

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, 19 July 2007.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.

Councillors A Hansard, C R Hyams,
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 P L E Bucknell.

40. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 28th June 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

41. EMERGENCY INCIDENT - ST NEOTS

The Chief Executive advised the Cabinet that the Council's emergency response arrangements had been invoked overnight to deal with an incident at the premises of Cryovac Sealed Air Limited in St Neots.

Having been advised of the efforts of staff particularly in making available St Neots Leisure Centre as a rest centre in the event of a requirement for that facility, Executive Members asked that their thanks be conveyed to all those involved in the incident.

42. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

43. HUNTINGDON LEISURE CENTRE - REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF MTP FUNDING

Further to Minute No. 06/110 and with the assistance of a report by the Chief Officers Management Team (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 to extend the Impressions Fitness Suite at Huntingdon Leisure Centre.

In considering the content of the report, Executive Councillors acknowledged the contribution that the scheme would make in achieving the targets in the Council's corporate plan and the supporting business case for the project. Reference also was made to an interest in monitoring projected attendances and income from the facility.

RESOLVED

that relevant funding be released for the scheme to extend the Impressions Fitness Suite at Huntingdon Leisure Centre and a further report on levels of attendance and income generated submitted to Cabinet 9 months after of the new facility is operational.

44. REVENUE MONITORING 2006/07 OUTTURN AND 2007/08 BUDGET

A report by the Head of Financial Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of the outturn of revenue expenditure for 2006/07 and the variations between the original and revised budget revision for that year.

In receiving a presentation by the Director of Commerce and Technology on the 2006/07 financial outturn Executive Councillors were pleased to note that as a result of the ongoing review of budgets and Medium Term Plan schemes the Council had been successful in obviating the need to use its reserves to fund revenue spending. Having expressed their thanks to staff for their efforts in achieving the budgetary outcomes, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the spending variations for the revenue budget 2006/07 be noted; and
- (b) that the action to be taken to improve financial monitoring as outlined in Annex D to the report now submitted also be noted;

45. CAPITAL MONITORING: 2006/07 OUTTURN AND 2007/08 BUDGET

A report by the Head of Financial Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) detailing the outturn of capital expenditure during 2006/07 and the implications for 2007/08.

Having noted variations in the programme, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the capital schemes monitoring report reproduced at Appendix B to the report now submitted be noted;
- (b) that the spending variations referred to in paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4 of the report be noted; and
- (c) that the use of virement from the local leisure project grants and accessibility improvements/signs budgets to fund the sum of £63,000 for the Shop Mobility Scheme in Huntingdon be approved.

46. CHOICE-BASED LETTINGS - ADOPTION OF LETTINGS POLICY

Further to Minute No. 06/149 and by way of a report by the Head of Housing Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with progress on the implementation of the Cambridge Sub-Region Choice-Based Lettings Scheme.

At the same time, Executive Councillors considered the content of a new lettings policy for Huntingdonshire which had been developed as part of the wider Sub-Regional Scheme. Having been reminded that the policy had been the subject of consultation with interested parties and in noting the responses received, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the content of the Huntingdonshire District Council Lettings Policy be approved; and
- (b) that a report be submitted to Cabinet on the progress of the scheme twelve months after its implementation.

47. AMENDMENTS TO HOUSING RENEWAL ASSISTANCE POLICY

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Housing Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which outlined three proposed amendments to the Council's Housing Renewal Assistance Policy relating to exempt disposal, where the repayment of loans would not be required, disabled facilities "top up" assistance and the determination of a loan or grant for repairs assistance.

In discussing the amendments proposed, Executive Councillors expressed some apprehension about the potential for anomalies, particularly where grants in excess of £25,000 were made for adaptations to a home of a family member or relative who was not the disabled person and in those circumstances it was -

RESOLVED

- (a) that the proposed amendments to the Housing Renewal Assistance Policy as outlined in the report now submitted be approved; and
- (b) that appropriate representations be made to the Members of Parliament for the Huntingdon and North West Cambridgeshire Constituencies regarding concerns about the anomalies now referred to.

48. HUNTINGDONSHIRE PLAY STRATEGY

Further to Minute No. 06/190 and by way of a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was invited to consider the content of a draft Play Strategy for Huntingdonshire together with an associated action plan prior to their submission to the "Big Lottery Fund" for funding to create, improve and develop children and young

peoples' play spaces locally. Whereupon, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the report be approved and the Director of Operational Services authorised to agree any necessary amendments to the Play Strategy and associated action plan prior to their submission to the "Big Lottery Fund".

49. OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND AUDIT

With the aid of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was acquainted with the key findings of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment which reviewed the District's informal open space, outdoor recreational facilities, allotments and children's play areas.

In so doing, attention was drawn to a series of proposed standards for each area assessed which it was intended to use when negotiating contributions from developers towards open space or when considering the future provision of open space funded from other sources.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the findings of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment and audit be noted; and
- (b) that the new standards for informal open space, provision for children and young people, outdoor sports facilities and allotments as outlined in the Annex to the report now submitted be approved as interim policy when considering developer's applications prior to their inclusion in a Supplementary Planning Document.

50. REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY SINGLE ISSUE REVIEW: PLANNING FOR GYPSYS AND TRAVELLERS ACCOMMODATION - CONSULTATION ON OPTIONS & ISSUES

By means of a joint report by the Heads of Planning Services and of Housing Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the contents of a suggested response to a consultation paper issued by the East of England Regional Assembly entitled "Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation in the East of England: Issues and Options".

In considering the information contained in the report, and while noting the potential need to clarify the reference to the current site in St. Neots, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that, subject to clarification of the reference to the site in St. Neots, the Heads of Planning Services and of Housing

Services be authorised to respond to the East of England Regional Assembly along the lines set out in the report now submitted.

51. REVIEW OF SMALL SCALE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS GRANTS SCHEME

Consideration was given to a report by the Working Group appointed by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) to undertake a review of the Council's Small Scale Environmental Improvements Grants scheme. A copy of the report is appended in the Minute Book.

Having noted the Working Group's recommendations in relation to Town and Parish Councils involvement, the schemes criteria, application and funding, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Environment and Transport and the Working Group, be authorised to prepare an amended Small Scale Environmental Improvements Grant Scheme; and
- (b) that, prior to its adoption, a draft of the revised scheme be circulated to Executive Councillors for comment.

Chairman