

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

**Meeting held at the Council Offices, Letchworth Garden City,
on 14 June 2005 at 7.30 p.m.**

PRESENT: *Councillors F.J. Smith (Chairman), Mrs A.G. Ashley, T.W. Hone, I.J. Knighton and R.A.C. Thake.*

ALSO PRESENT: *Councillors: Martin Stears and S. K. Jarvis.*

IN ATTENDANCE: *Chief Executive, Strategic Director of Customer Services, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Democratic Services Manager, Head of Environmental Services, Head of Revenues and Benefits, Accountancy Manager, Policy Manager, Major Developments Manager, Head of Customer Services.*

24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: W.M. Davidson, Mrs. Tricia Gibbs and A.D. Young.

25. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 17 and 31 May 2005 be approved as true records of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

26. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

No additional items of business were presented for consideration by the Cabinet.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

28. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No items were presented under public participation for consideration by Cabinet.

29. CIVIL CONTINGENCIES ACT 2004

The Strategic Director of Customer Services submitted a report advising Cabinet of the duties imposed on North Hertfordshire District Council by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and asking Cabinet to note the Council's annual programme 2005/2006. The report sought additional funding to allow a contribution of £25,000 to be made to Hertfordshire County Council towards a part time Emergency Planning Officer for North Hertfordshire District Council and asked Cabinet to endorse the Business Continuity Strategy. The following documents were attached to the report:

Appendix A Annual Programme 2005/2006;
Appendix B Business Continuity Strategy.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the implications of the Civil Contingencies Act and the NHDC annual programme 2005/6 be noted;
- (2) That the £25,000 shortfall within the Emergency Planning/Business Continuity Projects be funded;

- (3) That the Business Continuity Strategy, attached at Appendix B to the report, be endorsed;
- (4) that the gratitude, of the Cabinet, expressed towards Mr Wootton and the 80 members of staff who have volunteered for civil contingencies duties, be noted.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To ensure that the Council would be able to meet the demands of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

30. REGIONAL AND STRATEGIC PLANNING ISSUES

The Strategic Director of Financial and Regulatory Services submitted a report which informed Cabinet of the current position regarding:

- the draft East of England Plan;
- Growth Area Liaison for the Luton conurbation;
- Luton & Dunstable Northern Bypasses;
- London Luton Airport.

The report explained that judicial review of Stevenage Borough Council's District Plan Second Review 1991-2011 had decided against the West Stevenage Consortium.

The Major Developments Manager reported on the Pre-Inquiry Meeting which had taken place on 14 June 2004. The main matters to be considered were: scale of growth; spacial strategy; transport; housing considerations; environment and natural resources, regional waste, economic development, sub-regional strategies and delivery and implementation. Concern was expressed that the 44 district councils within the region would be expected to elect a single representative to contribute to several of the issues.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That officers make representations to ensure that all matters regarding the Inquiry are considered adequately together with issues arising from the South Midlands Plan.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure that Members were aware of evolving issues in regional and strategic planning matters.

31. REPORT OF THE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Scrutiny Officer submitted a report introducing a report of the Scrutiny Committee sub group that had looked at Antisocial Behaviour: the report was attached at Appendix A. The report also included a draft protocol which the Scrutiny Committee commended to the Community Engagement portfolio holder.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the proposed definition of the term 'antisocial behaviour' be agreed for use by the Council and its partners;
- (2) That the draft protocol contained within Appendix A to the report be agreed;
- (3) That the Council's community safety and community development teams carry out further work with partners on projects for reducing antisocial behaviour and altering the perception of antisocial behaviour;
- (4) That officers include in the 2006/7 Service and Financial planning process, reference to the funding of community safety and anti-social behaviour posts;
- (5) That officers prepare a report for the next meeting of the Cabinet on the issues regarding high hedges.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To advise Cabinet of the work carried out by the Scrutiny Committee's Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) task & finish group.

