

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held at Cabinet Room on Thursday, 29 January 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

144. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 8th January 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

145. BUDGET AND 2004 - 2009 MEDIUM TERM PLAN

Further to Minute No. 03/123 and by way of a report by the Corporate Director, Commerce and Technology (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with a number of variations to assumptions made previously for the purpose of preparing the draft budget and Medium Term Plan (MTP) for the period 2004 – 2009 and consequently the level of Council Tax for 2004/05.

Reference having been made to an amended Annex F to the report, incorporating prudential indicators in accordance with the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance and to the outcome of consultation with the business community on expenditure proposals, the Cabinet

RECOMMENDED

- (a) that no further variations be made to the Medium Term Plan as appended to the report;
- (b) that, for the financial year commencing 1st April 2004, the existing level of Council Tax for a Band D property be increased from £82.54 to £94.54; and
- (c) that the prudential indicators for 2004/05, as shown in the revised Annex F, but amended to reflect the changes referred to in the report now submitted, be approved.

146. MEDIUM TERM PLAN: REQUESTS FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

Further to Minute No. 03/123 consideration was given to a report by the Head of Financial Services requesting the release of funding for various schemes to be included or identified for inclusion in the Medium Term Plan. Copies of the report and associated justifications are appended in the Minute Book.

In that respect, having requested additional information on a number of schemes, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

(a) that the relevant funding be released for the following schemes and projects within the Council's MTP –

- ◆ Capital Contingency:
- ◆ Sawtry Leisure Centre Fitness Studio;
- ◆ Leisure Centres: Future Maintenance;
- ◆ Ramsey Leisure Centre: multi-activity area;
- ◆ Licensing Act 2003: new temporary posts;
- ◆ Introduction of new payroll/personnel and Operations Division business systems;
- ◆ Introduction of ICT “out of hours” support service;
- ◆ Pathfinder House: access arrangements;
- ◆ St. Ives Bus Station: repairs and improvements;
- ◆ Huntingdon Bus Station: repairs and improvements;
- ◆ Small scale environmental improvements;
- ◆ Upgrade of existing disabled toilet and access at Little Paxton Visitors Centre;
- ◆ Local Transport Plan;
- ◆ Provision of extra bus shelters;
- ◆ Additional caretaker, Pathfinder House/Castle Hill House;
- ◆ Discretionary repair grants; and
- ◆ Disabled facilities grants.

(b) that the release of funding for the following schemes and projects be deferred pending the submission and consideration of further information:-

- ◆ Additional Homelessness Officer;
- ◆ Additional Council Tax Clerk;
- ◆ Upgrade of computer “server room”;
- ◆ Customer First: contact centre and transactional website; and
- ◆ Pathfinder House/Castle Hill House: Cleaning costs.

147. THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

By way of a report by the Chief Officers' Management Team (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with work in progress on a vision and a set of priorities, which had been developed following a review of the Council's Corporate Plan. The review had been undertaken in order to support the Community Strategy, to clarify the Council's ambitions and objectives and to prioritise the Council's medium term objectives in response to feedback from the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Peer Challenge.

In considering the content of the report, Members noted the steps being taken to support the delivery of the Council's priorities by way of a performance management framework which would embrace a balanced scorecard methodology. Having been advised that this would reflect member, public and customer perspectives, internal business processes and learning and growth within the Council and that it was proposed to submit the final plan and framework to Cabinet on the 25th March 2004, Members

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report now submitted be noted and the work undertaken to-date to produce a revised corporate plan and "balanced score card" as part of the Comprehensive Performance Management Framework endorsed.

148. COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: PEER CHALLENGE AND SELF ASSESSMENT

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Policy to which was appended the report of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) Peer Challenge Team, the latest draft of the Council's CPA self assessment documents and a note of the deliberations of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panels on the approach adopted for the self-scoring exercise.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the Council's self-assessment documents, as appended to the report now submitted, be endorsed; and
- (b) that the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to make such minor drafting and other amendments to the documents as he considers appropriate prior to their submission to the Audit Commission.

149. THE FUTURE OF AIR TRANSPORT & LOCAL IMPLICATIONS

The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Operational Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding the content of the Government's white paper – "The Future of Air Transport in the UK".

The report advised that –

- ◆ the development of Alconbury Airfield for passenger or freight services was no longer supported, but that in the Government's view potential remained for the relocation there of aircraft maintenance operations from Cambridge;

and in noting a report on decisions by the First Secretary of State to allow appeals against the District Council's decisions to refuse planning applications for development at Alconbury Airfield had been submitted to the Development Control Panel, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the content of the report now submitted be noted.

