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## **Cabinet**

### **Report of the meetings held on 17th December 2009 and 21st January 2010**

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#### **Matters for Information**

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**52. TREASURY MANAGEMENT –  
INVESTMENT AND PERFORMANCE**

The Cabinet has noted the performance of the District Council's Fund Managers for the period 1st July to 30th September 2009.

**53. LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT 1988 (AS AMENDED)  
PUBLICATION OF RURAL SETTLEMENT LIST**

Billing authorities are required under Section 42 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1988 to compile and maintain a rural settlement list identifying the boundary of any settlement which has not more than 3,000 residents. This list is then used to grant rural rate relief to local post offices, village shops and petrol filling stations. Following a review necessitated by growth in certain areas, changes to the District Council's Rural Settlement List have been approved by the Cabinet.

**54. 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, progress against the Council's Improvement Plan and the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels on the matter.

**55. ST. NEOTS HEALTH CHECK**

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the purpose and process of the St. Neots "health check" undertaken by the Planning Division. The health check explored St. Neots holistically and identified what could be done to improve the town in line with its predicted growth. The consultation process undertaken has created a vision for the whole of St. Neots which Officers will use to develop plans for use as future funding bids.

**56. PAXTON PITS NATURE RESERVE EDUCATION CENTRE**

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the key elements of the scheme to provide an education centre at Paxton Pits Nature

Reserve, which will provide a class room for office use by educational groups and local schools.

Funding for the scheme amounting to £280,000 has been secured by the Wildlife Trust from the Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund. Countryside Services have obtained match funding of £70,000 from the Housing Growth Fund with a further £4,000 donated by the Friends of Paxton Pits. Once completed, the building will be owned by the District Council and leased to the Wildlife Trust for a period of 30 years.

**57. AGEING WELL IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE –  
OLDER PEOPLE'S STRATEGIC STRATEGY**

The Cabinet has approved the contents of the Huntingdonshire Housing and Health Ageing for Older People's Strategic Strategy. The strategy has been prepared to examine the issues and identify the housing and related services that the District Council and Partners can deliver to support NHS Cambridgeshire in promoting healthy ageing and improving the quality of life for older people.

**58. DRAFT SIDE ROAD ORDERS FOR A14**

The Cabinet has endorsed the Council's response to the draft side road orders for the A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton Improvements Scheme published by the Highways Agency. Having reviewed the issues involved, the Cabinet support the overall principle of the proposed scheme but have commented in relation to the high levels of traffic predicted in and around Huntingdon town centre, the layout for the proposed new interchanges at Brampton and Fen Ditton and the risk of flooding and noise for villages adjoining the proposed route.

**59. SHAPING PLACES, SHAPING SERVICES**

The Cabinet has noted the contents of Cambridgeshire County Council's Community Engagement Strategy - "Shaping Places, Shaping Services". The strategy aims to increase the potential for local people to influence the development of their communities and the services provided.

**60. REVIEW OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PILOT PROJECTS IN  
HUNTINGDONSHIRE**

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the findings of two participatory budgeting pilots undertaken in the Huntingdon North and Eynesbury Wards. Particular reference was made to the Government's community empowerment directions, which encourage authorities to 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.

Having considered the potential of expanding participatory budgeting in future and in particular issues relating to the role of the Neighbourhood Forums, the Cabinet has requested that Officers undertake further evaluation to include a breakdown of the costs involved in extending the system more widely. In the meantime, investigations will continue with partners as to the level of funding they are prepared to commit to such a project.

**61. MONITORING OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008/09**

The Cabinet has been acquainted with variations to the approved capital programme in the current year and the consequential estimated revenue impact.

**62. FINANCIAL MONITORING – REVENUE BUDGET**

The Cabinet has noted the expected revenue budget variations already identified in the current year, together with the payments written-off in the year for Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates. In that respect, Members were advised that there had been an increase in the number of liquidations during 2009 as a consequence of the downturn in the economic climate which had led to an increase in the value of debts being written-off.

In noting that the expected outturn of revenue expenditure is £22.2m, which represents a reduction in the budget deficit of £1.2m, Executive Councillors have referred to the absence of a contingency to make “invest to save” decisions and have agreed that as part of the final budget paper the underspend be used to establish a “special reserve” to help fund the achievement of savings.

**63. ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Cabinet has noted details of the Council’s management of assets against national property performance management indicators. In so doing, Executive Councillors have been advised that the registration of all land and property with the Land Registry was nearly complete and that work is progressing to incorporate all information relating to the Council’s property ownership and asset management on a new computerised database.

**64. IMPROVEMENTS TO KERBSIDE RECYCLING SERVICES**

The Cabinet has agreed to widen the range of materials collected through the current kerbside recycling service to include glass bottles and containers with effect from the end of March 2010. The Director of Environment & Community Services has been authorised to determine an appropriate way forward for the scheme’s delivery after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Operational and Countryside Services.

In discussing the extension of the service, the Cabinet’s attention has been drawn to the future of local glass “bring sites” which were previously the only method of recycling in the District. As recycling

services have developed and expanded in recent years, the amount of material collected through the “bring site” system has reduced and now represents a small fraction of the material collected for recycling. In that respect, the Cabinet has agreed to introduce a phased removal of the existing recycling banks from bring sites. Payment of recycling credits will continue at the current rate per tonne to site owners during the financial year 2010/2011 but during this time, efforts will be made to secure arrangements to introduce new banks at the sites to enable the collection of a different range of recyclables with the aim of these being in place by April 2011. The Cabinet has agreed that the future payment of recycling credits from that date will be on the basis of an equitable division that ensures the full costs of managing and operating “bring sites” is met from the income received.

**65. DEVELOPMENT BRIEF - OLD FIRE STATION, ST NEOTS**

The Cabinet has agreed to adopt as Interim Planning Guidance a planning brief for the Old Fire Station and Depot site at Huntingdon Street, St Neots. The brief is an important step to achieving the most appropriate form of redevelopment of the site and has been subject of a public consultation exercise. The Cabinet has also authorised the Head of Planning Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, to make any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations as necessary.

**66. SAPLEY EAST – PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS**

The Cabinet has authorised the Director of Central Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillors for Resources and Policy and for Finance, to approve terms for a series of property transactions required to achieve the Master Plan for the development of land to the East of Sapley Square, Huntingdon. Having discussed the financial cost of the scheme, the Cabinet has noted that Hunts Forum has submitted a bid for grant funding towards the development of the proposed community enterprise centre referred to in the plan. There is a need for some match funding which will include the land value and possibly some S106 contributions as well as part of the rental stream converted to a loan. With this in mind, the Cabinet has emphasised the need to ensure that the proposals do not incur any additional costs to the Council.

I C Bates  
Chairman