

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 28 June 2006.

PRESENT: Councillor P A Swales – Chairman.

Councillors J D Ablewhite, R W D Bailey, M G Baker, K M Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, I C Bates, J T Bell, Mrs B E Boddington, P L E Bucknell, E R Butler, K J Churchill, Mrs D E Collins, S J Criswell, J W Davies, D B Dew, P J Downes, J J Dutton, RWJ Eaton, J D Fell, J E Garner, A N Gilbert, D A Giles, J A Gray, Mrs K P Gregory, N J Guyatt, C R Hyams, Mrs S A Menczer, P G Mitchell, I R Muir, M F Newman, R Powell, D J Priestman, Mrs D C Reynolds, K Reynolds, T V Rogers, J M Sadler, T D Sanderson, L M Simpson, C J Stephens, G S E Thorpe, R G Tuplin, J S Watt, R J West and Ms M Wheeler.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs J Chandler, J A P Eddy, Mrs C A Godley, A Hansard, D Harty, Mrs P J Longford and J Taylor.

17. PRAYER

The Reverend A Milton, Team Rector for Huntingdon opened the meeting with Prayer.

18. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Former Councillor P W Meyer

The Chairman announced, with regret, the recent death of former Councillor P W Meyer who had served as Councillor for the Offords Ward on the District Council during the period 1990 – 1998. Councillor P J Downes, Leader of the Opposition paid tribute to the service rendered and contribution made by former Councillor Meyer as Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group and as a Member of the former Planning and Housing Committees on the Council.

(b) Councillor J A P Eddy

The Chairman reported that he had sent, on behalf of the Council, best wishes to Councillor J A P Eddy following his recent operation and hospital stay.

(c) Councillors vs Officers Rounders Match

Members were encouraged by the Chairman to participate in the inaugural Councillors vs Officers rounders match to be

held on 12th July 2006 at the St. Ivo Outdoor Centre.

19. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17th May 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

20. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were none declared.

21. CABINET PROCEDURE RULES - DELEGATION BY THE LEADER

In accordance with the Cabinet Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution and having confirmed that the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy was responsible for issues relating to Children and Young People, the Council noted the allocation of Executive functions for the ensuing Municipal Year contained in a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book).

22. IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT STATEMENT 6

By way of a report by the Head of Information Management (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Executive Councillor for Headquarters and Information Technology, Councillor L M Simpson invited the Council to consider the content of the final IEG Statement which had been prepared annually over the past 5 years to monitor the Council's progress against e-Government targets.

Having been informed that the cost benefit and status of those priority outcomes coloured red would be reconsidered at a later date, the Council

RESOLVED

that the Implementing Electronic Government Return 2006 (IEG6) be approved for submission to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

23. FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2006/07

Referring to a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), Councillor J M Sadler, Chairman of the Licensing and Protection Panel reminded the Council that the Food Standards Agency required the preparation, on an annual basis, of a Food Safety Service Plan (an executive summary of which also is appended in the Minute Book). A full copy of the Food Service Plan 2006/07 had been made available in the Members' Room.

Members were reminded of the objectives of the Service Plan in terms of identifying resources, establishing a work programme and providing a means by which to measure and manage performance. In drawing the Council's attention to the work programme for 2006/07, Councillor Sadler highlighted the intention to work in partnership with businesses in Huntingdonshire to assist their understanding of food

safety legislation introduced in January 2006 which had affected the way in which food business operators managed and controlled their businesses. Members were informed that an application had been submitted for grant funding from the Food Standards Agency to support the delivery of the Safer Food Better Business Food Safety Management System and to provide coaching and training for food business operators with the outcome to be announced in September.

In commending the efforts of the Food Service Team for inspecting 99.4% of premises on their programme and for delivering most of the initiatives outlined in the 2005/06 development plan, Councillor Sadler drew particular attention to the success of the Team in receiving a Food Link Annual Award in 2005 for achievements in the field of food safety and promotion of healthy eating.

