
Cabinet

Report of the meetings held on 24th February and
17th March 2005

Matters for Decision

126. YOUNG PERSONS HOUSING STRATEGY 2005 TO 2007

The Cabinet has considered the content of the first draft Young Persons Housing Strategy produced on behalf of the Council for 2005 to 2007. A copy of the draft Strategy has been previously circulated to all Members.

Having been informed that the strategy will complement the Council's overarching Housing Strategy and noted that it had been submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) for comment, the Cabinet

RECOMMEND

that the Young Persons Housing Strategy 2005 to 2007 be approved.

127. COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY

The Cabinet has considered the draft Community Safety Strategy for the period 2005 to 2008 which has been developed by the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership. A copy of the Strategy is enclosed for Members only.

Having been reminded that the Community Safety Partnership is required to produce a strategy for reducing crime and disorder in their local area every three years, the Cabinet has endorsed the six key priorities proposed for inclusion in the new strategy and

RECOMMEND

that the Community Safety Strategy for 2005/08 be approved.

128. EQUALITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY AND RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

The Cabinet has considered the content of a revised and enhanced Equality and Inclusion Strategy, together with an updated Race Equality Scheme for the Council – copies of which are reproduced

hereto as Appendix A. Having regard to the forthcoming review of the Council's Corporate and Best Value Performance Plan and the need to ensure relevant co-ordination of the two documents, the Cabinet has authorised the Director of Central Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor with responsibility for equality issues to approve amendments of textual detail to the strategy in the light of the forthcoming review of the Plans identified. The Cabinet therefore

RECOMMEND

that, subject to textual amendment by the Director of Central Services, the revised Equality and Inclusion Strategy and updated Race Equality Scheme be approved.

**129. EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN –
CONSULTATION ON DRAFT REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY
FOR THE EAST OF ENGLAND**

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the significant elements of the East of England Plan issued for consultation in December 2004 and the content of suggested representations to be made to the Regional Assembly. A copy of the report is attached as Appendix B and the Cabinet

RECOMMEND

that the response on behalf of the Council based on the points raised in Chapter 4 of the Report as appended, be authorised for submission to the Regional Assembly and that specific mention be made to the absence of a reference in the document to the Fens, Broads and other wetland areas in the Eastern Region and also to the need for further investigations in relation to any potential future development of Alconbury Airfield.

Matters for Information

**130. CONEYGEAR PARK AND IMPROVEMENTS TO OPEN SPACE:
OXMOOR, HUNTINGDON**

Further to Item No 4 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 21st July 2004, the Cabinet has been acquainted with progress in implementing improvements to the green spaces in Oxmoor, Huntingdon and the creation and development of Coneygear Park. The Cabinet has noted the steps taken to engage with local residents in the development of neighbourhood gardens and doorstep greens, to improve local open spaces which are essential elements of the Oxmoor Action Plan. Construction work on Coneygear Park is scheduled to commence in June 2005 with phase 1 being completed in September 2005.

131. TRAVEL PLAN 2005 - 2010

The Cabinet has approved for consultation a proposed travel plan for the District Council for the period 2005-2010. The draft plan takes into account changes to the external environment and travelling behaviour since the first Travel Plan was adopted in 1999. The Cabinet has been acquainted with statistical information on employee travel data, which had previously been submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Planning and Finance and requested that the outcome of the consultation and Action Plan be reported to a future meeting.

132. SUPPORTING PEOPLE STRATEGY 2005-2010

The Cabinet has approved the Supporting People Strategy for the period 2005 – 2010 subject to there being a facility available to consider tailoring implementation of the Strategy to match available resources. In considering the strategy, concern has been raised by the Cabinet with regard to the estimated shortfall in Government funding to address the perceived needs in delivering housing-related support services in Cambridgeshire in the period 2005-2010.

The Cabinet has noted the supporting people resource allocation for Cambridgeshire for 2005/06 and the projected reduction in available budget allocations and has requested that the apprehension of the Cabinet in relation to the shortfall in Government funding for housing be conveyed to the Local Government Association and Members of Parliament for the Huntingdon and North West Cambridgeshire Constituencies.

133. FUNDING OF MANDATORY DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

The Cabinet has noted the overall take-up of Disabled Facility Grants (DFGs) in the first three quarters of 2004/05 and the Government's contribution towards the funding of grants in 2005/06. In total 184 DFGs have been processed to date in 2004/05 at a cost of £993,000 and it is projected that this will rise to 254 DFGs by the end of the year at an estimated cost of £1,336,000. The Cabinet has been reminded that the supplementary estimate approved by Cabinet at their meeting held on 2nd September 2004 would be sufficient to meet the cost of DFGs in the remainder of the current financial year but has expressed concern at the continuing reduction in Government funding of the grants.

