
Cabinet

Report of the meetings held on 7th and 28th April,
19th May and 9th June 2005

Matters for Decision

1. **PROPOSED UPGRADE OF ELLINGTON/FEN DITTON – HIGHWAYS AGENCY CONSULTATION**

Further to the meeting of the Council held on the 13th April 2005, the Cabinet has discussed proposals published by the Highways Agency to improve the A14 between Ellington and Fen Ditton (a copy of the report of the Director of Operational Services is appended).

Having authorised the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning, to agree a statement of principles with other Cambridgeshire local authorities as a joint submission to the Highways Agency based on the principles set out in the attached report, the Cabinet

RECOMMEND

that the comments listed in the report of the Director of Operational Services form the basis of the Council's formal response to the Highways Agency consultation on the upgrade of the A14.

Since the meeting of the Cabinet the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) have met to discuss the proposals and their recommendations are referred to in Item No 1 of the Report of their meeting held on 14th June 2005.

Matters for Information

2. **LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT**

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the background to and terms of a second Local Public Service Agreement in Cambridgeshire. Having noted details of the District Council's involvement and discussed the allocation of the funding involved, the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader, has been authorised to enter into a partnership agreement.

3. ANNUAL EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

The Cabinet has been informed of a new requirement for the Council to produce an Annual Efficiency Statement. Having noted the scope for savings to be made and the timetable for its submission, the Director of Commerce and Technology, after consultation with the Leader and the Chief Executive, has been authorised to submit the Annual Efficiency Statement to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

**4. PLANNING FOR MIXED COMMUNITIES –
CONSULTATION PAPER ON A PROPOSED CHANGE TO PPG3:
HOUSING**

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the contents of a consultation paper issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister entitled “Planning for Mixed Communities”. In approving a suggested response, the Cabinet has decided that reference should be made to the Council’s concern that without the necessary Local Development Framework, it would be impossible to achieve the suggested sanction of refusing planning permission should a development proposal not adequately meet the objective of ensuring a mixed community.

5. CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE’S INTERIM PLAN

The Cabinet has endorsed the content of the Children and Young People’s Interim Plan which has been produced by the Cambridgeshire Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership for 2005-06. The purpose of the Plan is to help organisations demonstrate their contribution to the overall vision for children and young people in Cambridgeshire and make connections more effectively with the work of other agencies.

Having been informed that Government guidance was expected on the preparation of statutory plans from 1st April 2006, the Cabinet has noted that the Partnership had produced the interim plan to provide direction to those agencies involved in the short-term.

**6. MAKING THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS:
REVIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS AND
CONSULTATION STRATEGY**

The Cabinet has approved a revised Communications and Consultation Strategy for the Council, together with an associated action plan. The revised strategy is intended to provide a framework for the Council’s corporate communications on a structured and consistent basis, whilst the action plan sets out some of the key activities that will help achieve the outcomes in the strategy and contribute to the Council’s wider priorities.

The performance targets and measures will be monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery & Resources).

**7. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK:
WEST OF STUKELEY ROAD, HUNTINGDON**

The Cabinet has approved a draft Urban Design Framework for land to the west of Stukeley Road in Huntingdon for public consultation. The framework is designed to establish some clear guiding principles for development to ensure that the quality of Stukeley Road is significantly improved

8. CIVIL CONTINGENCIES ACT, 2004 – FUNDING ISSUES

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the service requirements and funding implications required to facilitate the implementation of duties under the Civil Contingencies Act.

In so doing, the Cabinet has endorsed in principle a proposal to expand the County Council's Civil Protection Unit and establish a joint agency team to take forward work on the Community Risk Register, and to contribute a sum of £23,000 per annum to support these arrangements in the period 2005/06 to 2007/08. The financial contributions will be reviewed in October 2006, and these will be funded by a supplementary capital estimate of £23,000 in 2005/06 and an unavoidable MTP bid of the same amount in 2006/07 and 2007/08.

**9. PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON OPTIONS FOR
PRIMARY CARE SERVICES IN LITTLE PAXTON**

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the details of a consultation being undertaken by Huntingdonshire Primary Care Trust on the future provision of primary care services to the residents of Little Paxton.

Having considered the options outlined in the consultation paper and concluded that the loss of primary care services would be detrimental to local residents, the Cabinet has requested that the Huntingdonshire Primary Care Trust be informed of the Council's deep concern with regard to any suggestion that primary care services be withdrawn from Little Paxton and their support for the establishment of a branch surgery in the village, together with an in-house pharmacy.

