
Cabinet

Report of the meeting held on 28th February and 22nd March 2012

Matters for Information

**60. CASTLE HILL HOUSE – FORMER DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES,
HIGH STREET, HUNTINGDON**

(The following item was considered as a confidential item under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.)

Further to Item No. 59 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 16th February 2012 and having considered the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being), the Cabinet has discussed a range of options for the future of Castle Hill House, Huntingdon.

In considering details of an offer received for the building, the Cabinet has requested the Managing Director (Resources) to instruct the Council's Agents to contact the potential purchaser and to advise them that the Council will accept an offer of £625,000 for Castle Hill House but that this offer would exclude the hardstanding area of land east of the property. Should this figure be unacceptable, the Cabinet has agreed that the Council's Agents should continue to market the house with the aim of attracting potential interest locally and from outside the area.

Having discussed the potential to convert the building to residential use, the Cabinet has requested the Managing Director (Resources) to instruct another agent to market the property as a residential dwelling.

61. OFFICER EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURE RULES

(The following item was considered as a confidential item under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.)

Having been acquainted with the requirements of paragraph 4(e) of the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, contained in the Council's Constitution, the Cabinet has confirmed that there was no material or well-founded objection to the Senior Officers' Panel's decision to make the post of Head of Housing Services redundant and the consequential deletion of the post from the establishment.

62. CAMBRIDGESHIRE RENEWABLES INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK (CRIF) AND CAMBRIDGESHIRE COMMUNITY ENERGY FUND (CEF)

Further to Item No.49 of the Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) the Cabinet has supported the future approach to energy and renewables as outlined in the Cambridgeshire Renewables Infrastructure Framework (CRIF) and the Cambridgeshire Community Energy Fund (CEF).

Executive Councillors have been advised that the CRIF project aims to provide a robust evidence base to promote and increase the implementation of renewable energy projects for the benefit of the public sector, community and business. It has been developed to help Cambridgeshire meet carbon and climate change targets by maximising energy opportunities enabling the County to deliver 28% of its energy from onshore renewables by 2030.

In considering the key elements of the CEF project, a mechanism to support developers to achieve their zero carbon obligations, Members have noted that it allows developers to offset the balance of their emissions by contributing into a fund. The money is then invested into low carbon infrastructure projects to deliver carbon emissions savings.

On the subject of wind farms, the Cabinet has concurred with the view of the Scrutiny Panel, that the Council should try to influence the positioning of wind turbines given that some wind farms work better in some locations than in others. Furthermore, Executive Councillors have emphasised that the delivery of wind farms should not be restricted to private developers and that CRIF should recognise the commercial opportunities for public sector organisations. With this in mind, the Cabinet has stressed the need to ensure that CEF income is retained locally through appropriate planning policy provision. With this caveat, the Cabinet has authorised the Managing Directors (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) and (Resources), after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Environment, to carry forward work on energy and renewables in the District and to deliver the best possible outcomes for businesses, the community and the public sector within the CRIF Framework. The Cabinet also has requested Officers to consider the merits of setting up a CEF.

63. GREATER CAMBRIDGE – GREATER PETERBOROUGH LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP: INCORPORATION AS A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

The Cabinet has supported the incorporation of the Greater Cambridge – Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) as a Company Limited by Guarantee.

Executive Councillors were advised that corporate membership allows for the expansion of the Board's remit and enables it to enter into contracts. The LEP Board has 13 Local Authorities in its area all of which have been invited to become corporate members. Having

noted that this will not involve any additional financial commitment to the authority and in supporting the Council's involvement, the Cabinet has authorised the Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to complete the appropriate legal documentation and processes.

64. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT – HUNTINGDON

Further to Item No 53 of the Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) the Cabinet has authorised the Head of Customer Services to enter into a Business Improvement District (BID) Levy Operating Agreement for Huntingdon Town Centre as required under the Local Government Act 2003.

Executive Councillors were advised that the BID area proposed for Huntingdon focused on the town centre and was essentially the area circumscribed by the ring road covering 369 businesses across the retail and office sectors. Those businesses within the defined area will be balloted on whether they will be prepared to pay an additional levy to fund improvements within that area. In order for a BID to be successful the agreement of a majority of those businesses affected must be received by number and rateable value. Executive Councillors have noted that a suggested bid levy of 1.5% of the rateable value of the businesses will raise approximately £200,000 per annum. Under this rate the Council will be subject to an annual levy of £11,320 for the 14 premises/areas under its ownership that fall within the BID boundary. With regard to the votes that will be allotted to these premises, the Cabinet has authorised the Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) to cast these votes after consultation with the Executive Leader.

The Cabinet was conscious of the potential impact an additional cost will have on small businesses and charities. Members understand that, subject to the agreement of those liable, the BID Regulations 2004 will allow for these vulnerable groups to be excluded from the charge.

65. LOCATION OF THE CALL CENTRE

(The following item was considered as a confidential item under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.)

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being), the Cabinet has considered a range of options for the future location of the District Council's Call Centre. In concurring with the Panel that the Call Centre worked well and that there were no apparent advantages to changing the current arrangements, the Cabinet has agreed that it be retained at Speke House. The Cabinet also has authorised the Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) to negotiate the best terms available for a new lease for Speke House, before its expiry in June 2013. J D Ablewhite

Chairman