

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 10 April 2014.

PRESENT: Councillor J D Ablewhite – Chairman.

Councillors B S Chapman, J A Gray,  
N J Guyatt, R B Howe, T D Sanderson and  
D M Tysoe.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor K J Churchill.

### **80. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **81. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

No declarations were received.

### **82. CORPORATE PLAN & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

Further to Minute No.13/72 and with the assistance of a report by the Interim Corporate Team Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered and suggested amendments to the draft Corporate Plan and associated Performance Management Framework.

Having noted the Plan's main aims and objectives, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that, subject to minor consequential amendments relating to roles and responsibilities, the Council be recommended to adopt the Corporate Plan and associated Performance Management Framework.

### **83. NATIONAL NON DOMESTIC RATING - CHANGES TO DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY FROM 1ST APRIL 2014**

By way of a report by the Head of Customer Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with new temporary rate relief measures announced by the Government resulting in the need to consider a change to the Council's Discretionary Rate Relief Policy.

Members were advised that the measures aimed to help and financial support the local "retail" ratepayers, encourage new occupations as well as support households and businesses affected by the recent floods. Having noted that billing authorities would be reimbursed by the Government for any discounts awarded and in stressing the need

to promote the measures with the business community, the Cabinet

#### RESOLVED

- (a) that with effect from 1st April 2014 a discount of £1,000 (subject to state aid limits) be awarded for all occupied retail properties with a rateable value not exceeding £50,000;
- (b) that with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 a 50% business rate relief for 18 months be awarded for businesses that move into retail premises that have been empty for a year or more;
- (c) that 100% rate relief for 3 months be awarded for any day between 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 where non domestic properties have been flooded and meet other qualifying criteria; and
- (d) that the Head of Customer Services and Local Taxation Manager be authorised to award these discounts.

#### **84. THE FUTURE OF MEMBERS IT**

The Cabinet considered a report by the IMD Service Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) summarising a proposal to withdraw Council funded IT equipment for Members and promote the purchase of iPads from Members allowances. The proposal had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

In the discussions that ensued, Executive Councillors were advised that the proposal would enable the authority to achieve savings in the region of £50k and that there would be further savings through the reduction of printed reports. Having noted the proposal for Members to use non-HDC approved email addresses for Council business Executive Councillors queried whether it would be possible to set up private email addresses for Councillors that easily identified them as a Member of the District Council. In response, the IMD Service Manager undertook to investigate the matter further.

Executive Councillors concurred with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel that appropriate training and support would be required for all Members prior to implementation and that the WIFI facility within the Civic Suite should be stress tested. Having also referred to transition arrangements, access to the Council's IT resources within Pathfinder House and current arrangements for funding of broadband connections for Members, the Cabinet

#### RESOLVED

- (a) that Council-funded IT equipment for Members be withdrawn, with continued support only being provided in exceptional circumstances;
- (b) that the purchase of iPads from Members allowances be

approved;

- (c) that, where possible, printed agendas and reports for Members meetings be withdrawn;
- (d) that the principle that all Members should use non-HDC (but HDC approved) email addresses for Council business be supported;
- (e) that HDC funded broadband connections be withdrawn; and
- (f) that, with effect from 1st May 2014, it be compulsory for newly elected Members to participate in the iPad scheme.

It was also RECOMMENDED to Council that the Members' IT and telephone support guidelines in the Council's Constitution be varied accordingly to reflect the above.

*[In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 25, a request from Councillor K J Churchill to address the Cabinet on this item was declined by the Chairman.]*

**85. GREATER CAMBRIDGE GREATER PETERBOROUGH ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LEP) - STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN (SEP)**

By way of a report by the Economic Development Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were invited to consider the content of a Strategic Economic Plan produced by the Greater Cambridge, Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership.

Having raised concern over the late receipt of the document from the Partnership, the content of the Executive Summary and inaccuracies within the Plan relating to housing growth, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Strategic Economic Plan appended to the report now submitted be approved.

Chairman