

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, 16 March 2017.

PRESENT: Councillor R B Howe – Chairman.
Councillors D Brown, G J Bull, S Cawley, R Harrison, J M Palmer, Mrs A Dickinson, R Fuller and J E White.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor J A Gray.

88. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 9th February 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

89. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

90. PROVISIONAL AGREEMENT FOR TRANSFER OF LOAN

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Resources (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), which recommended that provisional agreement was given to the transfer of a loan from Huntingdonshire Regional College to Cambridge Regional College following the formal merger of the two educational establishments. Having received an assurance that the Council would maintain its security for the loan, Members stated that the original purpose of the loan remained, namely to improve the chances of local young people.

With regard to the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Customers), confirmation was received that the terms of the loan were competitive compared with the commercial market and were governed by state aid regulation.

On the understanding that this matter would be submitted to the Cabinet for formal approval following the completion of the merger, due diligence and consultations with the external auditor, it was

RESOLVED

that it be provisionally agreed that the loan given to Huntingdonshire Regional College by Huntingdonshire District Council be transferred to Cambridge Regional College following formal merger.

91. NEW CAMBRIDGESHIRE HOUSING ADAPTATIONS AGREEMENT AND REFRESHED HUNTINGDONSHIRE HOUSING RENEWAL ASSISTANCE POLICY

Consideration was given to a report by the Housing Strategy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached the Cambridgeshire Housing Adaptations Agreement together with the refreshed Huntingdonshire District Council Housing Renewal Assistance Policy. The Housing Adaptations Agreement had been produced following a review of the Better Care Fund.

Members discussed the Council's approach to funding Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). While an increase in the level of funding provided by the Government had coincided with a reduction in the amount allocated by the Council in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for this purpose, the budget had been exceeded. The Council was under a statutory obligation to provide DFGs. However, the Housing Renewal Assistance Policy ensured policies were in place for the use of future unallocated DFG funding and represented an opportunity to support those in need.

Having concurred on the need to monitor closely trends in DFG spending to inform future decisions on the MTFS, it was

RESOLVED

- i) that the Cambridgeshire Housing Adaptations Agreement be endorsed, which establishes a joint strategic approach to delivering housing adaptations to ensure the best use of the capital resources available through Better Care Fund, and
- ii) that the refreshed Huntingdonshire District Council Housing Renewal Assistance Policy, which has been updated to complement the adaptations agreement, be approved.

92. THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE DESIGN GUIDE

By way of introduction to a report by the Planning Service Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which recommended the adoption of a new Huntingdonshire Design Guide, the Cabinet received a presentation by Mr M Paul, Urban Design Officer, on the contents of the Guide. Reference was made to density, parking, flood risk and water management, road design, ecology and green design and building extensions. Members' attention was drawn to the inclusion in the Guide of development scenarios, which were intended to help developers through the development process.

The Cabinet was advised that the Guide, as a Supplementary Planning Document, would be a material consideration when applications were determined and could be cited in reasons for refusal. In response to questions from Members, it was confirmed that the Guide contained reference to street furniture and that it would be widely publicised, particularly to town and parish councils. Following a further question from a Member, it was agreed to include terms for electric car charging points in the Guide. It was, furthermore,

suggested that this matter should form part of the deliberations during the Parking Strategy review.

The comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) had been circulated to the Cabinet separately to the Agenda, the Panel meeting having occurred following the Agenda publication. Having considered the Panel's comments, Executive Councillors expressed their appreciation of the work by Officers in the Development section in producing an excellent document, which was progressive and technologically advanced.

RESOLVED

- i) that the 'Huntingdonshire Design Guide' be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document, and the Head of Development authorised, after consultation with the Executive Member for Growth, to make any minor amendments prior to publication, and
- ii) that the comments from the Consultation Statement and the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report be noted and the officer responses to the issues raised endorsed.

93. CORPORATE PLAN REFRESH

By means of a report by the Corporate Team Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet received an update on progress of the mid-term review of the Corporate Plan 2016/18. The revised Plan contained two significant changes relating to transformation and devolution. Having requested that the Plan was circulated to Executive Councillors prior to its publication with the Agenda for the next meeting of the Council, it was

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

Chairman