

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the the Aquarius Room, St Ivo Leisure Centre, Westwood Road, St Ives on Thursday, 17 September 2009.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.

Councillors K J Churchill, D B Dew, J A Gray, A Hansard, C R Hyams, T V Rogers and L M Simpson.

APOLOGIES: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds .

38. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 23rd July 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

39. MEMBERS INTERESTS

Councillor Churchill and Hyams declared personal interests in Minute No 09/41 by virtue of their former membership of the Luminus Group and the Luminus Homes (parent) board respectively.

40. FINANCIAL FORECAST

Further to Minute No. 09/17 and by way of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the financial forecast for the period up to 2018/2019 together with the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well Being) thereon.

In considering the information contained in the report, Members have been informed of potential variations in a number of sources of income and other factors that could affect the Council's financial position. Having noted the uncertainty created by the current economic climate and the uncertainties for the next financial year, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted;
- (b) that the annuity basis for the calculation of minimum revenue provision as outlined in Annex C be approved; and
- (c) that in considering the Financial Strategy for the period up to 2018/19 the Council's attention be drawn to the

uncertainty created by the current economic and political conditions and their potential effect on the Council's financial position next year.

41. THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT CORE STRATEGY 2008 - DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT - THE INSPECTOR'S BINDING REPORT/ADOPTION PROCEDURES

Further to Minute No. 07/73, the Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which summarised the Inspector's consideration and conclusions regarding the soundness of the DPD, following his examination of the submitted Core Strategy.

The Cabinet were advised that the majority of the changes to the strategy had been proposed by the Council and any changes imposed by the Inspector were negligible. In discussing the contents of the strategy, the Executive Councillor for Operations expressed apprehension about the conclusions reached for Godmanchester regarding housing development, particularly the ability to support new developments with the existing infrastructure and the effect on local services.

Having expressed their thanks to staff for their efforts in achieving such a comprehensive document, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Council be recommended to approve the Core Strategy as part of the Development Plan for the District.

(Councillor C R Hyams requested that it be recorded that he abstained from voting on this item.)

42. PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Cabinet received and noted a report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which reviewed the Council's performance against targets within "Growing Success" - the Council's Corporate Plan. Of the 37 corporate objectives 8 were priorities and these had been split between the Overview and Scrutiny Panels. Having received explanations for 6 of the objectives being highlighted as not performing, Executive Councillors suggested that where monthly figures were compared against yearly these be coded as amber, rather than red, to show they are on target.

43. GREAT FEN MASTERPLAN

With the assistance of a report by the Director of Environmental and Community Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a draft illustrative Masterplan for the Great Fen project together with the deliberations the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) thereon.

Members were advised that the Masterplan outlined where new physical features could be created and existing characteristics

retained showing open water, wetland, woodland, footpaths, cycleways, buildings and car parks. The document would form the basis of a new action plan for the ongoing development of the project.

In discussing the contents of the Masterplan Members' attention was drawn to initial discussions held with Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council regarding the project. In that respect, Executive Councillors have requested that they both be formally consulted on the Masterplan with a view to them eventually becoming full partners alongside the District Council, Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners, English Nature and the Wildlife Trust for Cambridgeshire. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Masterplan for the Great Fen project be approved as a basis of public consultation.

44. NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS

By way of a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered proposed draft terms of reference for the new neighbourhood forums and panels.

Members were reminded that the forums were intended to improve community engagement and inform, consult and involve local people in the exercise of the functions of the Council and its partners.

In discussing representation, Executive Councillors were advised that each Panel will comprise of up to 10 representatives of local authorities and other public and voluntary bodies in each forum area. Whilst the district council representation would be limited to one ward member, all councillors within each neighbourhood area would be encouraged to attend the meetings. Members were advised that the forums would replace the Police Safer Neighbourhood Panel meetings already programmed after the beginning of the new calendar year. Having noted that in the interim an initial forum meeting would be held in the southern neighbourhood on 28th September 2009, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the terms of reference for the neighbourhood forums and panels for Huntingdonshire be approved; and
- (b) that the following appointments to the five neighbourhood panels/forums be approved: -

Huntingdon – Councillor T D Sanderson
North West Huntingdonshire – Councillor E R Butler
Ramsey – Councillor A Monk;
St. Ives – Councillor Mrs J Dew ;and
St. Neots – Councillor A N Gilbert.

45. NEW HEADQUARTERS - MEMORABILIA AND ENDOWMENTS

The Cabinet considered a report by the New Accommodation Project Co-ordinator (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding the future inclusion/display of civic memorabilia and endowments in the Council's new headquarters.

Members were advised that as a result of the function of the various spaces in the new building display space would be limited, resulting in the display of chairmen's portraits and group photographs of the Council being restricted to the most recent. In discussing the proposed display of the Council's Rolls of Honour in the new Civic Suite, certain Members were of the opinion that these should continue to be on view to the general public. Having considered proposals to deal with future acquisitions and endowments, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the New Accommodation Project Co-ordinator and the Deputy Leader, after consultation with Members, be requested to investigate alternative locations for the Council's Rolls of Honour, together with possibility of a new display board listing Leaders of the Council.
- (b) that the restriction on displaying the Chairman's portrait and group photographs of the Council to those that are the most recent be noted;
- (c) that the protocol for determining future endowments, outlined in paragraph 4.2 of the report now submitted be approved and the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to determine these endowments.

46. ADOPTION OF ROADS AND SEWERS

A report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which summarised the findings of their study on the adoption of roads and sewers in Huntingdonshire.

The Cabinet were informed that the report highlighted the problems encountered by house buyers in ensuring that the infrastructure is maintained at the public's expense and the difficulties faced by the highways and water authorities in ensuring that roads and sewers are completed by the developers to adoptable standards. Having recognised the importance of raising awareness of these issues among residents, especially during the conveyancing process, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report now submitted be noted;

- (b) that, subject to consultation with Anglian Water on the proposed approach, the communications plan appended to the report now submitted be implemented;
- (c) that the Scrutiny and Review Manager be requested to formally write to the local branch of the Law Society to draw their attention to the issues identified by the Panel;
- (d) that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) be requested to revisit the study once the extent is known of the sewers not under the responsibility of Anglian Water and following the implementation of the Government initiative referred to in paragraph 4.10 of the report; and
- (e) that the Scrutiny and Review Manager be requested to lobby the local government association to seek the strengthening of the powers of the Highways Authority with regard to the road adoption process.

47. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to the financial affairs of the Council and is likely to reveal the terms of a contract.

48. SOUTH STREET PUBLIC CONVENIENCES, ST NEOTS

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Environmental Management on the South Street Public Conveniences, St. Neots (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book).

Having considered the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) on the matter and in acknowledging that no further expenditure should be incurred in improving the facility, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that St Neots Town Council be offered the option of improving and maintaining the South Street Public Conveniences before any final decision is made as to their future.