**150. LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN: ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2003
- SETTLEMENT NOTE AND NEW LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN
2004 - 2011**

(Councillors I C Bates and R L Clarke declared their respective personal interests as Members of Cambridgeshire County Council in the following item of business)

The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Environment and Transport (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the financial settlement for the Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan (LTP). The Plan outlined proposed developments in transport to 2011 and the key target of outputs expected to be delivered at a local level over that period.

Having been advised that the new LTP for 2004-2011 would be reassessed to take into account future guidance from the Government and the developing Regional Transport Strategy and adopted local plans, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the outcomes of the LTP settlement and the Government's comments on the new plan for 2004 – 2011 be noted.

151. GUIDED BUS FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE

(Councillors I C Bates and R L Clarke declared their respective personal interests as Members of Cambridgeshire County Council in the following item of business)

Further to Minute No. 03/49, consideration was given to a report by the Head of Environment and Transport (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the County Council's proposals for development of the Cambridgeshire Guided Bus Scheme formerly the Cambridge to Huntingdon Rapid Transit Transport Scheme.

It was reported that the proposed scheme envisaged the use of high quality conventional buses operating both on public roads and on sections of dedicated guideways, the longest section of guideway being between St. Ives to Histon.

Members were advised that the County Council would be making an application under the Transport and Works Act 1992 in February 2004 where, if approved would provide deemed planning consent and authority to acquire the necessary land. In that respect, Members expressed concern that the District Council had been given only a short period of time to consider the County Council's final proposals.

With regard to the overall scheme, Members raised potential concern associated with the commercial viability and environmental impact of

the proposals. In that respect, it was reported that the period for formal objections to the TWA submission would remain open until the end of March 2004, and that the opportunity thus would be available to consider the matter further at a future meeting of the Cabinet,

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the County Council's intention to make TWA submission for the guided bus scheme be noted;
- (b) that the Director of Operational Services be authorised to seek to resolve any outstanding matters of concern with Cambridgeshire County Council; and
- (c) that the matter be reviewed further at the meeting of the Cabinet on 25th March 2004 to determine whether any outstanding matters need to be pursued as a formal objection.

152. RESPONSE TO DRAFT PPS12: LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

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 the content of the Council's response to the Government's proposals to introduce a new planning framework for producing local planning documents. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted and the Council's response to the Government's proposals endorsed.

153. EMERGENCY PLAN

Further to Minute No. 02/201 and by means of a report by the Head of Environment and Transport (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a draft Emergency Plan which documented the Council's emergency planning arrangements.

Having been advised of the recommendations of the Flooding Advisory Group in respect of the deployment of sandbags, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the inclusion of the Flooding Advisory Group's recommendations regarding the deployment of sandbags within the Emergency Plan be endorsed;
- (b) that, subject to the inclusion of a requirement for appropriate Executive Councillors to be notified when a rest centre is opened, the draft emergency plan appended to the report now submitted be approved for publication;

- (c) that the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Resources, Welfare and Information Technology, be authorised to update the emergency plan as required.

154. ICT STRATEGY

With the assistance of a report prepared by the ICT Services Manager, IMD (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a IS/ICT strategy which described the underlying principles for the development of the Council's ICT services. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that, subject to the release of Medium Term Plan funding, the ICT strategy as appended to the report now submitted be approved.

155. SMALL SCALE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Environment and Transport (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining progress on small scale environmental improvement schemes and proposing a programme of schemes for 2004/05.

Having noted the explanations for a number of variations in the 2003/04 programme, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report now submitted be noted; and
- (b) that, subject to the release of medium term plan funding, the programme of schemes for 2004/05, as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report now submitted be approved.

156. QUARTERLY SUMMARY OF DEBTS WRITTEN-OFF

The Cabinet received and noted a report by the Head of Revenue Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) summarising debts which had been written off during the period October – December 2003 as irrecoverable.

157. 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 for the acquisition and disposal of land and property.

158. OXMOOR ACTION PLAN - PROPERTY UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 03/44, the Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Legal and Estates (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) regarding terms proposed for the sale, acquisition and disposal of areas of land at Oxmoor, Huntingdon.

Having been reminded of the objectives of planning guidance for that area, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Executive Director of Central Services, after consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Executive Councillors for Resources, Welfare and IT and for Finance, be authorised to approve detailed terms for;
 - ◆ the sale of land required for the Acorn Community Health Centre;
 - ◆ the acquisition of land from the BRJ Club and its disposal to the Commissioners of the Acorn Community Health Centre; and
 - ◆ the overall funding of the redevelopment of Sapley Square as outlined in paragraphs 4.1 – 4.4 of the report now submitted;
- (b) that the terms for the acquisition of properties in Sapley Square from Huntingdonshire Housing Partnership be approved;
- (c) that the terms for the disposal of land at Buttsgrove Way outlined in paragraph 5.1 of the report now submitted be approved; and
- (d) that the Director of Operational Services be authorised to appoint a Project Manager for Oxmoor for a temporary period of 2 years.

Chairman