

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Wren Room, the Countryside Centre, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park, Huntingdon on Thursday, 17 December 2009.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.

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

69. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th November 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

70. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor I C Bates and K J Churchill declared personal interests in Minute Nos. 75 and 76 by virtue of their membership of Cambridgeshire County Council.

71. LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT 1988 - PUBLICATION OF RURAL SETTLEMENT LIST

The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Customer Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the boundaries of rural settlements for the purposes of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997.

In considering an amended draft rural settlement list for Huntingdonshire, Members were advised that changes had been necessary as a result of the growth and expansion experienced in some rural areas and specifically the Huntingdonshire (Parishes) Order 2009. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the revised rural settlement list, as appended to the report now submitted, be approved and made available for inspection as required.

72. TREASURY MANAGEMENT INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE

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 achieved during the period April to September 2009 by external fund managers in the matter of the investment of the Council's capital receipts.

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

73. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

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 the Corporate Plan - "Growing Success". The report which included data and narrative on the achievement against targets for each of the Council's priority objectives had been considered also by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

74. ST. NEOTS HEALTH CHECK

With the aid 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 purpose and process of the St. Neots Health Check undertaken by his division. The Health Check had explored St. Neots holistically and identified what could be done to improve the town in line with its predicted growth. The consultation process undertaken had created a vision for the whole of St. Neots and in noting that plans would be developed to achieve this and provide the evidence for future funding bids, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the work undertaken to date to produce the St. Neots Health Check be noted.

75. REVIEW OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PILOT PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

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 were acquainted with the findings of two participatory budgeting pilots undertaken in the Huntingdon North and Eynesbury Wards.

Members were reminded that the Government's recent community empowerment directions included encouragement that authorities should undertake some form of participatory budgeting by 2012. The approach is believed to give people more of a direct stake in local governance and increase levels of civic and community participation and action. The events had been successful in distributing a total of £120,000 of funding from the County and District Councils and Luminus Homes Group to community based agencies and statutory services offering community services. Having considered the potential for expanding participatory budgeting in the future and in particular issues relating to the role of the Neighbourhood Forums/Panels and the financial implications for the authority, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

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

- (b) that further evaluation of the effectiveness of the two participatory budget initiatives be undertaken to include a breakdown of the costs involved, with a view to a report being considered at a future meeting; and
- (c) that officers be requested to investigate with partners the level of funding they are prepared to commit to participatory budgeting and into what areas they feel it should be allocated.

76. SHAPING PLACES, SHAPING SERVICES CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

By way of a report by the Heads of Democratic and Central Services, Environmental and Community Health Services and People, Performance & Partnership Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the content of Cambridgeshire County Council's Community Engagement Strategy - "Shaping Places, Shaping Services", along and a draft action plan.

The Cabinet were advised that the strategy aimed to increase the potential for local people to influence the development of their communities and the services provided. Having discussed the implications for the District, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted and the Council's response to the Cambridgeshire County Council's Community Engagement Strategy, outlined in paragraph 3 of the report now submitted, be endorsed.

77. AGEING WELL IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE - OLDER PEOPLES' HOUSING STRATEGY

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 the contents of the draft Older People's Housing Strategy - "Ageing Well in Huntingdonshire Housing and Healthy Ageing for Older People", together with an associated action plan.

Having been informed that the strategy has been produced to examine the issues and identify the housing and related services that the District Council and Partners would need to deliver to support NHS Cambridgeshire in promoting healthy ageing and to improve the quality of life for older people the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the older people's housing strategy "Ageing Well in Huntingdonshire" together with the associated action plan be approved.

78. DRAFT SIDE ROAD ORDERS FOR THE A14 ELLINGTON TO FEN DITTON IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

By means of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with a proposed response to the draft side road orders for the A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton Improvements scheme published by the Highways Agency.

In reviewing the issues involved, Members supported the overall principle of the proposed enhancement however, comments were made in relation to the predicted pattern of increase and decrease in traffic in and around Huntingdon town centre and the proposed new interchanges at Brampton and Fen Drayton, possible flood risks, the impact on adjoining villages and the level of mitigation for issues such as noise and landscape. Given that the scheme and the Council's response would be considered further at a special meeting of the Council on 22nd December 2009, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

79. PAXTON PITS NATURE RESERVE EDUCATION CENTRE

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining a scheme to provide an education centre at Paxton Pits Nature Reserve. The scheme would provide a class room and office for use by educational groups and local schools.

Members were advised that funding of £280,000 for the scheme had been secured by the Wildlife Trust from the aggregate levy sustainability fund. The Countryside Services had obtained match funding of £70,000 from the Housing Growth Fund and further £4,000 donated by the Friends of Paxton Pits. Having noted that the building would be owned by the District Council and leased to the Wildlife Trust for a period of 30 years, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

Chairman