

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Civic Suite O.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 21 October 2010.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.

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

APOLOGY: An Apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor C R Hyams.

41. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 16th September 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

42. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor I C Bates declared a personal interest in Minute No. 10/50 by virtue of his membership of Cambridgeshire Horizons and Cambridgeshire County Council.

Councillor K J Churchill declared a personal interest in Minute No. 10/50 by virtue of his membership of Cambridgeshire County Council.

Councillor T V Rogers declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No. 10/50 by virtue of a family connection with a potential development and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

43. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

(Councillors J D Ablewhite, S J Criswell and P M D Godfrey, Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Economic Well-Being, Social Well-Being and Environmental Well-Being respectively were in attendance for consideration of this item).

Pursuant to Minute No. 10/36, the Cabinet reconsidered a report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels outlining their deliberations and proposals in response to the report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships on the Council's performance against its priority objectives.

The Chairmen of the Panels were provided with an opportunity to present the conclusions reached within their report and in so doing referred to comments of the Corporate Plan Working Group concerning expenditure on the employment of external consultants and the need to address the strategic and future direction and development of the Council. The Cabinet noted that a review of the Council's policy framework and performance management systems

were underway to take account of Government announcements on the national performance arrangements. It was intended that the review would incorporate measures to improve the understanding and transparency of the Council's performance and activities. It was noted also that the Redundancy Policy and Voluntary Release Scheme recently adopted by the Employment Panel contained clear guidance on the criteria to be used in determining proposals or applications for the release of employees.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Panels' comments as part of its deliberations on the report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships be noted;
- (b) that use of expenditure on employing external consultants be referred back to the Corporate Plan Working Group for further review, including the criteria used in the appointment of and an assessment of the cost and value of using consultants;
- (c) that contributions from opposition groups, all Members, employees, local businesses and the public had been and were being sought in identifying financial savings; and
- (d) that a review the Council's priorities, aims and objectives and consequent service provision and levels was underway generally and specifically in terms of the work being undertaken to prepare budgets for 2011/12 and future years and that this review would involve the Corporate Plan Working Group, the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and take account of the views expressed during consultation exercises.

44. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2010/11 BUDGET

By means of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was acquainted with anticipated cost variations and timing changes in the Capital Programme for the 2010/11 financial year. Having received clarification on the appropriate level of borrowing compared to revenue, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the report be received and the expenditure variations noted.

45. FINANCIAL MONITORING - REVENUE BUDGET 2010/11

The Cabinet received a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the projected budget outturn for 2010/11 together with details of variations from the previous forecast.

The Cabinet's attention was drawn to areas of spending where there

was likely to be some level of uncertainty, particularly in respect of concessionary fares. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report now submitted be noted.

46. DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE REVIEW - 12 MONTHS ON

A report by the Democratic Structure Review Working Party was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) summarising the findings of a review by the Working Party on the impact of the changes made to the Council's democratic structure since its implementation in September 2009. The Cabinet were reminded that at the time the Working Party's recommendations were approved, the Council had requested for a review of the arrangements to be undertaken after twelve months' in operation.

Having been advised that the outcome of a consultation exercise with Members had indicated support for the changes introduced by the Council and following consideration of a proposal to retain the Working Party in its current form to consider any emerging developments which may impact upon the Council's democratic structure, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Council be recommended to make no change to the current democratic structure of the Council as a result of the review of the measures approved by the Council at its meetings held in April and June 2009; and
- (b) that the Democratic Structure Working Party be retained in its current format to consider and report on an ad hoc basis legislative and other changes that may impact on the Council's democratic structure.

47. EXECUTIVE LEADER AND CABINET FORM OF EXECUTIVE

Pursuant to Minute No. 10/38, the Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the implications for the Council upon its decision to change its executive arrangements to an Executive Leader and Cabinet model.

In noting that the change would come into effect three days after the day of elections in May 2011 and having drawn the Cabinet's attention to a series of consequential changes to be made to the Council's Constitution, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Council be RECOMMENDED to

- (a) change its form of executive with effect from 8th May 2011 to an Executive Leader and Cabinet in accordance with Section 11(2A) of the Local

Government Act 2000; and

- (b) approve the changes to the Constitution listed in the Appendix to the report now submitted with the exception of the changes to the Council Procedure Rules which should stand adjourned without discussion, after being moved and seconded, to the next meeting of the Council to be held on 15th December 2010.

48. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to terms proposed in the course of negotiation for the acquisition or disposal of property.

49. LANDING ADJOINING 4 KINGSBROOK, ST IVES

The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Law, Property and Governance (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) seeking approval for the disposal of Council owned land at Kingsbrook, St Ives. Consideration was also given to the financial limit for the approval of land sales under delegated powers. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the disposal of land at Kingsbrook, St Ives be approved on the terms set out in the report now submitted; and
- (b) that after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Leisure and Law, Property and Governance, the Director of Central Services, or in his absence, the Head of Law, Property and Governance be authorised to approve land sale transactions up to £50,000 in any particular case.

50. HUNTINGDON TOWN CENTRE RE-DEVELOPMENT

(See Members' Interests)

With the aid of a presentation and a report by Chief Officers Management Team (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) the Cabinet received an update on progress with redevelopment schemes in Huntingdon town centre, together with the proposed heads of terms for agreements to secure redevelopment. In so doing, Members received also the conclusions of the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) thereon.

The Cabinet considered in detail the economic benefits and opportunities that the redevelopment would bring to the town centre and were provided with an update of information by the Director of Environmental and Community Services in respect of negotiations

concerning land ownership, funding of the Huntingdon West Relief Road and the financial and commercial risks arising from the proposals in line with the comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being). With regard to the funding arrangements for the new link road, Members concurred with the view expressed by Officers and the Overview and Scrutiny Panel that it would be preferable for the County Council to be party to meeting the funding gap pending the receipt of developer contributions. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Director of Environmental & Community Services be authorised to negotiate and conclude the Development Agreements with Sainsbury's, Churchmanor Estates and Cambridgeshire County Council after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy on the basis of Heads of Terms being considered;
- (b) that Medium Term Plan monies for the "Extra Car Parking, Huntingdon Town Centre" and "Huntingdon Town Centre Development" schemes for the construction of the multi storey car park and the Huntingdon West Relief Road be released; and
- (c) that after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy, the Director of Environmental and Community Services be authorised to agree funding arrangements for the Huntingdon West Relief Road until the future Section 106 monies are received.

Chairman