

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held at Pathfinder House, St. Mary's Street, Huntingdon on 17th April 2003.

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.

02/206 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 3rd April 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

02/207 SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP

The Minutes of the meeting of the Safety Advisory Group held on 5th March 2003 were received and noted.

02/208 CONSULTATION METHODS FOR NEW LOCAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Further to Minute No. 02/180 and by means of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered proposed arrangements for consulting the public during the early stages of producing a new local planning framework for the District.

In so doing, Members expressed the view that the significance of the new framework was such that particular attention should be paid to conveying the appropriate messages via "District Wide". Having been acquainted also with the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) on the matter and given the role of the Development Plan Policy Group in local planning matters, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that, subject to the design of "District Wide" being varied in the interests of seeking to maximise public response, the proposals for public involvement in the new local planning framework, as set out in the report now submitted, be noted; and
- (b) that, in the interests of ensuring a more direct involvement in the consultation process on the part of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) consideration be given at an appropriate future meeting to the inclusion of the Chairman of the Overview/Scrutiny Panel in the membership of the Development Plan Policy Group.

02/209 HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

The Cabinet considered a joint report by the Heads of Housing and of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the conclusions of the district-wide housing needs survey carried out by Fordham Research Services during 2002.

In noting the outcomes of the survey, Members expressed concern with regard to the potential implications in terms of influencing the range of future housing provision in the District, the mix of property sizes, the definition of the term “key worker” and its application to the private and public sector employment markets and the current uncertainty with regard to the future availability of social housing grant to support the provision of affordable housing in the District. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the report by Fordham Research Services be noted and that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet to address the issues of concern now referred to.

02/210 DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE: MARKET HOUSING MIX

The Cabinet received a report by the Head of Planning Services to which was attached a copy of the draft supplementary planning guidance (SPG) – “Market Housing Mix”. Copies of the report and SPG are appended in the Minute Book.

Having been reminded of the objective of the SPG and the criteria it would establish against which the District Council would be able to require an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes and types for market properties, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance – “Market Housing Mix” be approved for public consultation.

02/211 REVIEW OF THE HOUSING REGISTER AND NOMINATIONS POLICY

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Housing Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking approval for the adoption of a revised Housing Register and Nominations Policy.

Having been advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) and the major housing stakeholders within the District had been consulted on the changes, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Housing Register Nominations Policy, as appended to the report now submitted, be approved;
- (b) that, following satisfactory completion of the consultation process and necessary changes to the Saffron computer software system and associated procedures and processes, the revised Policy be formally introduced; and
- (c) that the effect of the policy change be monitored and a report submitted to Cabinet 12 months after its implementation, or sooner if necessary, so that the success or otherwise of the amendments may be reviewed and any recommendations for change determined.

02/212 BEST VALUE REVIEW – TRANSPORTATION & HIGHWAYS

The Cabinet received a report by the Head of Environment and Transport (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) together with a copy of the Best Value Review of the Council's Transportation and Highways Services, the results of which had been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) at their meeting on 8th April 2003.

In discussing the Service Improvement Plan, particular reference was made to the cost implications of further studies including the provision of cycle routes and support for travel on public transport. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the outcomes of the Best Value Review of Transportation and Highways be noted and the Service Improvement Plan endorsed; and
- (b) that the continued funding of the temporary post in the Transportation Team be met from existing budgets during the remainder of the current financial year and any future additional spending bids considered in conjunction with the Medium Term Plan

02/213 STAFFING AT LEISURE CENTRES

By reference to the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) held on 26th March 2003 (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was acquainted with the outcome of the Panel's deliberations in relation decisions on the restructuring of staff at the Leisure Centres. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the comments of the Panel be noted and the issues raised considered as part of the progress report to Cabinet six months after the implementation of the restructuring.

02/214 GODMANCHESTER (EARNING STREET) CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER STATEMENT

With the aid of a report by the Planning Policy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the content of a draft character statement for the Godmanchester (Earning Street) Conservation Area.

RESOLVED

that the draft character statement for the Godmanchester (Earning Street) Conservation Area be approved for public consultation.

02/215 KEYSTON CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER STATEMENT

Further to Minute No. 02/147 and by way of a report by the Planning Policy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) Members were acquainted with the outcomes of the conservation exercise undertaken on the draft Conservation Area Statement for Keyston.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that Conservation Area Character Statement for Keyston be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

02/216 BUDGETARY CONTROL: REVENUE

The Cabinet received and noted a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of spending variations estimated in 2002/03.

02/217 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 as irrecoverable in the period January – March 2003.

02/218 PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining proposals for additional expenditure on the delivery of local development control services in the light of the award by the Government of a planning delivery grant to the District Council for 2003/04.

RESOLVED

that a sum of £95,000 from the planning delivery grant for the current year be transferred to the Planning Services Budget to enable the proposals outlined in paragraph 3.2 of the report now submitted to proceed.

02/219 REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES (PREPARATIONS) BILL: ELECTED REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES: SOUNDINGS

(The Chairman announced that he proposed to allow the following item as a matter of urgency in accordance with Section 100 B (4) (B) of the Local Government Act 1972, in view of the Government's change in the framework and content of the consultation exercise to ascertain levels of interest in holding referendums about elected regional assemblies and the timetable for responding)

Further to Minute No 02/153 and by way of a report by the Executive Director of Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was advised that the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill had been amended during its passage through Parliament to the effect that where a referendum was commissioned by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), the Boundary Committee should be requested to present at least two options for unitary local government in each County area.

Having discussed the implications for the District, Members were of the opinion that the changes would strengthen the Council's previous response to the ODPM. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that full Council be invited to reaffirm the decisions taken at its meeting on 19th February 2003 in the matter.

02/220 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to terms proposed in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property for the supply of goods or services.

02/221 HUNTINGDON RIVERSIDE PROJECT

By way of a joint report by the Chief Officer's Management Team (a copy of which is appended in the annex to the Minute Book) Members were acquainted with the findings of a feasibility study undertaken by Humbert's Leisure regarding the potential development of the Purvis Marina site and improvements to the Riverside Park in Huntingdon.

Having considered a possible option for the areas in question and in noting the outcome of initial discussions with the current leaseholder and the Environment Agency, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the principle of diversifying leisure activity in the Huntingdon Riverside Area be supported;
- (b) that such further necessary study and consultation be undertaken consistent with the Council's desire to implement the principles referred to in the preceding resolution in early course;
- (c) that supplementary planning guidance be prepared for the whole of the Riverside area to incorporate a Master plan and brief to guide the extent and design of any new development; and
- (d) that negotiations take place with relevant stakeholders and partners, concerning possible additional sources of funding.

Chairman