Having noted the support for the plan on the part of the Licensing and Protection Panel, the Council

RESOLVED

that the Food Safety Service Plan 2006/07 be approved.

24. REPORTS OF THE CABINET, PANELS AND COMMITTEES

(a) Cabinet

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Councillor I C Bates, Leader and Chairman of the Cabinet presented the Report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 20th and 27th April, 18th May and 8th June 2006.

In connection with Item No. 1, it was noted that the recommendation previously had been considered under Minute No. 21 ante.

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In connection with Item No. 5 and in response to a question from Councillor D A Giles, the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Councillor P L E Bucknell, replied that any suggestion that land in the ownership of the Town Council was to be used for car parking as part of an approved development brief for land in and around the Old Fire Station in St. Neots was incorrect as this proposal currently was subject to consultation with St. Neots Town Council.

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In connection with Item No. 8 and in response to a question from Councillor Mrs S A Menczer, the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy, Councillor A Hansard announced that training on child protection and children and young persons' issues would be offered to Councillors in the future.

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In connection with Item No. 11 and in response to questions from Councillors P J Downes and C R Hyams, the Executive Councillor for Environment and Transport, Councillor N J Guyatt clarified that the Cabinet had reiterated its support for the original CHUMMS option but that the Council still were awaiting a decision from the Secretary of State on the preferred route for the A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton and that public consultation on a proposal to remove the existing A14 viaduct at Huntingdon would commence shortly as part of the "Huntingdon Vision" initiative.

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In connection with Item No. 15 and in response to a question from Councillor D A Giles, the Leader, Councillor I C Bates confirmed that he was satisfied with the performance of the communications consultants employed to assist the Council with the new headquarters project.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that subject to the foregoing paragraphs, the Report of the Cabinet held on 20th and 27th April, 18th May and 8th June 2006 be received and adopted.

(b) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)

Councillor J A Gray presented the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) held on 11th April and Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) held on 13th June 2006.

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In connection with Item No. 3 and in response to questions from Councillors P J Downes and T D Sanderson, the Chairman of the Panel indicated that he was satisfied with the progress of ongoing work to identify savings to achieve the Council's target for expenditure reductions but that he was not yet aware of the nature of the savings to be considered. However, he was confident that the overall forecast of the Council's financial position would be available for presentation to the meeting of the Corporate and Strategic Framework Scrutiny Panel in September.

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In connection with Item No. 7 and in response to a question from Councillor T D Sanderson regarding the progress/success of arrangements for monitoring the receipt and expenditure of money negotiated under Section 106

Agreements, the Chairman of the Panel, having expressed his confidence in the monitoring process, undertook to forward a copy of the most recent monitoring report to the questioner after the meeting.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Reports of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) held on 11th April and Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) held on 13th June 2006 be received and adopted.

(c) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery)

Councillor S J Criswell presented the Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) held on 6th June 2006.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) held on 6th June 2006 be received and adopted.

(d) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework)

Councillor J A Gray presented the Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) held on 6th June 2006.

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In connection with Item No. 1 and in response to a question from Councillor P J Downes, the Chairman of the Panel reiterated that it was the intention for Members to consider and comment on prioritised potential savings at their meeting in November and that the Panel would continue to work hard to achieve the necessary reductions in expenditure required to comply with the Council's Financial Strategy.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Overview and

Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) held on 6th June 2006 be received and adopted.

(e) Development Control Panel

Councillor P G Mitchell presented the Report of the meetings of the Development Control Panel held on 24th April, 22nd May and 19th June 2006.

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In connection with Item No. 3 and having regard to the performance of the Development Control Section over the period 1st January – 31st March 2006, the Chairman of the Panel congratulated Officers in the Section for their achievement in meeting national performance targets, particularly in view of the number of vacant posts on the establishment of the Planning Division.

