

---

## **Cabinet**

**Report of the meeting held on 19th February,  
12th March and 2nd April 2009**

---

---

### **Matters for Information**

---

#### **78. LEISURE CENTRES MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the key elements of a proposal to change the funding and management arrangements for the District's jointly provided leisure centres, which has arisen as a result of changes affecting the way the education service operates and in the management corporately of various aspects of the leisure service.

The proposals will bring to an end the existing joint provision arrangements, with direct management by the District Council which will result in savings on audit fees and the administrative costs associated with servicing the current joint meetings. As part of the new proposals, a Councillor within the notional catchment area of each centre will become the "advocate" for that centre, representing community interests and becoming the person to whom the manager and his staff will turn in the first instance for Member support.

Each of the advocates will sit on a new Active Leisure Forum, together with the Executive Member for Leisure, a County Councillor, a representative of each of the secondary school governing bodies where the leisure centres are situated to discuss leisure provision across the District. As the lease between the District Council and the Town Council for the sports hall at Huntingdon contains provision for a management committee on which the Town is entitled to a number of voting representatives, membership of the Forum has been widened to include a Town Council representative and discussions are continuing with the Town Council on the amendment to the lease. The Cabinet therefore has -

- ◆ endorsed proposals to change the way in which the District's joint provision leisure centres are managed and funded in the future;
- ◆ agreed that responsibility for the leisure centres be undertaken by the District Council with effect from the new financial year;
- ◆ agreed that the existing five management committees be wound up with effect from the end of the current financial year;
- ◆ endorsed the establishment of an Active Leisure Forum;

- ◆ agreed that Huntingdon Town Council can nominate one representative to the leisure forum;
- ◆ agreed that the existing management agreements be substituted by new arrangements to be determined with the County Council and individual secondary school governing bodies, plus an amendment to the lease of Huntingdon Sports Hall and authorised the Head of Democratic and Central Services to determine the final content of the Agreements, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Leisure and the General Manager, Leisure; and
- ◆ requested that future levels of performance for the Centres be reported to Cabinet on a six monthly basis.

## **79. REVIEW OF CENTRAL SERVICES**

*(The following Item was considered as a confidential item under paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).*

Having noted the approval of the Employment Panel to a new establishment structure for the Central Services Directorate, the Cabinet has endorsed the associated financial implications of the changes. The revised structure reflects the outcome of a review of the Directorate following the recent appointment to the post of Director of Central Services and addresses a number of staffing matters, together with new opportunities which have arisen in terms of the structure and management of the Directorate. In approving the financial implications, the Cabinet has been pleased to note that the review has produced significant savings towards the Council's overall targets and that the initial findings of the review of the Democratic Structure Working Group have also been taken into consideration.

## **80. PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

The Cabinet has reviewed the Council's performance against targets within the Corporate Plan - "Growing Success", together with a summary of achievements, service performance, data for priority objectives, progress against the council's improvement plan and the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Service Support and Service Delivery) on the matter.

## **81. LOCAL INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK**

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the development of a Huntingdonshire Local Investment Framework which has been compiled to determine the level of local and strategic infrastructure required to meet the target for new homes identified in Huntingdonshire in the Core Strategy up to 2026.

In discussing future initiatives, Members have supported the proposed creation of a St. Neots Delivery Board, similar to the boards set up to deliver growth in the Cambridge area. The new board will consider social infrastructure requirements and how delivery options associated with potential housing development can be located, based

on existing facilities and accessibility levels. It was noted that Member involvement will be crucial in the deliberations of such a board.

**82. ST. NEOTS MARKET TOWN STRATEGY**

The Cabinet has approved the contents of the St. Neots Market Town Transport Strategy, which forms part of the Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2006 - 2011.

In considering the key aspects of the document, Members have raised concerns over the lack of bus lay-over space and the impact of congestion generally in terms of air quality. The Cabinet has been informed that initial discussions have been held with local bus operators with regard to known problems, specifically the absence of any link between bus and train timetables. At the same time, the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy has recorded his concern that the Strategy does not address future transport needs given the predicted population levels for the area. In that respect, the Cabinet has been reassured that the strategy will be reviewed between now and 2011 to take into account emerging pressures and possible development scenarios around St. Neots.

