

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Thursday, 13 October 2005.

PRESENT: Councillor D P Holley – Chairman.
Councillors I C Bates, Mrs J Chandler,
A Hansard, Mrs P J Longford,
Mrs D C Reynolds, T V Rogers and
L M Simpson.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor N J Guyatt.

78. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15th September 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

79. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Bates declared a personal interest in Minute No 84 by virtue of his membership of Cambridgeshire County Council. Councillor Hansard declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No 81 by virtue of his membership of St Neots Sports Association. Councillor Mrs Reynolds declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No 88 by virtue of her employment under the auspices of the PCT and Councillor Rogers declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No 80 by virtue of a previous involvement in correspondence with the Golf Club. Those Councillors who declared personal and prejudicial interests, left the Chamber for the duration of discussion and voting on the respective items of business.

80. NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES DISCRETIONARY RELIEF - BRAMPTON PARK GOLF CLUB

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Revenue Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding an application by Brampton Park Golf Club for discretionary rate relief from non-domestic rates.

Having considered the information contained in the report, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that Brampton Park Golf Club's application for discretionary rate relief be not granted.

81. NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES - DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF - CHARITIES AND KINDRED ORGANISATIONS

The Cabinet received a report by the Head of Revenue Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) reviewing the Council's policy for assessing entitlement to discretionary rate relief which was last reviewed in January 1996.

Having considered the information contained in the report, the suggested assessment criteria and the financial implications the changes would have on those organisations that currently qualified for relief, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the proposed discretionary rate relief policy as set out in Appendix D to the report now submitted be approved;
- (b) that existing organisations in receipt of discretionary rate relief be reviewed as required following a change in rateable value;
- (c) that existing recipients of discretionary relief be advised of the new scheme and the effect on their rate accounts;
- (d) that new cases be assessed under the new criteria;
- (e) that the rateable value mentioned in the policy be reviewed, every five years, on the occasion of the new rating lists;
- (f) that the Head of Revenue Services and the Local Taxation Manager be authorised to grant relief under the policy; and
- (g) that the Director of Commerce and Technology be authorised to deal with appeals from applicants dissatisfied with the determination made by the Head of Revenue Services and the Local Taxation Manager.

82. HUNTINGDON TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENTS: REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

By way of a joint report by the Heads of Planning and of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a request for the release of funding from the Medium Term Plan for a series of studies on issues likely to impact on the redevelopment and economic viability of Huntingdon Town Centre, some of which would involve a transfer from capital to revenue funding.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the release of funding for the Huntingdon Town Centre Development Scheme in 2005/06 be approved; and
- (b) that, should revenue savings fail to cover the impact of

the change referred to in (a) above, a supplementary revenue estimate of up to £54,000 in the current year be approved and the variations in revenue impact relating to 2005/06 onwards included in the Medium Term Plan.

83. MEDIUM TERM PLAN: REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a request for the release of funding for two Medium Term Plan schemes.

Having considered the schemes involved, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the relevant funding be released for a programme of maintenance work at the District's leisure centres and a contribution towards a partnership project for an indoor activity hall at the Grafham Water Centre.

84. RECYCLING CREDITS

By way of a report by the Development and Community Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with changes to the recycling credit scheme proposed by Cambridgeshire County Council, the waste disposal authority.

Having considered the information contained in the report, the financial implications of the proposal and in noting that the revised scheme would be discussed by the CCA waste forum meeting on 30th September 2005, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Head of Environment and Transport be authorised, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Environment and Transport, to agree a draft revised recycling credit scheme as described in the report now submitted;
- (b) that the Executive Councillor for Environment and Transport be authorised to confirm the Council's support for the scheme at the CCA waste forum; and
- (c) that the growth in recycling income from 2005 – 2010 as detailed in paragraph 4 of the report, be noted.

85. CONEYGEAR COURT, HUNTINGDON: REVENUE FUNDING

A report by the Head of Housing Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining a bid by the Granta Housing Association for capital funding from the Housing Corporation to provide an additional six units of accommodation for homeless people at Coneygear Court, Huntingdon.

In considering a request from Granta for an increase in the level of revenue funding from the Council to finance additional staffing posts

required to support the increase in accommodation, Executive Councillors expressed the view that the additional costs of £30,000 should properly be met from within the Government's Supporting People budget. However, given the limited funds available and in noting the pressures in the District for this type of accommodation, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the bid from Granta Housing Association for capital funding from the housing corporation to provide an additional six units of accommodation at Coneygear Court be supported; and
- (b) that a transfer of funds from the housing benefit budget to the homelessness budget to finance the increased revenue funding of the scheme be approved.

86. CHOICE-BASED LETTINGS, CAMBRIDGE SUB-REGION: RECOMMENDED OPTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Housing Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding the development of a Cambridgeshire Sub-Region choice-based letting scheme in partnership with other local authorities and housing associations.

In discussing the possibility of Government funding towards the set up and implementation costs, the Cabinet expressed reservations that the funding was unlikely to meet the overall costs of the scheme and in noting that a further report would be submitted to a future meeting, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the involvement of the Council in partnership working with other local authorities and housing associations in the Cambridge Sub-Region to develop a sub-regional choice-based lettings scheme, be approved in principle.

87. THE COUNCIL'S SCHEME OF DELEGATION: INTERIM VARIATION PENDING THE APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered interim arrangements suggested in relation to the Council's scheme of delegation pending the recruitment of the replacement of the Director of Operational Services.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that, with effect from 14th November and pending the recruitment of a new Director, the Chief Executive be authorised to exercise the powers delegated to the Director of Operational Services in the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

88. COMMISSIONING A PATIENT-LED NHS: PRIMARY CARE TRUSTS

(The Chairman announced that he proposed to admit the following item in accordance with Section 100 (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 given the need for the Council to respond to a proposal for the configuration of the PCT's by 15th October 2005.)

By way of a report by the Chief Executive (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with arrangements for the proposed development of options by the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority (SHA) for consultation on the future configuration of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs).

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to make appropriate representations to the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire SHA for the inclusion in the forthcoming round of consultation of the option to retain the existing Huntingdonshire PCT in any future reconfiguration of Primary Care Trusts in the Eastern Region.

Chairman