
Cabinet

Report of the meetings held on 15th December 2005,
12th January, 2nd and 10th February 2006

Matters for Decision

88. BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2007 - 2011 AND BUDGET 2006/07

The Cabinet has considered the content of the 2006/07 draft budget, the Medium Term Plan for the period 2007 – 2011 and the level of Council Tax for the following year. The financial report considered by the Cabinet at their meeting held on 2nd February 2006 is reproduced as Appendix A hereto.

Having been acquainted with the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels on this matter and the outcome of consultation with the business community on expenditure proposals, the Cabinet

RECOMMEND

- (a) that the spending proposals summarised in Annex C to the report be approved;**
- (b) that, subject to appropriate adjustments to Annexes B and C to reflect the potential requirement for additional compensatory savings/budget reductions as may be determined by Council at its meeting on 22nd February 2006, the proposed budget and Medium Term Plan as annexed to the report be approved;**
- (c) that a Council Tax level of £104.69 for a Band D property for 2006/07 and the indicative levels for 2007/08 onwards as detailed in paragraph 6.9 of the report be approved; and**
- (d) that the Prudential Indicators at Annex E to the report be approved.**

89. 2006/07 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Reproduced as Appendix B is a proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2006/07. The Strategy, which complies with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Code of Practice, has clear objectives for the management of the Council's

borrowing and investments. Having been satisfied that the strategy meets the requirements of the Code of Practice and Government guidance, the Cabinet

RECOMMEND

that the 2006/07 Treasury Management Strategy be approved.

90. IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT STATEMENT 2005

Having considered the content of the Implementing Electronic Government Statement 2005 (a copy of which has been circulated under separate cover to all Members) prior to its submission to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Cabinet

RECOMMEND

that the submission of the Implementing Electronic Government Statement 2005 be approved.

91. HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION – DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

Members will have received under separate cover a report by the Chief Officers' Management Team entitled "Headquarters and Other Accommodation – Development Agreement". The report has been considered by the District Council Headquarters and Other Accommodation Members' Advisory Group and the Cabinet and has been the subject of discussion at a joint meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels. The recommendations of the Advisory Group have been circulated separately to all Members and have been endorsed by the Panels and Cabinet.

Having regard to the confidentiality of the information contained in the report, the Council will need to exclude the public for the duration of its consideration and voting thereon. Accordingly, the Cabinet

RECOMMEND

- (a) that the press and public be excluded from the meeting by virtue of paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 to enable consideration to be given the report by the Chief Officers Management Team which contains exempt information relating to terms for the acquisition and disposal of property and the supply of goods and services; and**
- (b) that the recommendations set out in paragraph 2.4 of the report of the Advisory Group be approved.**

(NB. The Council will need to resolve to re-admit the press and public following the consideration and determination of this item of business.)

Matters for Information

92. CALL CENTRE PERFORMANCE AND PROPOSED CHANGES TO CALL HANDLING ARRANGEMENTS

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) the Cabinet has been acquainted with the outcome of a review of levels of performance achieved by the Call Centre in its first month of operation. Having noted the rates at which calls had been received, answered and resolved satisfactorily, Members have been acquainted with proposals to improve call handling by increasing the number of operational lines, which should prevent callers hearing an engaged tone at busy times. In that respect, the Cabinet has endorsed an increase in the number of operational lines and the trial use of call queuing arrangements for a three month period which will give the caller the option to queue or leave a message.

93. BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BME) HOUSING STRATEGY

The Cabinet has approved the Council's second Black Minority Ethnic (BME) Housing Strategy which is to be submitted to Go East. The Strategy has been written following consultation with BME Groups, the Local Diversity Forum and other partners.