**10. MONITORING OF THE REVENUE BUDGET AND
CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

Consideration has been given by the Cabinet to reports monitoring the revenue budget and capital programme expenditure in 2004/05. Particular attention was given to variations to the approved programme and the estimated capital and revenue implications. In so doing, the Cabinet has approved supplementary capital estimates of £214,000 for revenue funded staff capital schemes and £800,000 towards the Heart of Oxmoor bid and their financing from capital receipts.

11. QUARTERLY SUMMARY OF DEBTS WRITTEN OFF

The Cabinet has been advised of those debts which have been written off as irrecoverable during the period January – March 2005.

A summary of the list is available on request from the Democratic Services Section.

12. ADVICE ON HUNTINGDON TOWN CENTRE REDEVELOPMENTS

The Cabinet has agreed to appoint the consultants, CB Richard Ellis, to advise the Council on proposals for the future development of Huntingdon town centre.

13. APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Executive responsibilities for the Municipal Year 2005/06 have been allocated by the Leader as follows -

- ◆ Leisure – Councillor Mrs J Chandler
- ◆ Planning Strategy – Councillor N J Guyatt
- ◆ Resources and Policy – Councillor A Hansard
- ◆ Environment and Transport – Councillor Mrs P J Longford
- ◆ Housing and Public Health – Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds
- ◆ Finance – Councillor T V Rogers; and
- ◆ Operations and Information Technology – Councillor L M Simpson.

Responsibility for issues associated with the Council's Headquarters and Other Accommodation and the strategic overview of personnel has been reserved to the Leader. Those Members appointed to hold executive responsibility for Resources and Policy, Planning Strategy and the Leader have been appointed ex-officio Members of the Licensing Committee/Licensing and Protection, Development Control and Employment Panels respectively.

14. CORE POLICIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT: PREFERRED OPTIONS FOR CONSULTATION

The Cabinet has had the opportunity to consider, in advance of the special Council meeting, the suggested preferred options for inclusion in the Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD). The Core Strategy is the first part of the Local Development framework to be provided by the Council and will set out a vision for the District and policies for guiding the development and use of land. The findings of the Draft Final Sustainability Appraisals on Strategic Environmental Assets also were presented to Members. These had been produced by consultants and compared the suggested preferred options against social, economic and environmental criteria to ensure the approaches which had been recommended would be more sustainable than any alternatives identified. Having also been advised of the timescale and procedure for public consultation and

consideration of the document by the Council prior to submission to the Secretary of State, the Cabinet recommended the Special Meeting to approve the contents of the Core Strategy: Preferred Options Report as a basis for public consultation.

(A Special Meeting of the Council held on 25th May 2005 endorsed the recommendation of the Cabinet and approved the Core Strategy: Preferred Options Report as the basis for public consultation.)

**15. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK:
ST NEOTS COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

A schedule summarising representations received during consultation on the Urban Design Framework which will guide development in the vicinity of St Neots Community College has been submitted to the Cabinet.

Having recognised that the development of the area as envisaged will be subject to the receipt of detailed planning applications and that the matters raised during consultation will be addressed through the planning process, the Cabinet has authorised the Head of Planning Services after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy to make any consequential amendments to the text and illustrations of the Urban Design Framework document to incorporate those changes proposed.

Subject to the incorporation of these changes, the Cabinet has adopted the Urban Design Framework for St Neots Community College as Interim Planning Guidance.

16. HOUSING ACT 2004

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the provisions of the Housing Act 2004 and the arrangements required to ensure that the District Council, as local housing authority, is in a position to fulfil its duties under the Act in relation to private sector housing enforcement issues. The Cabinet has agreed to vary the Council's scheme of delegation to authorise appropriate Officers to use a range of powers and duties that are necessary to meet the Council's obligations under the Act. The Cabinet also has extended the availability of mandatory disabled facilities grants to those occupying caravans in the District as their only or main residence and has requested that the Head of Housing Services consider the needs of gypsies and travellers living in the District when reviewing housing needs in accordance with statutory requirements and other relevant corporate strategies.

17. MEDIUM TERM PLAN: REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

Having considered details of schemes in the Medium Term Plan, the Cabinet has agreed to release appropriate funding for additional car parking spaces at Huntingdon Leisure Centre, a private sector housing survey, to meet a deficit in air quality fees, commission work to investigate contaminated land, a vehicle replacement programme,

an older peoples village warden scheme, discretionary repair loans/grants and disabled facilities grants.

