

---

## Cabinet

Report of the meetings held on 12th February,  
4th and 25th March 2004

---

---

### Matters for Decision

---

**129. 2004/05 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the contents of the draft 2004/05 Treasury Management Strategy, which reports on the Council's range of investments. (A copy of the Strategy is attached as an Appendix.) Having been satisfied with its content, the Cabinet

**RECOMMEND**

**that the 2004/05 Treasury Management Strategy be approved.**

---

### Matters for Information

---

**130. OXMOOR ACTION PLAN – INTERIM PLANNING GUIDANCE**

Further to Item No. 128 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 18th February 2004, the Cabinet has noted 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 on California Road, Moorhouse Drive, Butts Grove Way and Sapley Square.

**131. OXMOOR ACTION PLAN – CALIFORNIA ROAD, HUNTINGDON: GARAGE SITE**

The Cabinet has been advised that the Government has awarded the District Council funding from the Growth Area Delivery Grant to assist with the delivery of additional affordable housing on Oxmoor. Given that the money had to be allocated before the end of the financial year, the Cabinet has authorised the Director of Central Services, after consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Executive Councillor for Resources, Welfare and IT, to approve the terms and conditions of the sale of land in the Council's ownership at California Road, Huntingdon to Huntingdonshire Housing Partnership for the purpose of constructing 7 new houses.

In accordance with Rule 17.3 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules, the Council's attention is also drawn to the fact that this item was not included in the Forward Plan and did not appear on the relevant meeting agenda. It was therefore dealt with by the Cabinet as a matter of special urgency in accordance with Rule 16 under which the consent of the Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels was obtained prior to the item being considered.

### **132. WASTE PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVE**

Further to Item No. 92 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 10th December 2003, the Cabinet has been updated on progress of a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) bid by Peterborough City Council and the Cambridgeshire principal authorities to fund investment in a new waste disposal and, potentially collection, infrastructure to divert more waste from landfill sites.

In order to benefit from external funding a decision on the Council's involvement in any future joint procurement will need to be made once the outcome of the PFI bid is known. In the meantime, the Cabinet has approved the powers proposed for a Members Board to replace the CCA Waste Forum and overall governance proposals for the period prior to a final decision on procurement being made. Members have also agreed to release the existing provision for waste procurement in the MTP of £50,000 and £20,000 in 2004/05 and 2005/06 respectively, to secure external legal, financial and technical input and to finance a core project team to manage the procurement process.

A Members' seminar on the subject has already taken place and further reports will be submitted to future meetings of the Cabinet when the service delivery implications of the proposals are known.

### **133. WASTE STRATEGY**

Further to Item No. 91 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 10th December 2003, the Cabinet has been advised that the Council has secured £1.8m from the Government's Recycling Challenge Fund towards the total 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. The Council aims to introduce the significant service improvements in 2004/05, which requires the purchase of a number of vehicles and wheeled bins the relevant funding for which has been released from the MTP.

At the same time, reference was made to the closing of the Peterborough materials recycling facility (MRF) which has resulted in Officers seeking a new arrangement for the disposal of dry recyclables with a MRF operated by Northampton Borough Council. Whilst negotiating the new contract the Council has benefited from a considerable reduction in the gate fee.

#### **134. REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION**

As part of the annual review of the Council's Constitution, the Cabinet has been consulted on present constitutional arrangements. Having been acquainted with the views expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels, the Cabinet has conveyed the following comments to the Standards Committee prior to final determination by the Council -

- ◆ substitution arrangements – if recommended by the Committee, substitute Members should be named prior to the meeting,
- ◆ 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 to motions: right of reply for mover – the Cabinet would not object in principle to amendments to Council Procedure 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.

#### **135. LGA – CONSULTATION PAPER – BALANCE OF FUNDING**

The content of the Local Government Association's Consultation Paper – The Balance of Funding has been considered by the Cabinet. In discussing the basis for the District Council's response to the paper, Members' attention has been 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 remains the most preferable form of local taxation, consideration should be given to improving the benefits system to reflect an individual's investment income rather than the capital value of investments particularly for those on fixed incomes. However, Members were of the opinion that there would be no benefit in returning business rates to local authority control and did not feel

inclined to support local income tax on the basis that this would be difficult and expensive to administer and collect and would require a significant and costly re-structuring of the Inland Revenue's existing arrangements.

With regard to the range of other new forms of taxes and charges, the Cabinet agreed with the Panel 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 and that any new system should be fair, open and understandable. The Executive Director of Central Services has been requested to reflect these comments in the Council's response to the Local Government Association.