94. NUISANCE VEHICLES

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the availability of devolved powers from the DVLA for dealing with the clamping and removing of untaxed vehicles from the public highway. In adopting the powers the Cabinet has agreed to subscribe to a code of practice produced by the DVLA which deals with a range of issues including the removal of untaxed vehicles and wheel clamping fees. As part of the new arrangements the Head of Environmental Health Services has been authorised by the Cabinet to enter into an agreement with the existing abandoned vehicles contractor to collect, store, destroy, return, sell or otherwise dispose of untaxed nuisance vehicles in return for the fees set out in the Vehicle Excise Duty Regulations 1997. At the same time, the Cabinet has delegated the Director of Operational Services to appoint Officers to enforce the devolved powers.

**95. HOMELESS PREVENTION OFFICER:
REQUEST FOR THE RELEASE OF FUNDS**

The Cabinet has agreed to make the post of Homelessness Prevention Officer permanent and to release the relevant funding from the Medium Term Plan. The post has had a major impact on the

Council's priority of providing suitable accommodation for those who are homeless.

96. ALFRED HALL MEMORIAL FIELD/EYNESBURY ROVERS FC DESIGN BRIEF

Having considered responses received to consultation on the proposed design brief for the Alfred Hall Memorial Field/Eynesbury Rovers FC and having been acquainted with the resultant amendments which had been made to the document, the Cabinet has approved the adoption of a Design Brief (as amended) as interim planning guidance. In so doing, the Director of Operational Services has been authorised, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, to make any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations as necessary.

97. RAMSEY CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW, CHARACTER ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

The Cabinet has considered responses received to consultation on the Ramsey Conservation Area Boundary Review, Character Assessment and Management Plan. Having been acquainted with the resultant amendments which had been made to the documents, the Cabinet has agreed to designate the conservation area according to the revised Ramsey Boundary Review document and has approved the adoption of the Character Assessment and Management Plan consultation documents (as amended). In so doing, the Director of Operational Services has been authorised after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy to make any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations as necessary.

98. THE GRAND CINEMA, RAMSEY – DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

The Cabinet has agreed to adopt the development brief for the Grand Cinema in Ramsey as Interim Planning Guidance. The brief is an important step towards achieving the most appropriate form of redevelopment on the site and has been the subject of a public consultation exercise. The Cabinet has also authorised the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, to make any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations as necessary.

99. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITE, MOORHOUSE DRIVE, HUNTINGDON

The Cabinet has approved in principle the sale of land at Moorhouse Drive, Huntingdon to Huntingdonshire Housing Partnership for residential development, 29% of which will comprise affordable housing. In so doing, the Director of Central Services has been authorised, after consultation with the Executive Councillors for Resources and Policy, and for Finance, to approve detailed terms for the sale of the land.

**100. THE COUNCIL'S SCHEME OF DELEGATION:
INTERIM VARIATION PENDING THE APPOINTMENT OF A
DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

The Cabinet has approved interim arrangements relating to the Council's scheme of delegation pending the recruitment of a Director of Commerce and Technology to the current vacancy. With effect from 20th January 2006, the Chief Executive will undertake the powers delegated to the Director in the scheme on a temporary basis, with the exception of those which relate to the Financial Proper Officer and Section 151 functions which will be dealt with by the Head of Financial Services.

101. MEMBERSHIP OF PANELS

The Cabinet has appointed the Executive Councillor for Office Accommodation and Other Special Projects to the Appointments Panel to serve alongside Councillors Baker, Davies, Rogers and Simpson during the forthcoming interviews for the post of Director of Commerce and Technology.

The Cabinet has also appointed the Executive Councillor to the Employment Panel as an ex-officio member.

102. RISK MANAGEMENT

Arising from the review of office management procedures, the Cabinet has appointed the Executive Councillor for Finance as risk management "champion".

103. BROOKSIDE, HUNTINGDON, URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The Cabinet has approved for public consultation a draft Urban Design Framework for the former school site at Brookside, Huntingdon. The framework has been produced to clearly identify and guide a series of principles for the redevelopment of the site aimed at enhancing the architectural and visual quality of the Town.

