received and the expenditure variations noted.

23. 2012/13 OUTTURN AND 2013/14 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING

A report by the Assistant Director, Finance and Resources was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which

contained details of the final outturn for revenue expenditure for 2012/13 and the variations between the original budget for that year.

Executive Councillors were pleased to note that as a result of under spending the Council had been successful in saving an additional £1 million which would be placed in the Special Reserve to fund one-off expenditure that would lead to ongoing savings. Having been advised that the New Homes Bonus for 2014/15 may be marginally less than that forecast but within the sum included in the risk provision, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the spending variations for the revenue budget for 2012/13 be noted;
- (b) that the present position in terms of the revenue budget for 2013/14 outturn be noted;
- (c) that the ongoing performance in respect of new homes bonus be noted; and
- (d) and the position on debts collected and written off.

24. STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION AND DRAFT REVISED SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT - LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY TO WIND TURBINE DEVELOPMENT

(Councillor G J Bull (Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) was in attendance and spoke on this Item.)

By way of a report by the Planning Service Manager (Policy) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was invited to consider the content of the following documents:-

- Proposed Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development;
- Draft Revised SPD: “Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development” – Revised Statement of Consultation; and
- Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts (CLVI) of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire.

Members were advised that the new SPD had been prepared to update, clarify and replace the existing SPD document adopted by the Council in 2006. The document reflects the publication of new policy guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework and the methodology approach undertaken to assess landscape sensitivity to wind turbine development since 2005.

With regard to the Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts (CLVI) report, the Planning Service Manager explained that this had been commissioned to address the concerns over the effects of wind turbines and to clarify the evidence base for the SPD. The document detailed all operational and consented wind turbine developments in the District together with those currently awaiting determination and

offered guidance on the capacity of local landscapes to accommodate further wind turbine development. In the discussions that ensued, Members' attention was drawn to a letter from "Stop Molesworth Wind Farm Action Group" expressing support for the visual impact report as technical evidence alongside the Council's policy. However, the Group believed that some additional work and consultation would be required to transform the proposed SPD into a document that represented the views of Huntingdonshire residents as a whole.

Members' attention was drawn to the conclusions reached by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) on the documents. In that respect, Members concurred with the Panel that the SPD should not include the proposed upper limit for large groups of wind turbines and that the specification of an upper limit would provide developers with an indication of the level of development they could expect to receive approval for, and in some cases, they might expect to exceed that level. Executive Councillors referred to Table 1 of the SPD which indicated that there was, at best, moderate capacity for large groups with some of these limited to groups of 13-15. The Cabinet expressed some doubts over the capacity judgements, given that Table 6 of the CLVI revealed that some areas of the District were already reaching saturation point. Mention also was made on the fact that there appeared to be fewer wind turbine developments in neighbouring local authority areas.

Having concurred with the Panel that the CLVI should be the subject of a separate public consultation exercise as this would strengthen the SPD during any potential appeal process, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that Officers be requested to further review the content of the draft Supplementary Planning Document - Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development in light of the Cabinet's views above;
- (b) that the Statement of Consultation and Officer responses to the issues raised during consultation on the draft Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development Supplementary Planning Document be noted; and
- (c) that the Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire, appended to the report now submitted, be the subject of a public consultation exercise.

25. HUNTINGDONSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH PLAN 2013 - 2023

(Councillor T V Rogers (Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) was in attendance and spoke on this Item.)

By way of a report by the Economic Development Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the background to the production of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013 to 2023. The report had been considered also by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic)

whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

In considering the contents of the report, Executive Councillors stressed the importance of the Economic Growth Plan for the District and the Council. Members discussed the extent of the area covered by the Plan and concern was raised over the lack of reference to rural areas. In response to which, the Cabinet were advised that the Plan was based upon the current assets within Huntingdonshire with the Alconbury Enterprise Zone being an important factor. It was reported that the successful development of key strategic sites would result in increased economic activity throughout the district.

Executive Councillors concurred with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel that the Plan's vision should be amended to refer to Huntingdonshire becoming one of the best places in England to live, work and invest and that the document would benefit from a more dynamic tone throughout. Having also supported the Panel's view that a more explicit explanation be provided for the "trickle down" effect, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that, subject to the inclusion of amendments to reflect the text of the preamble hereto, the contents of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013-2023 be approved.

26. CCTV OPERATIONS - SHARED SERVICE PROPOSAL

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) summarising a proposal to establish a shared CCTV service with Cambridge City Council. The report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

Members' attention was drawn to the issues involved in managing the service, the scope for achieving efficiency savings and the next steps to be taken to progress the proposal. Having been advised of the updated financial implications of the proposal, Executive Councillors stressed the importance of including a detailed financial summary in future reports.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the establishment of a shared CCTV service with Cambridgeshire City Council be approved in principle; and
- (b) that the Head of Operations be authorised, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities, to approve the establishment of the shared service, based in Huntingdon, on the basis of a detailed business case.

27. SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP

The report of the Safety Advisory Group held on 4th June 2013 was received and noted.

Chairman