

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) held in Civic Suite, 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 28 February 2012.

PRESENT: Councillor T V Rogers – Chairman.
Councillors G J Bull, E R Butler, P G Mitchell and M F Shellens.

Mr R Hall

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S Greenall, R Harrison, R B Howe, A J Mackender-Lawrence, Roberts and A H Williams.

95. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

96. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

97. CASTLE HILL HOUSE - FORMER HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES - HIGH STREET, HUNTINGDON

(Councillor J A Gray, Executive Councillor for Resources, was in attendance for this item).

The Chairman informed Members of the events that had led to this item being submitted to the Panel for consideration. By means of a report by the Managing Director (Resources) (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) the Executive Councillor for Resources then summarised the options that the Council had previously considered for Castle Hill House, High Street, Huntingdon, and the factors that would need to be taken into consideration when deciding whether to accept an offer for the property.

The Managing Director (Resources) explained the financial implications for the Council and the Medium Term Plan of the offer. He also referred to the consequences of selling the building in future years and the price that would need to be obtained to match the current offer and the costs of pursuing other options.

Mr A Matthews of Barker Storey Matthews, whom the Panel had been permitted to remain in the meeting to provide expert advice, informed Members of his assessment of the offer and of the local property market and the prospects for change.

During their deliberations on the report, the Panel discussed the need for “due diligence” to be carried out on the purchaser, the terms of the offer, changes in property values, the cost of refurbishing the building, the extent of the curtilage, the difference between the offer and the figures included in the MTP for the sale of Castle Hill House and the adjacent area of land, the timing of the decision to put the building on the market and the marketing strategy. Having also considered other uses of the building, on the grounds that it would be used constructively and that it would encourage the local economy, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to accept the offer for Castle Hill House, Main Street, Huntingdon on the terms set out in the report now submitted.

Chairman