**18. A14 HUNTINGDON TO CAMBRIDGE –
PROPOSED 60 MPH SPEED LIMIT**

The Cabinet has expressed its support for a proposal by the Highways Agency to introduce for a trial period a 60mph speed limit on the A14 between Huntingdon and Cambridge. In the long term, however, the Cabinet has indicated its preference for variable speed limits together with SPECS cameras on the section of the A14 from the north west of the Spittals interchange to east of the Histon roundabout to be strategically placed in the vicinity of road junctions.

**19. PATHFINDER HOUSE, HUNTINGDON –
PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK**

Following on from item No 10 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on the 21st July 2004 and having been acquainted with the responses received from the consultation exercise on the Planning and Urban Design Framework for the redevelopment of the Pathfinder House site in Huntingdon, the Cabinet have agreed to adopt the Framework as Interim Planning Guidance.

20. GROWING SUCCESS: A CORPORATE PLAN

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and by way of report by the Chief Officers Management Team, the Cabinet has considered the content of the replacement Corporate Plan – “Growing Success”. The Plan has been reviewed in relation to the continuing development of the comprehensive performance management framework. Having noted that the designation of the Council as “excellent” has enabled the authority to take advantage of freedoms and flexibilities concerning the publication of Best Value Performance Plans and allowed certain relevant information to be incorporated in the Corporate Plan, the Cabinet has endorsed the content of the document and recommended its approval to Council.

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

**21. DISTRICT COUNCIL’S HEADQUARTERS AND
OTHER ACCOMMODATION MEMBER’S ADVISORY GROUP**

Procurement Issues

The Cabinet has considered proposals for the procurement of the replacement Council Headquarters and other accommodation. Having being acquainted with the requirements of European Union Procurement Regulations, Executive Councillors have decided to –

- ◆ publish in the Official Journal of the European Communities and place an advertisement in the Estates Gazette seeking expressions of interest from suitably qualified developers;

- ◆ authorise the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, to determine a list of not more than six tenderers from the responses to the initial contract notice;
- ◆ note that the Cabinet will be required to approve output specifications for the new building/premises before tenders are issued in June 2005;
- ◆ authorise the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council to develop and approve detailed tender evaluation criteria;
- ◆ authorise the Chief Executive to obtain independent evaluations of the Pathfinder House/Castle Hill House site and of the Godmanchester Depot site such that realisable values can be used in the tender evaluation exercise;
- ◆ authorise the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, to complete an initial evaluation of tenders received and report thereon to the meeting of the Council on 28th September 2005;
- ◆ note the intention to submit a request to the September meeting of the Council to take a decision on the project based on an initial evaluation of tenders received; and
- ◆ authorise the Chief Executive to enter into post tender clarification with two or more tenderers leading to the submission of best and final offers.

Subsequently, the recommendations of the District Council Headquarters and other Accommodation Members Advisory Group in relation to the output specifications proposed for the Council's future office and other accommodation requirements have been considered by the Cabinet. In that respect, Members noted proposals by the Chief Executive to develop the tender evaluation criteria based on securing the most economically advantageous tender and approved an invitation of tenders that provides opportunities for tenderers to propose payment arrangement including a single payment at the completion of all premises.

Members have agreed that the period between the awarding of the contract and the completion of a development agreement should be kept to a minimum of three months and they have authorised the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, to determine the timing of land transfers within that agreement. This approach will require external, legal and technical advice for which the Cabinet has approved the release of £200,000 from the Medium Term Plan.

With regard to the allocation of space within the new offices, Members have authorised the Chief Executive after consultation with the Leader of the Council, to determine the final space requirements.

Project Management

The Cabinet has considered proposals to establish a post of Project Director for the proposed procurement and development of a new District Council headquarters.

Having been acquainted with the deliberations and recommendations of the Employment Panel described in item no 4 of their Report, the Cabinet has agreed to retain Mrs E Wilson in a consultancy capacity in connection with the project subject to her prior resignation as an employee of the Council. In acknowledging the specialist nature of this work and on the ground that the engagement of Mrs Wilson in a consultancy capacity will represent the Council's best interest, the Cabinet has approved the adoption of the single tender option as set out in paragraph 5.3E of the Council's Code of Procurement. The Cabinet has also authorised the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chairman of the Employment Panel, to approve terms for the retention of Mrs Wilson's services.

22. TREASURY MANAGEMENT

The Cabinet has noted the performance of the District Council's Fund Managers for the period January - March 2005 and respective levels of performance for the year ending 31st March 2005 in the matter of investment of the Council's Capital Receipts.

23. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT DIVISION – STAFFING

Following consideration of recommendations by the Employment Panel described in item No. 3 of their Report, the Cabinet has approved the associated financial implications of the staffing review within the Information Management Division.

D P Holley
Chairman