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In connection with Item No. 6 and in response to a question from Councillor D A Giles, the Chairman confirmed that the garage buildings at that location could be considered to be an inappropriate use in the area of land described as St. Mary's Urban Village, St. Neots.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Development Control Panel held on 24th April, 22nd May and 19th June 2006 be received and adopted.

(f) Employment Panel

Councillor K Reynolds presented the Report of the meeting of the Employment Panel held on 7th June 2006.

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In connection with Item No. 4 and in response to a question from Councillor P J Downes, the Chairman of the Panel undertook to arrange for a written reply to be sent to all Members of the Council indicating the number of vacant posts which the Panel had decided not to fill in light of the requirement for the Council to achieve budget savings in this and future years.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Employment Panel held on 7th June 2006 be received and adopted.

(g) Licensing and Protection Panel

Councillor J M Sadler presented the Report of the meeting of the Licensing and Protection Panel held on 21st June 2006.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Licensing and Protection Panel held on 21st June 2006 be received and adopted.

(h) Appointments Panel

Councillor L M Simpson presented the Report of the meeting of the Appointments Panel held on 20th April 2006.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Appointments Panel held on 20th April 2006 be received and adopted.

25. ORAL QUESTIONS

In accordance with the Council's Procedure Rules (Section 8.3 of the Council's Constitution), the Chairman proceeded to conduct a period of oral questions addressed to Executive Councillors and Panel Chairmen as follows:-

Question from Councillor T D Sanderson to the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Councillor P L E Bucknell

In response to a question regarding the potential to use Section 106 monies to improve pedestrian and cycle links in St. Peter's Road, Huntingdon, Councillor Bucknell replied that he had visited the site with District/County Officers recently, had discussed the feasibility of various options bearing in mind the number of HGV movements on St. Peter's Road and would keep the questioner informed of further progress.

Question from Councillor C J Stephens to the Leader, Councillor I C Bates

In response to a question regarding the approach the Council would adopt towards a possible Government policy on the acquisition of

properties left vacant for a period longer than six months, the Leader replied that although he had not read the government guidance in detail, he would not envisage that the Council would pursue implementation of the policy as a priority.

Question from Councillor R G Tuplin to the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Councillor P L E Bucknell

In response to a question regarding the process for the use of Section 106 receipts from development at Yaxley by Cambridgeshire County Council for educational purposes at Stanground, even though children from Yaxley were being educated at Sawtry Community College, Councillor Bucknell, undertook to pursue the matters raised with the County Council and to advise the questioner accordingly.

Question from Councillor J J Dutton to the Executive Councillor for Headquarters and Information Technology, Councillor L M Simpson

In response to a request for support in resolving the problem of car parking in the Whaddons, Thongsley, Sycamore and Maple Drives, Huntingdon following the opening recently of the Oak Tree Centre, Councillor Simpson undertook to establish what parking provision had been made for employees of the Centre and to consider whether the imposition of no waiting restrictions would improve the situation.

Question from Councillor D B Dew to the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Councillor P L E Bucknell

In response to a question regarding the proposed relocation of the Defence Logistics Organisation from RAF Wyton to the Bath/Bristol area and the effect that this might have on the local economy, Councillor Bucknell advised the Council that he was to attend a Ministry of Defence briefing on the following day after which he would be better able to advise the Councillor of the situation locally.

Question from Councillor D A Giles to the Executive Councillor for Environment and Transport, Councillor N J Guyatt

In response to a question in respect of the sewerage systems on former Council estates, particularly in Dukes, Kings and Regents Roads, Eaton Socon which appeared not to have been adopted by Anglian Water Authority, Councillor Guyatt undertook to establish which agency had responsibility for the function and to advise the Councillor accordingly.

26. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: SECTION 85

The Chief Executive reported that there were no absences of Members from meetings for consideration in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The meeting concluded at 3.25 pm.

Chairman