**104. LONGSANDS COLLEGE, ST. NEOTS
URBAN DESIGN BRIEF AND MASTERPLAN**

Further to Item No. 54 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 28th September 2005, the Cabinet has considered responses received from the consultation exercise on the draft Urban Design Brief and Masterplan for the redevelopment of land in and around Longsands College, the Huntingdonshire Regional College, the site of the open air swimming pool, the Almond Road surgery and Health Centre in St. Neots. Having been acquainted with the amendments made to the document, the Cabinet has authorised the Planning Policy Manager, after consultation with Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, to approve the adoption of the document as Interim Planning Guidance.

105. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

The Cabinet has noted the outcome of the Council's first Local Development Framework monitoring report for the period from 1st April 2004 to 31st March 2005 prior to its submission to the Secretary of State. The document focuses on the progress of the scheme, indicators for monitoring local development documents, an analysis of non-implementation of existing policies and an estimate of future performance in terms of housing delivery.

106. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES ADVISORY GROUP

Consequent upon a meeting of the Public Conveniences Advisory Group held on 24th November 2005, the Cabinet has approved the replacement of the South Street public conveniences on an alternative site and endorsed a number of recommendations relating to the Council's future commitment to the provision of conveniences in town centres, service standards and maintenance/cleaning. A copy of the report is available on request from the Democratic Services Section.

107. DECLARATION OF CONTAMINATED LAND

Further to Item No. 77 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 7th December 2005, the Cabinet has been acquainted with the findings of a contaminated land survey of the Council's mobile home park at Eynesbury, St. Neots. Due to concentrations of compounds, on-site including benzo(A)pyrene, the land has been declared as "contaminated land" resulting in a requirement to commission a remediation statement at a cost of £35,000 for which a bid has been submitted for Government funding under the contaminated land capital projects programme. In view of the need to proceed as soon as possible, the Cabinet has approved a supplementary estimate to enable consultants to be appointed to prepare the statement.

108. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PLAN AND AREA MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) the Cabinet have been consulted on the content of the first full plan of the Cambridgeshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. The Partnership brings together organisations involved in delivering a wide range of services in Cambridgeshire including the District Council. The plan is an important step in the development of services for children and young people as it identifies the Partnership's priorities for 2006 to 2009. At the same time, the Cabinet has been consulted on proposals for the delivery and organisation of services for children and young people at area locality level. It is envisaged that Huntingdonshire will be one of three areas in the County and will contain four locality teams of multi-disciplinary staff organised around the secondary schools at Huntingdon, St. Ives, St. Neots and Ramsey/Sawtry. In discussing the new arrangements

the Cabinet has expressed concern about the potential implications at County and District levels given the pressures arising from the revenue support grant settlement and the competing priorities of other services for the allocation of resources. With this in mind, the Cabinet has authorised the Chief Executive to respond to the consultation documents and requested that a further report on arrangements for the Children and Young People's services be submitted to a future meeting once local governance and resources issues are known.

109. HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION – OPERATIONS CENTRE LAND PURCHASE

The Cabinet has approved terms for the purchase of land at Latham Road, Huntingdon for an Operations Centre in conjunction with the development of a new Headquarters for the District Council. Subsequently the land has been sold to another party and a search for an alternative location has commenced.

110. QUARTERLY SUMMARY OF DEBTS WRITTEN-OFF

The Cabinet has been advised of those individual debts which have been written-off as irrecoverable during the period October to December 2005.

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

111. WIND POWER – DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Further to Item No. 42 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 28th September 2005 and having been acquainted with responses received to consultation on the draft document, the Cabinet has agreed to adopt the Supplementary Planning Document – Wind Power.

112. LOCAL AUTHORITY BUSINESS GROWTH INCENTIVE

Further to Item No. 46 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 28th September 2005, the Cabinet has been acquainted with details of the Government's Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) scheme designed to allow local authorities to retain a share of increased business rates generated in their area. Business growth will be measured in terms of the increase in a local authority's rateable value during a calendar year. A single payment will be made to each eligible local authority in the final quarter of the financial year and it is envisaged that the Council will receive the first payment from the scheme this month.

