

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, 12 June 2008.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.
Councillors P L E Bucknell, K J Churchill, A Hansard, C R Hyams and T V Rogers.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors D B Dew, Mrs D C Reynolds and L M Simpson.

20. MINUTES

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

21. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor T V Rogers declared a personal interest in Minute No. 28 by virtue of being a resident of Earith and Councillor I C Bates declared a personal interest in Minute No. 29 by virtue of representing the Hemingfords Ward.

22. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08

A report by the Head of Financial Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which reviewed the respective levels of performance in the year ending 31st March 2008 by Fund Managers in the matter of investment of the Council's capital receipts.

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report now submitted be noted.

23. BUDGET AND MTP PROCESS 2009-2014

By way of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the approach, stages and timing for the review and approval of the financial strategy, 2009/2010 budget and the 2009 - 2014 Medium Term Plan.

Having been advised that the proposals had been supported by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate Governance), the Cabinet

RESOLVED

(a) that the timetable and stages for considering amendments to service plans, the financial strategy, budget and Medium Term Plan be approved; and

- (b) that Executive Councillors and Senior Officers be reminded of the need to review all Budgets and Medium Term Plan schemes to identify further opportunities for efficiency savings.

24. THE EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN - REVISION OF THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE EAST OF ENGLAND

Further to Minute No. 07/161 and by way of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the key elements of the "East of England Plan – the Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England" issued by the Secretary of State.

Members were reminded that the plan outlined the strategic planning approach proposed for the East of England until 2021 and would form part of the Statutory Development Plan for Huntingdonshire.

RESOLVED

that the contents of the East of England Plan and its Revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England be noted.

25. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - THE CORE STRATEGY SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

Further to Minute No. 07/191 and by way of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were invited to consider the content of the submission document for the Core Strategy prior to its approval by Council for formal submission to the Secretary of State. Changes to the Core Strategy had been recommended in March 2007, by Go-East and the Planning Inspectorate, to reflect the latest emerging guidance regarding the spatial content of the document.

Members were reminded that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) had considered the new submission document at their meeting on 10th June 2008. With regard to the Panel's concerns that the proposed policies failed to recognise fully the importance of the role of agriculture to the local economy and local land use, Executive Councillors felt it would be appropriate to make reference to this in the Spatial Vision document. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that, subject to a legal audit of the Strategy and the changes referred to in paragraph 5 of the report now submitted, the Local Development Framework Core Strategy be submitted to full Council for approval; and
- (b) that the Head of Planning Services be authorised, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, to approve any minor textual amendments to the documents including a reference in the Spatial Vision Document to reflect the value of

agriculture to the land economy.

26. PROSPEROUS PLACES: TAKING FORWARD THE SUB NATIONAL REVIEW OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

By means of a report by the Head of Planning and Strategic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the contents of a recent consultation paper issued by the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform proposing a series of measures to streamline the regional tier, strengthen the local authority role in economic development and support collaboration by local authorities across the economic areas.

Having considered the proposals outlined in the consultation paper, and the suggested responses, the Cabinet emphasised that a concerted approach should be made to ensure that local input at district level was an integral element within the process. Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED

that, the proposed response to the consultation paper as outlined in the Appendix to the report now submitted be approved and that specific reference be made to the importance of ensuring that the elected local authority members comprise a majority on Regional Development Agencies.

27. ECO-TOWNS: LIVING A GREENER FUTURE - RESPONSE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES & LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION

By means of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were advised of the inclusion of a greenfield site at Hanley Grange near Hinxton in South Cambridgeshire in the Government's short-list of 15 possible locations for new eco-towns as part of their initiative to deliver additional housing growth in sustainable ways.

Having discussed the implications of the site proposed at Hanley Grange in terms of the adverse impact on the Cambridgeshire Planning Strategy and Cambridge Sub-Region Growth Strategy and in noting that a joint response to the Government's proposal was being prepared by the Cambridgeshire authorities and Cambridgeshire Horizons, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted and the Head of Planning Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning and Transport, authorised to approve the contents of the joint response to the Department of Communities and Local Government.

28. EARITH CONSERVATION AREA: BOUNDARY REVIEW AND CHARACTER ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The Cabinet considered a report by the Planning Policy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the consultation responses to the Earith Character Statement and Boundary Review.

Having considered the responses and amendments outlined in the appendices to the report, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that, subject to the incorporation of changes identified in the Appendix to the report now submitted, the character statement and boundary review for the Earith Conservation Area be approved; and
- (b) that the Head of Planning Services be authorised to approve any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations as a result of the changes referred to in (a) above after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport.

29. THE HEMINGFORDS CONSERVATION AREA: BOUNDARY REVIEW AND CHARACTER ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

By way of a report by the Planning Policy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Cabinet considered the responses received to the consultation on the Hemingfords Character Statement and Boundary Review and suggested amendment as a consequence thereof.

RESOLVED

- (a) that, subject to the incorporation of changes identified in the Appendix to the report now submitted, the character statement and boundary review for the Hemingfords Conservation Area be approved; and
- (b) that the Head of Planning Services be authorised to approve any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations as a result of the changes referred to in (a) above after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport.

30. GROWING SUCCESS - PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Cabinet received a report by the Head of Policy and Strategic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) presenting performance management data for the Council's Corporate Plan – "Growing Success".

Having noted that the annual review of the plan had been deferred pending the preparation of a new Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement for Cambridgeshire and the issue

identified by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Service Support regarding attainment of the objective in relation to the Council being an employer for whom people wanted to work, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the timetable for the review of the plan and performance management data be noted.

31. CORPORATE EQUALITY POLICY: ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

Further to Minute No. 06/168 and by way of a report by the Head of Policy and Strategic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were updated on progress made to date on the delivery of actions and targets set out in the Corporate Equality Action Plan.

Having considered the information contained in the report, an updated action plan for 2008/09, the findings from equality impact assessments conducted over the last 12 months and a revised assessment timetable for 2008/09, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the progress made with the Corporate Equality Policy Action Plan be noted;
- (b) that the 2008/09 Action Plan set out in Appendix 2 to the report now submitted be approved;
- (c) that the findings from the equality impact assessments conducted in 2007/08 summarised in Appendix 3 be noted; and
- (d) that the revised timetable for equality impact assessments set out in Appendix 4 to the report now submitted be approved.

32. BENEFIT FRAUD PROSECUTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Customer Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a proposed policy for the prosecution of benefit claimants, landlords, employees and members who had committed benefit fraud.

Having considered the issues involved and the efficiencies to be gained in pursuing the course of action proposed in the report, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted;
- (b) that the revised Benefits Prosecution Policy set out in Appendix A to the report now submitted be approved;

- (c) that the Fraud Manager be authorised to undertake court hearings and issue formal cautions and administrative penalties as set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report; and
- (d) that staff within the Fraud Team be authorised to undertake investigations in fraud affecting all other District Council services and to report to the relevant Head of Service on the outcomes, findings and recommendations arising from these investigations.

33. REPRESENTATIVES ON ORGANISATIONS 2008/09

Having received and considered a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) in relation to representation on a variety of organisations and the appointment of new Champions for Oxmoor and for Training, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that nominations be made to the organisations as set out in the Appendix to the report now submitted;
- (b) that, in the event that changes are required to Council representation during the course of the year, the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council, be authorised to nominate alternative representatives as necessary; and
- (c) that the appointment of “Champions” for Oxmoor and for Training be delegated to the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council.

Chairman