32. REVISIONS TO FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS - 2005-2006

The Strategic Director of Financial and Regulatory Services submitted a report seeking acceptance of the proposed changes to North Hertfordshire District Council's Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders for 2005-2006, and requesting the proposed changes be recommended to Council for adoption. The following documents were appended to the report:

Appendix A – Amendments to Financial Regulations 2005-2006;
Appendix B – Amendments to Contract Standings Orders 2005-2006
Appendix C - Financial Regulations 2005-2006;
Appendix D - Contract Standing Orders 2005-2006.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the changes to both Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders, as summarised in Appendices A and B to the report be agreed.
- (2) That the limit at which debts be referred to Cabinet be raised from £2,500 to over £5,000.
- (3) That decisions regarding debts between £2,500 and £5,000 be delegated to Strategic Director of Financial and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Finance Portfolio holder.
- (4) That the recommendation of the Finance Scrutiny Sub Committee that the reference in paragraph 2.4 in Payments of Accounts to :

“any amendment to an account must be made in ink and initialled by the member of staff making it, stating briefly the reasons where they are not self evident.”

be revised to advise what should happen when the record is in electronic format only, be considered next year once the technology becomes available.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That the revised Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders attached as appendices C and D to the report be adopted.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: Cabinet agrees the changes as part of the Council's annual review of its financial management arrangements.

33. REVISION OF PARISH CHARTER

The Chief Executive submitted a report advising Cabinet that a revised version of the Parish Charter has been prepared for publication for launch at the Rural Conference on 11 July 2005. The draft Parish Charter was attached to the report at Appendix A.

RESOLVED: That the revised Parish Charter be endorsed.

REASON FOR DECISION: The Government's Ten-Year Vision for local government envisaged an increasing role for Parish Councils, and Charters were encouraged as a means to improving and developing the working relationship between the three tiers of local government. The Parishes had, on the whole, been very supportive of the Charter and its aims.

34. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the report involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

35. REVENUES – BUSINESS RATE AND COUNCIL TAX WRITE-OFFS

The Strategic Director of Financial and Regulatory Services submitted a report seeking approval to write-off the amounts detailed in Appendix A to the report, which were over £2,500 relating to Council Tax, Business Rates and Sundry Debtors.

RESOLVED: That the accounts detailed in Appendix A to the report be written off as irrecoverable.

REASON FOR DECISION: All avenues of recovery had been explored and it was not anticipated that the outstanding debts would be recovered.

(Exempt information as defined in paragraph 7.)

36. SELECTION OF SUPPLIER FOR THE DELIVERY OF STRATEGIC SERVICE SUPPORT CONTRACT

The Strategic Director of Customer Services submitted a report containing a recommendation from the Access to Services Project Board on the selection of a supplier for the delivery of the Council's Strategic Service Support Contract (SSSC). The report explained the evaluation criteria in detail, provided details of the cost of the project over the first three years of the contract and projected costs thereafter and provided details of the key deliverables within the programme.

The Strategic Director of Customer Services referred to the following resolution of the meeting of the Performance Audit and Review Committee held on 8 June 2005:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the proposal made by the Access to Services Project Board to award the Strategic Service Support Contract to Anite Public Sector Limited be endorsed;
- (2) That the Access to Services Project Board be requested to review the structure and role of the Project Board, the reporting arrangements and the progress against targets (including forecasted financial savings);
- (3) That the Head of Customer Services and IT be requested to provide to PARC quarterly monitoring reports on the progress of the Strategic Support Services Contract.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

- (1) That the award of the Strategic Service Support Contract to Anite Public Sector Limited be approved by Cabinet;
- (2) That the resource implications as presented at Paragraph 6.4 to the report be noted by PARC and referred to Cabinet for approval.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the award of the contract to Anite Public Sector Ltd be approved;
- (2) That the resource implications be approved;
- (3) That the recommendations of the Performance Audit and Review Committee be noted.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: In order to meet the requirements of the agreed Access to Services Service Improvement Plan.

The meeting closed at 8:40 p.m.

..... Chairman