134. ATTITUDES AND CULTURE IN HEALTH AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT

The Cabinet has endorsed a proposed statement of intent for the "Local Authorities and Health and Safety Executive Working Together" strategic programme. The strategic programme has been commissioned as part of a range of initiatives established to deliver a nationwide strategy for work place health and safety to 2010 and beyond by way of Councils and the HSE being committed to working together.

135. TREASURY MANAGEMENT: INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE

The Cabinet has noted the performance of the District Council's Fund Managers for the period 1st April – 31st December 2004.

136. ACQUISITION OF LAND AT HOUGHTON ROAD, ST IVES

In considering the arrangements for the proposed acquisition of land at Houghton Road, St Ives from Cambridgeshire County Council, the Cabinet has not approved a proposed exception from the District Council's Code of Procurement and agreed that three Registered Social Landlords (RSL) be invited to submit their proposals for the development of the land. The Cabinet has noted that the land has been allocated in the Local Plan Alteration for residential purposes.

Having been acquainted with the possibility that the County Council might either offer the land to the District Council for immediate sale on to a Registered Social Landlord or direct to an RSL nominated by the District Council, the Cabinet has agreed that if the land is offered to the District Council it will be subject to satisfactory resolution of the issue of payable stamp duty. The Cabinet has also approved a supplementary capital estimate equivalent to the purchase price of the land and any related costs.

137. HOUSING REGISTER AND NOMINATIONS POLICY

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the outcomes of a review of the Council's Housing Register and Nominations Policy.

Having noted that the results of the review have been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery & Resources), the Cabinet has endorsed a series of amendments to the policy concerning points awarded to applicants without access to a living room and to overcrowding assessments.

138. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Cabinet has considered the draft Local Development Scheme for Huntingdonshire. The scheme sets out a range of statutory planning documents which the Council is required to produce under the new planning system and the timescales for their production.

Having regard to comments received from Go-East and a reassurance from the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy that the timescales were still considered realistic, the Cabinet has endorsed the draft Local Development Scheme for submission to the Secretary of State and authorised the Head of Planning Services, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy to make changes to the draft scheme to reflect, inter alia, the availability of an adequate supply of land for housing and the present position in relation to the Council's proposed arrangements with other local planning authorities in Cambridgeshire with regard to infrastructure contributions.

139. ST. IVES WEST URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK AND MASTERPLAN

Having considered responses received to consultation on the proposed St. Ives West Urban Design Framework and having been acquainted with the resultant amendments which had been made to the document, the Cabinet has approved the adoption of the Urban Design Framework (as amended) as Interim Planning Guidance. In so doing, the Head of Planning Services has been authorised after consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Strategy to make any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations as necessary.

140. ANGLIAN HOUSE, HUNTINGDON URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK AND MASTERPLAN

The Cabinet has considered responses received to consultation on the Anglian House, Huntingdon Urban Design Framework. Having been acquainted with the resultant amendments which had been made to the document, the Cabinet has approved the adoption of the Urban Design Framework (as amended) as Interim Planning Guidance. In so doing, the Head of Planning Services has been authorised after consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Strategy to make any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations as necessary.

141. THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH BIOLOGICAL RECORDS CENTRE

The Cabinet has endorsed the establishment of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biological Records Centre in the County and approved a total contribution of £14,480 from the planning delivery grant towards the formation of the Centre over the period from 2004/07. In so doing, the Director of Operational Services has been authorised to sign a memorandum of understanding setting out the management arrangements for the Centre, subject to a proviso that the operation of the Centre can be reviewed at the end of 2005/06 to enable consideration to be given to the Council's future involvement or otherwise in the Centre after 31st March 2007.

The Cabinet has also authorised the Director of Operational Services after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy to approve the appointment of a District Council representative to serve on the Centre's Board of Governors.

142. PFI UPDATE AND RECYCLING BUDGET

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the most recent developments in the County Council's application for Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) credits to support future waste disposal arrangements in Cambridgeshire and a proposed programme for the submission of reports to future meetings in accordance with the ongoing

negotiations to develop partner agreements with waste collection authorities.

Having been updated on variations to the District Council's recycling budget, the Cabinet has approved the proposed use of Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant in the sum of £52,000 to support the District Council's partnering negotiations together with the transfer of capital funding of £50,000 from Medium Term Plan scheme reference 279/B to scheme reference 602 to contribute towards the cost of optional wheeled bins. Clarification of a previously approved variation to the MTP in respect of a £120,000 shortfall arising from changes to gate fees and recycling credits has also been noted.

The Cabinet has agreed that consideration of the possible capping of payments to Parish Councils and voluntary organisations providing sites for mini-recycling centres be deferred for one year.