113. FOOTBALL IMPROVEMENTS

The Cabinet has approved revised funding arrangements for a football improvements project within the Medium Term Plan. The project intends to improve football facilities at Priory Park, St Neots

and St Ivo Outdoor Leisure Centre with the creation of additional changing and showering facilities, a meeting area, adjustments to existing car parking arrangements and new cycle path. The scheme is to be funded by way of the MTP, Section 106 monies from a local development and a contribution from the Football Federation.

114. MEDIUM TERM PLAN: REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

The Cabinet has agreed to release appropriate funding for the Health Improvement Scheme within the Medium Term Plan. The project will contribute to the corporate priority of obtaining and maintaining a healthy population by promoting services and activities which prevent ill-health and contribute to healthy lifestyles.

115. COMMERCIAL PROPERTY PORTFOLIO: SUPPORTING STRONG AND DIVERSE ECONOMY

The Cabinet has approved the Medium Term Strategic Investment Plan for the Council's Commercial Property Portfolio. The plan will support the Council's priorities and the development of physical assets to help deliver the objectives for a number of Plans and Strategies including the Community Strategy, Local Economy Strategy, Market Town Vision Statements and Action Plans, together with regional and sub-regional objectives. At the same time, the Cabinet has approved the phasing of expenditure for five schemes identified and prioritised by partners including industrial and commercial workspace at St. Ives and a proposed combined heat and power business enterprise centre at St. Neots. The progress of each scheme is conditional upon approval of a detailed appraisal by the Cabinet.

116. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS

The Cabinet has approved a draft Local Area Agreement for Cambridgeshire which aims to streamline Government funding, encourage partnership working and direct investment towards local priorities. In so doing, the Cabinet has raised concerns over the Agreement in terms of local accountability, the potential implications for local priorities and the additional costs associated with the governance arrangements.

117. GREATER CAMBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP

The Cabinet has supported a request for the Council to become a member of the recently incorporated Greater Cambridge Partnership. The Partnership was established in 1997/98 to encourage and facilitate a balanced framework for the structural, economic and culture development of the greater Cambridge area and comprises representatives from both the public and private sectors. The Partnership has now become incorporated as a company limited by guarantee which will give it greater flexibility. The Director of Central Services has been authorised to complete the application for membership and a deed of adherence.

118. CAMBRIDGESHIRE HORIZONS LIMITED

The Cabinet has approved an application by English Partnership to become a member of Cambridgeshire Horizons Limited which was founded under the auspices of the Cambridgeshire Sub-Regional Infrastructure Partnership. The principal purpose of the company is to help deliver the agreed development strategy for the sub-region and is supported by the County Council and the five District Councils in Cambridgeshire.

119. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (2ND AMENDMENT) – SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE ON PLANNING CONTRIBUTIONS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Further to Minute No. 118 of the report submitted to the meeting of the Council held on 13th April 2005, the Cabinet has approved two amendments to the Local Development Scheme for Huntingdonshire in relation to affordable housing and planning contributions prior to their submission to the Secretary of State.

120. DISTRICT COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER OFFICE ACCOMMODATION MEMBERS' ADVISORY GROUP

The Cabinet has considered the reports of the District Council Headquarters and Other Office Accommodation Members' Advisory Group held on 9th and 26th January 2006. The recommendations from the meeting on 26th January 2006 are considered at Item 91 of this report. However in respect of the implementation of a communications strategy and action plan, the Cabinet has authorised the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Office Accommodation and Other Special Projects, to approve terms for the retention of a PR/communications consultant.

**121. COMMERCE & TECHNOLOGY DIRECTORATE:
APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE & TECHNOLOGY**

In accordance with paragraph 4 (e) of the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, Cabinet has informed the Chief Executive that there were no material or well founded objections to a proposal of the Appointments Panel with regard to the offer of an appointment to fill the post of Director of Commerce & Technology.

I C Bates
Chairman