

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Cabinet Room, Pathfinder House, St. Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 12 February 2004

PRESENT: Councillor D P Holley - Chairman

Councillors I C Bates, Mrs J Chandler,
R L Clarke, Mrs K P Gregory, N J Guyatt,
T V Rogers and L M Simpson

159. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 29th January 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

160. OXMOOR ACTION PLAN - INTERIM PLANNING GUIDANCE

Further to Minute No. 03/158, the Cabinet received and noted a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining progress achieved to-date in implementing the Oxmoor Action Plan, including the redevelopment of the Sapley Square area, the commencement of environmental improvements and the identification of proposed development sites at California Road, Moorhouse Drive, Buttsgrove Way and Sapley Square.

161. WASTE PFI

Further to Minute No. 03/107, consideration was given to a report by the Director of Operational Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining progress of a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) bid by Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire principal authorities to fund investment in a new disposal and, potentially, collection infrastructure to divert more waste from landfill.

Members were advised that in order to benefit from the external funding a decision on the Council's involvement in any future joint procurement would need to be made once the outcome of the PFI bid was known. Having considered the governance and other issues associated with the delivery of a project of this nature, the development of a core project team to manage the procurement process and in discussing the potential options available to the District Council, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the powers proposed for the Member Board, as summarised in Annex A to the report now submitted, and the overall governance proposals for the period prior to a final decision on procurement be approved;

- (b) that the existing provision for waste procurement in the MTP of £50,000 and £20,000 in 2004/05 and 2005/06 respectively be approved for the purposes referred to in paragraph 4.9 of the report now submitted;
- (c) that the governance options for the management of any joint contract and the service delivery implications for the District Council be noted;
- (d) that the Director of Operational Services be requested to report to a future meeting of the Cabinet on the governance options and service delivery implications of the proposals;
- (e) that a progress report on the matter be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels in April 2004; and
- (f) that the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for the Environment and/or the Deputy Leader, be authorised to determine the content of the Members' Seminar on the subject to be held on 2nd March 2004.

162. WASTE STRATEGY

Further to Minute No. 03/106 and by way of a report by the Head of Environment and Transport (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Cabinet were advised of the Council's success in its bid for funding from the Government recycling challenge fund towards the capital cost of –

- ◆ the District-wide roll out of the green waste collection service;
- ◆ providing a third wheeled bin in the garden waste trial area for the collection of dry recyclables; and
- ◆ trialing the use of underground neighbourhood recycling bins.

Having discussed financial and other issues associated with securing a new arrangement for the disposal of dry recyclables with a Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) operated by Northampton Borough Council, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the securing of £1.8 m of grant funding from the Government's Recycling Challenge Fund be noted;
- (b) that the introduction of wheeled bins for dry recyclables in the garden waste trial area be noted and the cost met from the 2003/04 Government grant provision;
- (c) that the revenue implications for the MTP summarised in Section 4 of the report now submitted be noted;

- (d) that the relevant funding for Garden Waste referred to in MTP Scheme ref. 04/522 be released; and
- (e) that the reduced gate fees associated with the disposal of dry recyclables at the Northampton MRF be noted.

163. LGA - CONSULTATION PAPER - BALANCE OF FUNDING

A report by the Corporate Director, Commerce and Technology was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) summarising the contents of the Local Government Association's (LGA) consultation paper – "The Balance of Funding: A Combination Option".

Members were reminded of the key principles postulated in the paper which had been produced to initiate a debate on proposals for a more sustainable, buoyant and accountable system of resourcing local government.

In discussing the basis for a District Council's response to the paper Members' attention was drawn to the conclusions reached by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) on the matter. In that respect, Members concurred with the Panel that the current system of local government finance required amendment and that, while a property-imposed taxation system remained the most preferable form of local taxation, consideration should be given to improving the benefits system to reflect the investment value (ie. income from investments) rather than the capital value of investments particularly for those with fixed incomes. However, Members were of the opinion that there would be no benefit in the relocation of business rates and did not feel inclined to support local income tax because it would be difficult and expensive to administer and collect and would require significant and costly restructuring of the Inland Revenue's existing arrangements.

With regard to a range of other new forms of taxes and charges, the Cabinet felt that these would raise insufficient revenue to justify the administration involved in their collection.

Prior to any review of the funding process, Members also were of the opinion that a review of the duties, functions and powers of local government should be undertaken.

Having emphasised that any new system of local government should be fair, open and understandable and in thanking the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for their comments, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the report be received and the Executive Director of Central Services authorised to respond to the Local Government Association reflecting the sentiments expressed in the foregoing preamble.

164. REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the timetable for the review of the Council's Constitution by the Standards Committee and seeking comments on the present constitutional arrangements.

Having been advised of the views expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and otherwise, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that, in their forthcoming annual review of the Constitution the Standards Committee be invited to consider the following issues and comments:-

- ◆ substitution arrangements – if recommended Substitute Members should be named and nominated prior to the meeting, absences should continue to be recorded and a proportionate approach adopted;
- ◆ public forum at full Council meetings – the Cabinet neither recognises the need for nor supports the proposal for a forum to enable members of the public to ask questions or to speak at Council meetings;
- ◆ amendments: right of reply – the Cabinet would not object in principle to amendments to Council Procurement Rules which would give a right of reply to the mover of an amendment in debate;
- ◆ public speaking at Overview and Scrutiny Panels – the Cabinet's view is that the facility for members of the public to be invited to speak at meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Panels is covered adequately by paragraph 13 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules;
- ◆ introduction of a third Overview and Scrutiny Panel – the Cabinet neither recognises the need for nor supports the proposal for an additional Panel;
- ◆ Policy changes – given the arrangements for publication of the forward plan the Cabinet does not recognise the need to make additional provision in the constitution requiring policy changes to be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels prior to their consideration by the Cabinet; and
- ◆ State of the District Debate – the Cabinet neither recognises the need for nor supports the suggestion in relation to the need for additional publicity for the annual debate on the State of the District.

165. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to terms proposed for the supply of goods or services.

166. DISTRICT COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION MEMBERS ADVISORY GROUP

The Cabinet received a report of the meeting of the District Council Headquarters and Other Office Accommodation Members' Advisory Group together with details of an office accommodation and depot brief for a feasibility study (copies of which are appended in the Annex to the Minute Book).

Having considered issues regarding the appointment of Consultants to undertake an urban design framework for Pathfinder House, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the specification for the option appraisal work as set out in the office accommodation and depot brief be approved and a further report submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet following the tendering process;
- (b) that consideration of an option to relocate to an edge-of-town location be deferred pending the outcomes of the option appraisals for the refurbishment of Pathfinder House/Castle Hill House or redevelopment of either Pathfinder House or the bus station site in Huntingdon Town Centre; and
- (c) that the appointment of CPMG Consultants to prepare an urban design framework for the Pathfinder House site, at a cost of £20,000 be approved.

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