**83. PROPOSED SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS –  
THE TRANSFORMATION FROM DEVELOPMENT CONTROL TO  
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT**

A proposal to formalise the transformation of the development control function to one of development management has been endorsed by the Cabinet. In so doing, Members have noted that the nature of the local development framework has prompted a change in emphasis with focus now being placed on the importance of a sustainable and deliverable development in the District as opposed to the more negatives and reactive perception held currently in some quarters about the development control function. At the same time, attention has been drawn to the issue of targeted funding arising from which the Cabinet has requested the Head of Planning Services to investigate the possibility of introducing charges for pre-application discussions and advice. In recognising the importance of ensuring that all stakeholders understand and sign up to the new approach, the Cabinet has requested that town and parish councils be invited to a series of planned workshops on the new arrangements.

**84. REVIEW OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS**

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the findings of a study by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) regarding the Council's Section 106 process. Particular reference was made to the potential impact of the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy and variable infrastructure tariff expected to be implemented in the near future. Executive Councillors have been advised that the introduction of the levy will empower local authorities to place a new charge on most types of developments in their area with the proceeds being spent on local and sub-regional infrastructure to offset the impact of

the development. Having been advised of new legislation which enables local planning authorities to request developers to submit draft heads of terms for Section 106 Agreements as part of the application validation process, the Cabinet has -

- ◆ requested that a guidance note be prepared and drawn to the attention of Members to illustrate how they can comment on applications and the potential heads of terms for Section 106 Agreements by reference to the weekly planning list notification;
- ◆ agreed to give clear guidance to town and parish councils on how to comment on the potential content of agreements for development in their areas as part of the normal consultation arrangements and speaking at Development Management Panel meetings;
- ◆ requested that town and parish councils be advised of the introduction of a marker on the planning weekly list relating to applications likely to generate a Section 106 Agreement and reminded to review these on a regular basis with a view to making comments on the potential heads of terms of Agreements in their areas;
- ◆ suggested that copies of the quarterly report prepared by the People, Performance and Partnership Division detailing income and expenditure from the Section 106 money be provided to all Members and changes to the content of the report implemented at the earliest opportunity;
- ◆ approved the expansion of the remit and terms of reference of the Section 106 Advisory Group to include monitoring of agreements and meetings convened on a more regular basis with dates reserved in the Council's calendar one week prior to each Development Management Panel meeting;
- ◆ agreed to submit copies of the monitoring report to the Section 106 Advisory Group on a quarterly basis and also to the Development Management Panel with any comments from the Advisory Group;
- ◆ agreed to the Executive Councillor for Finance and the Environment becoming responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of processes for securing payments and the expenditure of receipts under Section 106 Agreements, with individual Executive Councillors remaining accountable for the delivery of benefits and projects relevant to their portfolios; and
- ◆ invited the Section 106 Working Group to consider the likely effects of the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy and make recommendations on processes to implement the system.

## **85. CONSULTATION ON CODE OF RECOMMENDED PRACTICE ON LOCAL AUTHORITY PUBLICITY**

The Cabinet has endorsed the contents of a suggested response on behalf of the Council to a consultation paper issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government on proposed changes to the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity. The Code was first issued in 1988 to cover the content,

style, distribution and cost of local authority publicity, from public meetings to council publications, advertising and the website. In reviewing the code, Members have recorded their concern that the code offers no specific guidance in relation to individual Ward members who may not hold a particular responsibility with the Council, but whose work with their constituents is of significant importance. Nor does the Code address the recent growth in electronic communication.

## **86. REVIEW OF DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE**

A Working Party chaired by the Special Adviser to the Cabinet has reported on its findings after a wide-ranging review of the Council's democratic structure and the role of Members. The report and recommendations themselves are dealt with by way of a separate item on the agenda for the Council meeting, where the report can be found in full.

Presentations to which all Members were invited have been provided by the working party over two sessions to give an opportunity for detailed discussion on the findings. Following consideration by Cabinet, the report has been submitted to meetings of both of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and the Corporate Governance Panel in terms of the changes proposed to the Council's constitution. The Cabinet will be meeting again after those Panels have discussed the report to finalise its recommendations to Council. These, together with the views of the Panels, will be assimilated into a final report by Cabinet that will be submitted to Council after the agenda has been despatched.

I C Bates  
Chairman