**136. DISTRICT COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION MEMBERS' ADVISORY GROUP**

Having considered the recommendations of the District Council Headquarters and Other Accommodation Members' Advisory Group, the Cabinet has approved the specification for the option appraisal work for the refurbishment/replacement of the Council's principal office accommodation and the relocation of its depot and have requested a further report following the tendering process. In so doing, Members have agreed that the option of relocating to an edge of town location should be deferred pending the findings of the appraisal and they have approved the appointment of CPMG Consultants to enable an urban design framework to be undertaken of the Pathfinder House site.

**137. MEDIUM TERM PLAN: REQUESTS FOR RELEASE OF FUNDING**

Further to Item No. 117 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 18th February 2004, the Cabinet has considered requests for the release of funding for various schemes included or identified for inclusion in the Medium Term Plan. In discussing the individual justifications, Members have requested that reports be submitted to future meetings of the Cabinet on -

- ◆ existing arrangements for the repayment of loans for repair/refurbishment of housing secured as a charge on the scale of a property; and
- ◆ progress towards the development of a combined contract for the future maintenance needs of the District Council's Leisure Centres.

Having requested also a presentation on the proposed staffing/establishment arrangements for the Contact Centre, the Cabinet has approved the release of the relevant funding for the following schemes/projects -

- ◆ Car Parks: Environmental Improvements Phase 5;
- ◆ AJC Small Scale Schemes: District Wide;

- ◆ Local Transport Plan 2004/05;
- ◆ Safe Cycle Routes: Creation of new routes to school;
- ◆ St Neots Transport Strategy;
- ◆ Huntingdon Transport Strategy;
- ◆ Views Common: Cycle Route;
- ◆ Huntingdon Town Centre Environmental Improvements Phase 2;
- ◆ Oxmoor Environmental Schemes;
- ◆ Huntingdon town centre development;
- ◆ Market town centre developments;
- ◆ Heart of Oxmoor;
- ◆ Safe cycle storage racks;
- ◆ Rural bus stop provision;
- ◆ Railway stations: Improvements;
- ◆ Accessibility improvements/signage;
- ◆ Leisure Centres: future maintenance;
- ◆ Sawtry Leisure Centre: Extension to facilities;
- ◆ Ramsey Leisure Centre: fitness studio expansion;
- ◆ Ramsey Leisure Centre: crèche/storage/office extension;
- ◆ Additional Council Tax Clerk;
- ◆ Discretionary repair grants;
- ◆ Disabled facilities grants;
- ◆ Fenstanton Car Park: Church Lane;
- ◆ Customer First: contact centre;
- ◆ Crime and Disorder – lighting improvements (subject to the Executive Councillors for the Environment and for Resources and Welfare and Information Technology being advised of the sites identified);
- ◆ Bus Shelters – Extra Provision (subject to the Executive Councillors for the Environment and for Resources and Welfare and Information Technology being advised of the sites identified);
- ◆ Additional Homelessness Officer (subject to the appointment being established on a temporary 2 year basis);
- ◆ St Neots Skate Park;
- ◆ External and internal communications and student placement; and
- ◆ Economic Development Feasibility Study.

**138. DISTRICT AUDITOR'S ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2002/03**

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the content of the District Auditor's Annual Audit Letter for 2002/03. Members concluded that there were no particular issues emerging from the document that required their attention.

**139. HOUSING MIX – SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**

Following on from Item No. 12 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 23rd July 2003 and having been acquainted with the responses received from the consultation exercise on the draft Market Housing Mix document, the Cabinet has agreed to adopt the

document as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

**140. ADOPTION OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, PLAY AREAS, BALANCING AREAS, LANDSCAPED AREAS AND WOODLAND**

Further to Item No. 114 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 19th February 2003, the Cabinet has reviewed the level of multiplier used to generate commuted sums in respect of the maintenance of open space and associated areas provided through new build development and destined for adoption by the Council or the appropriate Town or Parish Council. Having been informed of the practices adopted by other local authorities and in view of the fact that most developers in the District find the existing 15 year multiplier acceptable and that there would be no financial benefit in increasing it, the Cabinet has agreed not to change the Council's current policy.

**141. WATER COURSES – STANDARD OF PROTECTION STUDIES GENERAL AND HILTON**

The Cabinet has discussed progress achieved to date on the Environment Agency's Standard of Protection Studies and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Particular reference was made to the standard protection report for Hilton. Although 8 houses had been flooded during the storms of 2001, the report concluded that only a small number of properties were at risk of flooding in the future. Given that the benefits of any improvements to the village would be low and were unlikely to receive DEFRA grant aid, the Cabinet has agreed not to undertake further investigation work into raising the level of flood protection in the area.

**142. EMERGENCY PLAN**

Further to Item No. 124 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 18th February 2004, the Cabinet has approved the content of a protocol for notifying and supporting District Councillors during an emergency and have requested the Director of Operational Services to consult with Parish Councils on their role in an emergency and report back thereon to a future meeting. Both issues have been discussed in response to the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Planning and Finance) (Service Delivery and Resources) described in Item Nos 61 and 42 respectively of their reports.