143. CAR PARKING CHARGES

Further to Item No. 77 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 8th December 2004, the Cabinet has considered objections received following the publication of proposals to vary car parking charges in the District. In view of the scale and content of the objections to the Orders, the Cabinet has agreed that a local inquiry need not be convened and that subject to the inclusion of additional provision relating to the use of residents permits in certain car parks, the Orders as advertised be confirmed.

144. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES ADVISORY GROUP

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the further deliberations of the Public Conveniences Advisory Group, arising from which, and subject to consultation with St Neots Town Council, the Cabinet has approved in principle the disposal of the site of the public conveniences located at South Street, St. Neots. A number of other recommendations relating to the Council's future commitment to the provision of public conveniences in town centres, service standards and maintenance/cleaning were also endorsed.

145. MEDIUM TERM PLAN – REQUESTS FOR RELEASE OF FUNDING

The Cabinet has approved the release of the relevant funding from the following schemes and projects within the Council's MTP –

- ◆ Scheme reference 00/014, Car Parks – Environmental Improvements Phase 5;
- ◆ Scheme reference 231/386/431, AJC Small Scale Schemes – District Wide;
- ◆ Scheme reference 01/095/A and 389, Local Transport Plan – 2005/06;
- ◆ Scheme reference 152/390/472, Safe Cycle Routes – creation of new routes;
- ◆ Scheme reference 361, Huntingdon Transport Strategy;

- ◆ Scheme reference 49, Huntingdon Town Centre Environmental Improvements Phase 2;
- ◆ Scheme reference 104, Oxmoor Environmental Schemes;
- ◆ Scheme reference 77 and 401, Huntingdon Town Centre Development;
- ◆ Scheme reference 224, Town Centre Developments;
- ◆ Scheme reference 241/B, Heart of Oxmoor;
- ◆ Scheme reference 36, 387 and 469, Crime and Disorder – Lighting Improvements;
- ◆ Scheme reference 400; Bus Shelters – Extra Provision;
- ◆ Scheme reference 132, Railway Stations – Improvements – Partnership with Rail;
- ◆ Scheme reference 3/323/385/472, Accessibility Improvements/Signage;
- ◆ Scheme reference 607, Huntingdon Bus Station;
- ◆ Scheme reference 50, Ramsey Great Whyte – Environmental Improvements – Phase 2;
- ◆ Scheme reference 51, Ramsey Little Whyte – Environmental Improvements;
- ◆ Scheme reference 04/495/A, Corporate EDM System;
- ◆ Scheme reference 602, Optional Wheeled Bin for Dry Recyclables; and
- ◆ Scheme reference 279, Joint Waste Procurement.

**146. CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS –
COUNCIL TAX AND NON-DOMESTIC RATES**

Having reviewed the financial implications associated with the proposal, the Cabinet has approved the use of credit card payments for Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates, subject to the addition of a handling fee equivalent to that charged by the banking and internet service providers for card payments.

147. LEISURE CENTRES – LINE UPGRADES FOR IT NETWORK

Having considered proposals to upgrade connections to leisure centres in the District and the Ramsey Community Information Centre, the Cabinet has approved the necessary variations and budget transfers to enable the upgrading work to the IT network to proceed.

148. REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION

As part of the annual review of the Council's Constitution, the Cabinet has recommended that the Corporate Governance Panel be invited to consider the possibility of including a requirement for Members serving on the Development Control and Licensing and Protection Panels to undertake training in their respective subject areas.

149. HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION

The Cabinet has considered the deliberations of the District Council Headquarters and other Office Accommodation Members' Advisory

Group held on 18th February 2005 and their recommendations in relation to the steps to be taken to procure suitable headquarters and depot premises for use by the Council.

Having also been acquainted with the outcomes of discussions by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels on the matter, the Cabinet has endorsed further detailed investigations into the issues and options referred to in the report of the Members' Advisory Group. The Cabinet has also authorised the release of £74,000 in respect of the cost of the investigations and agreed that no further consideration be given to the option with regard to the refurbishment of Pathfinder House and Castle Hill House.

Having regard to the observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels, the Cabinet has authorised further work to be undertaken to identify the availability of edge-of-town centre sites in Huntingdon and to test competitively the cost of these and other options. A report on the options required to test the development competitively will be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

The Cabinet has agreed that the Council should be invited to note progress to date at its meeting on 13th April 2005 and that a further report will be submitted to Council in September 2005 on the selection of the final preferred scheme and its implications for the Medium Term Plan. The Cabinet has also authorised investigations to be undertaken as to the potential availability of external funding for buildings that achieve a high Environment Assessment Rating for the Building Research Establishment.

**150. HUNTINGDON HIGH STREET:
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS:
PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE**

The Cabinet has approved the use of a non-traditional procurement method for the Huntingdon High Street environmental improvements scheme. In so doing, the Cabinet has agreed that the County Council's term maintenance contract and its contractor, May Guerne Ltd, be used for this scheme.

D P Holley
Chairman