

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the The Civic Suite, Room CVO1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 8 December 2011.

PRESENT: Councillor J D Ablewhite – Chairman.  
Councillors B S Chapman, J A Gray,  
N J Guyatt, T D Sanderson and D M Tysoe.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor M Shellens for item No 68.

### **66. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17th November 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **67. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor T D Sanderson declared a personal interest in Minute No 68 in view of his employment by the Military of Defence.

### **68. RAF BRAMPTON URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK**

*(Councillor M Shellens, local ward member, was in attendance and spoke in support of the Framework)*

Further to Minute No. 10/67, the Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the responses received to the consultation on the draft RAF Brampton Urban Design Framework (UDF) and suggested amendments to the Framework as a consequence thereof.

Executive Councillors were advised that the principles set out in the UDF would facilitate the delivery of the District Council's adopted core strategy policies for mixed use development in Brampton.

The responses had been discussed by the Development Management Panel and the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) arising from which some concern had been expressed over the future of the Brampton Park Theatre. Having requested that the final document include reference to potential options for the retention of the theatre building as a community facility, the Cabinet

### **RESOLVED**

that the Head of Planning Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing and the Chairman of the Development Management Panel, be authorised to finalise and approve the RAF Brampton Urban Design Framework as planning guidance to inform Council Policy and Development Management Decisions on potential

planning applications.

**69. THE GREAT FEN MASTERPLAN PLANNING GUIDANCE**

Further to Minute No. 10/116, consideration was given to a report by the Head of Planning Services to which was attached the Great Fen Masterplan: Statement of Consultation (a copy of both the Statement and the Head of Service's report are appended in the Minute Book).

Executive Councillors were advised that the document had been prepared in partnership with the Environment Agency, Natural England, Middle Level Commissioners and Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough Wildlife Trust. It would be used to provide the delivery of the Great Fen Vision over a period of 50 years.

Having recognised the importance of the document when determining forthcoming planning applications within the Great Fen area and in noting its endorsement by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) and Development Management Panel, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Statement of Recognition, as set out in Appendix A to the report now submitted, be approved; and
- (b) that the Great Fen Masterplan be adopted as Supplementary Planning Policy Guidance to inform Council Policy and guide development management decisions.

**70. DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

By way of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) Members were acquainted with the outcomes of the consultation exercise undertaken on the draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – "Developer Contributions".

Members were informed that the initial aim of the Strategy was to establish a framework for securing planning obligations from new developments that require planning permission. It was explained that it had been necessary to update the SPD to complement the draft charging schedule for the Huntingdonshire Community Infrastructure Levy which also was subject to a preliminary consultation in November/December 2011 and examination in public by Spring 2012.

Having noted the document had been endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) and the Development Management Panel, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Developer Contributions Document be adopted as

**71. UPDATE OF THE COUNCIL'S CORE STRATEGY - IT'S LOCAL PLAN**

*(During discussion of this item (7.20pm) Councillor Tysoe, Executive Councillor for Environment took his seat at the meeting)*

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining a need to update the Council's Core Strategy in order to provide Huntingdonshire with a robust ongoing local planning policy and development framework. The report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

By way of background, Members were informed that emerging changes in the National Planning Policy position and local circumstances, such as the designation of the Alconbury Airfield Enterprise Zone, had accelerated the need for the Council to reconsider its local planning policy position.

Executive Councillors were advised that during the proposed review, the existing Core Strategy would continue to be used as a sound basis for a meeting currently defined sustainable development needs.

Members' attention was drawn to the Council's Development Strategy for future growth. The Cabinet were advised that the document would also require updating to incorporate the scale of additional new development that it is considered will need to be developed. It was reported that this work would be based on sound evidence of the local need for growth and the sustainability of such growth.

In response to a question by a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) regarding engagement, the Cabinet emphasised that public involvement was an important part of the review process and that this would include a series of workshops around the district and one specifically for Members. Whereupon, it was

**RESOLVED**

- (a) that a review and update of the Council's Core Strategy, as outlined in the report now submitted, be approved and the proposal for the Council to produce a new Local Plan in order to achieve this endorsed;
- (b) that in the interim and given the ongoing discernible growth demands on the area, support for the adopted Core Strategy as a sound basis for making relevant planning decisions be maintained; and
- (c) that the commencement of work, with partners as may be applicable, on complying an updated local evidence base be endorsed with the evidence base identifying what growth would be needed and how that additional growth could be appropriately and sustainably

accommodated; and

- (d) that the Head of Planning Services be requested to bring forward an update Local Development Scheme to include a timetable for preparing and delivering this new local plan.

## **72. ADJOURNMENT**

At 7.40pm, it was

RESOLVED

that the meeting stand adjourned

Upon resumption at 8.10pm

## **73. DRAFT BUDGET 2012/13 AND MTP**

*(At this point during the meeting Councillor Gray, Executive Councillor for Resources, took his seat at the meeting).*

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) setting out a draft Budget for 2012/2013 and Medium Term Plan (MTP) for the period 2011 – 2017.

Members were advised of the latest government grant figures and were pleased to note that the Formula Grant was as predicted and the New Homes Bonus higher than the projected figure within the budget.

In discussing the contents of the report, Members' 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 the Council should not accept the proposed Council Tax Freeze Grant.

With regard to setting the Council Tax Base for 2012/13, Executive Councillors confirmed that tax payers should not be presented with a tax increase that would require a referendum to be held.

Having considered the Panel's views on the Council's general reserves provision, the Cabinet noted that the minimum level of reserves was reviewed annually and discussed the benefits and risks of increasing the level to £5m.

In relation to the inclusion of Low End Assumptions built into the MTP, the Cabinet emphasised the need to consider these carefully including the implications of planning fees from the Enterprise Zone.

In discussing the increased demand for Disabled Facilities Grants, Members reiterated their commitment to maintaining the current level of service for these grants. Executive Councillors accepted that options would continue to be investigated with a view to working in partnership with other public organisations to reduce this cost.

Discussion also ensued on the future of the Council's CCTV service and Voluntary Sector funding, in respect of which the Cabinet noted that discussions with the relevant organisations were ongoing.

Whilst congratulating officers on the significant progress that has been made in both the efficiency and savings measures identified for the next two years, the Cabinet reiterated the need to remain vigilant given the current economic climate.

In considering a request for a supplementary capital estimate of £300k to allow the Huntingdon multi-storey car park scheme to proceed and having thanked the Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) for their input, the Cabinet

#### RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report now submitted be noted;
- (b) that the draft Medium Term Financial Plan be recommended to Council as a basis for the development of the 2012/2013 budget and the revised Medium Term Plan; and
- (c) that a supplementary capital estimate of £300k be approved for the Huntingdon multi-storey car park scheme.

Chairman