**143. TREASURY MANAGEMENT INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE**

The Cabinet has noted the performance of the District Council's Fund Managers for the period April to December 2003.

**144. GROWING SUCCESS: A CORPORATE PLAN**

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and by way of a report by the Chief Officer Management Team the Cabinet has considered the contents of the replacement Corporate Plan –

“Growing Success”. The plan has been developed to support the Council's Community Strategy, provide the content within which the comprehensive management framework will operate and assist in prioritisation. Having noted the views expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and the processes to be used to develop the setting of targets to promote improvement from the current baseline, the Cabinet has endorsed the content of the document and recommend its approval to Council.

A separate report on the subject appears elsewhere on the Agenda for the Council to consider.

**145. POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS**

The Cabinet has considered the contents of a proposed Governance Protocol with Cambridgeshire Constabulary (Central Division) established as part of the deployment of 18 new Police Community Support Officers in Huntingdonshire.

Members have been acquainted with issues raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) on the draft Protocol and Memorandum of Understanding with the Police on the funding of the scheme in relation to -

- ◆ the role and allocation of Officers to the rural settlements throughout the District;
- ◆ the inclusion of traffic management enforcement and road safety education as one of the five objectives of the PCSOs in the Governance Protocol;
- ◆ communications links;
- ◆ the implications for the Council's Medium Term Plan; and
- ◆ the level of financial support provided by the Council compared with other authorities in the County.

The Cabinet has therefore deferred consideration of the Protocol pending further discussion with a joint steering group which includes District Council and Police representatives on the issues identified by the Panel.

**146. A14 THRAPSTON – BRAMPTON JUNCTIONS:  
HIGHWAYS AGENCY CONSULTATION**

Further to Item 84 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 10th December 2003, the Cabinet has discussed revised proposals published by the Highways Agency to improve the junctions between Thrapston and Brampton on the A14.

Members were reminded that the Agency had previously withdrawn a scheme to improve junctions by the use of grade separation interchanges/flyovers. In discussing the new proposals, the Cabinet were addressed by Councillor J C Mugglestone and concurred with his opinion that only options which provide a similar level of benefit as grade separated junctions should be progressed, particularly at the

junction with Tollbar Lane/Bythorn and Keyston and that some form of improvement needs to be completed as soon as possible. Furthermore, Members felt that they could not support a 50 mph speed limit on both east bound and west bound lanes of the A14 between Coales Lodge and Little Meadow on the basis that this was likely to be ineffective in terms of highway safety. The views expressed will be reflected in the District Council's response.

**147. CAMBRIDGESHIRE GUIDED BUS**

Further to Item No. 122 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 18th February 2004, the Cabinet has agreed not to object to the Transport and Works Act (TWA) Order application by the County Council relating to the Cambridgeshire Guided Bus. The Order will provide the County Council with deemed planning consent and authority to acquire the necessary land to construct the guided sections of the route, principally between St Ives and Histon. The Director of Central Services has been authorised, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Resources, Welfare and IT, to initiate negotiations with the County Council in respect of the transfer of land in the District Council's ownership required for the scheme.

In discussing the implications of the scheme for Huntingdonshire, the Cabinet received representations from Councillors J C Mugglestone, K Reynolds and J M Sadler highlighting their constituents' concerns in relation to the cost of the scheme, its environmental impact and the overall benefits for both commuters and the District in general. In acknowledging the concerns of local Members, the Cabinet has expressed its reservations over the commercial viability and other aspects of the proposals. However the Cabinet has concluded that there is insufficient basis for a sustainable objection to the TWA application and has authorised Officers to continue to negotiate with the County Council on the detailed proposals involved in the design of the scheme.

**148. EASTON TO ELLINGTON PERMISSIVE CYCLE ROUTE**

The Cabinet has authorised the Director of Operational Services to take such actions as are necessary to establish a permissive cycle way linking the settlements of Easton and Ellington.

**149. BUILDINGS AT RISK REGISTER 2004**

The Cabinet has noted the contents of the 2004 Huntingdonshire Buildings at Risk Register which contains details of 318 structures categorised according to their condition and risk of collapse or structural failure. These include buildings that are redundant and underused and also those which are incapable of beneficial use such as boundary walls, statues and tombstones. At the same time, Members have endorsed a future strategy for dealing with buildings at risk in Huntingdonshire over the period 2003 to 2005.



**150. ACCOMMODATION FOR THE ICT SERVER ROOM**

Having been advised of the difficulties experienced in the ICT server room at Pathfinder House in accommodating the Council's expanding ICT infrastructure and the need to maintain the necessary physical environment for the servers, the Cabinet has agreed that the room be extended and to increase the capital funding for the scheme contained in the existing Medium Term Plan by an additional £45,000.

D P Holley  
Leader and Chairman of the Cabinet