

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 18 November 2010.

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.

51. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 21st October 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

52. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor I C Bates and Councillor K J Churchill declared personal interests in Minute No. 10/55 by virtue of their membership of Cambridgeshire County Council.

Councillor C R Hyams declared a personal interest in Minute No. 10/56 by virtue of his membership of Godmanchester Town Council.

53. DRAFT BUDGET 2011/12 AND MTP 2012/16

Consideration was given to a report by the Chief Officers Management Team (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) setting out a draft Budget for 2011/12 and Medium Term Plan (MTP) for the period 2012 -16.

Members were advised that the proposals reflected the results of the recent public consultation on the budget and were expected to generate revenue savings of 6.4m per year by 2014/15 as well as a reduction in the capital programme of 5.3m over five years.

In discussing the contents of the report, Member's attention was drawn to the conclusions reached by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being). In that respect, Members concurred with the Panel that consideration should be given to alternative delivery methods for local offices services, such as the customer services centres. Furthermore, Members were advised that initial discussions had been held with Cambridgeshire County Council with a view to working alongside their library service and that further talks would be held with Town and Parish Councils.

With regard to proposals to reduce the grants paid to voluntary organisations, Executive Councillors concurred with the Panel that these groups are likely to form an important part of the move towards "localism" and the public's demand on them may increase as a result of changes to the welfare system. The Cabinet were of the opinion also that these groups should be encouraged to explore a variety of

alternative means of funding and revenue generation.

Having considered the Panel's views on the proposals for the CCTV Service, the Cabinet noted that a number of options were being discussed including the potential to enter into a joint arrangement with Cambridgeshire Constabulary, other Councils and/or Town and Parish Councils.

In relation to the proposals to increase car parking charges from 2014, a number of comments have been made with regard to the staggering of the increases, the lack of adequate public transport, the introduction of civil parking enforcement and the support and ability of residents to pay an increased fee.

In considering the options for the determination of levels of Council Tax for 2011/12, the Cabinet were conscious of the current economic climate, the impact on local residents and the Government's proposed grant of 2.5% for Councils who decided to freeze their council tax for the coming financial year. In the circumstances Executive Councillors concluded that this should form the basis of a recommendation to Council and alternative options for Council Tax should not be considered.

Discussion also ensued on proposals put forward by the Liberal Democrat Group, in respect of which the Cabinet noted that review of pay, pay systems and allowances was already underway with the development of shared services initiatives and proposals to sub let spare office capacity. Areas which required further discussions were noted these included job sharing, members allowances, a reduction in the number of District Councillors - although it was felt that they would unlikely to result in significant savings during the budget plan period and the retention of the customer services centres. Members concluded that it was not feasible to lease back Pathfinder House.

Having acknowledged that the contents of the draft budget was subject to change during the preparation of the detailed budget and would need to adapt appropriately to circumstances and new information, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the draft Medium Term Financial Plan be recommended to Council as the basis for the development of the 2011/2012 budget and the revised Medium Term Plan 2015/2016;
- (b) that Council be recommended to approve no increase in Council Tax for 2011/2012; and
- (c) that Chief Officer's Management Team be authorised after consultation with the appropriate Executive Councillors to prepare and implement plans for changes and reductions in services to achieve targeted savings plans for 2011/2012 and future years.

54. TREASURY MANAGEMENT - REVIEW OF 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 2010 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.

55. CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN

Consideration was given to a joint report by the Heads of Housing Services and of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a copy of the Cambridgeshire Local Investment Plan (CLIP) prior to its submission to Cambridgeshire Horizons Board for final approval in December 2010.

The Cabinet were advised that the Plan aimed to facilitate the delivery of investment in a range of housing, infrastructure, regeneration and community activities taking into account locally determined priorities and a number of existing strategies and plans. The document had been prepared by the Homes and Communities Agency and Cambridgeshire Horizons in conjunction with Cambridgeshire Local Authorities and would primarily be used as evidence to support bids to draw in external funding to the area.

Having been advised of the conclusions reached by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) on the reliability of the data presented and in concurring with the Panel over the importance of upgrading the A14, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the contents of the Cambridgeshire Local Investment Plan now submitted be endorsed.

56. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY: CONSULTATION DRAFT

The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Housing Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking approval for the adoption of the draft Homelessness Strategy.

In so doing, Members' attention was drawn to the statutory requirement under the Homelessness Act 2002 for local authorities to carry out a review of homelessness within their areas and to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of that review. The draft Strategy outlines the future strategic direction of homelessness prevention, which was a matter of growing concern for the Council.

Members' attention was drawn to the conclusions reached by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). In that respect, the Cabinet shared the concerns of the Panel that Government funding for the homelessness prevention budget might not continue beyond

2010/11.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the draft Homelessness Strategy be approved for consultation purposes.

57. ST NEOTS EAST URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a schedule summarising those representations received during consultation on the Urban Design Framework which would guide development of an area of land east of the railway line in St. Neots. The framework was intended to set design parameters for any future redevelopment of the site and had been prepared in conjunction with the major landowners and potential developers.

The contents of the Framework had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being), arising from which some concern had been expressed over the need for integration with the remainder of the town and the planned education provision for the site. Having received assurances over proposals to expand Longsands and St Neots Community Colleges, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the revisions to the St. Neots Expansion Urban Design Framework be approved; and
- (b) that the Head of Planning Services be authorised, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, to approve the adoption of the revised document incorporating consequential amendments as Planning Policy.

58. LAND AT MILL ROAD, EATON SOCON

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Law, Property and Government (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a proposal for the transfer of Council-owned land at Mill Road, Eaton Socon to an adjoining landowner for the development of a residential scheme.

Members were advised that the 1st Eaton Socon Scout Group currently leased the land from the Council on a 10 year lease due to expire at the end of 2012. Having been advised that the transaction would protect the interests of the Scout Group and would include the developer providing replacement facilities and other support, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that disposal of the land at Mill Road, Eaton Socon be approved in principle and the Director of Central Services authorised, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Leisure and Law, Property and Governance to approve

terms for the sale.

59. LICENSING ACT 2003 - STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

(The following urgent item was admitted in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 given the need for the Cabinet to consider the report prior to its submission to the Council)

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Cabinet considered the results of consultation on the Council's revised Statement of Licensing Policy under the Licensing Act 2003.

The Cabinet were acquainted with legislative changes that had taken place since the previous statement of licensing policy had been approved. These included a mandatory code of practice for alcohol retailers, allowing elected members of licensing authorities to become interested parties for the purposes of making representation and applying for reviews, re-classification of lap dancing clubs so that they require a sex establishment licence and new mandatory conditions in relation to the supply of alcohol.

Having been informed that the consultation had elicited little response and that the Licensing Committee had proposed that no change be made to the draft other than minor corrections, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the revised statement of licensing policy be endorsed for submission to the Council for approval.

60. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

to resolve:-

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to individuals and is likely to reveal the identity of those individuals.

61. EMPLOYEE SELECTION PANEL APPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY RELEASE

Having been acquainted with the outcome of the meeting of the Employee Selection Panel on applications for voluntary release from senior managers the Leader, on behalf of the Cabinet confirmed that there were no material objections to the applications in accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules.

Chairman