

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**Meeting held at Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City  
on Tuesday, 16 January 2007 at 7.30pm**

**Minutes**

**PRESENT:** *Councillors F.J. Smith (Chairman), T.W. Hone (Vice-Chairman), Tricia Gibbs, I.J. Knighton, Mrs. L.A. Needham, R.A.C. Thake and A.D. Young.*

**IN ATTENDANCE:** *Chief Executive, Strategic Director of Customer Services, Head of Financial Services, Head of Planning & Building Control, Head of Leisure & Environmental Services, Head of Policy, Partnerships & Performance, Service Manager – Waste, Community Development Manager, Planning Project Manager, Leisure Project Manager, Corporate Legal Manager, Democratic Services Manager and Senior Committee & Member Services Officer.*

**ALSO PRESENT:** *Councillors M. Paterson (Chairman of Letchworth Committee), Martin Stears (Chairman of Scrutiny Committee), Jane Gray and 2 members of the public.*

**131. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Sarah Wren.

**132. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 19 December 2006 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

**133. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman advised that the following items had been tabled:-

Item 6a – Referral from Letchworth Committee – 11 January 2007 – Letchworth Garden City Town Centre Strategy: Revised Supplementary Planning Document.

Item 6e – Referral from Royston & District Committee – 20 December 2006 – Scoping Report for Royston Town Centre Strategy

Item 14 – Asset Management Plan: Annual Review – revised page of report.

**134. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**135. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

**136. REFERRAL FROM LETCHWORTH COMMITTEE – 11 JANUARY 2007 – LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY: REVISED SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

The Chairman of the Letchworth Committee presented an extract from the draft Minutes of the meeting of that Committee held on 11 January 2007 regarding the Letchworth Garden City Town Centre Strategy: Revised Supplementary Planning

Document, subsequent to comments made on the document as part of the public consultation process. A copy of the report considered by the Committee was included with the draft Minute, as were the following appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Letchworth Garden City Town Centre Strategy: Revised SPD (January 2007), incorporating proposed amendments;
- Appendix 2 – Figures/plans relating to the Letchworth Garden City Town Centre Strategy Revised SPD (January 2007);
- Appendix 3 – Representations to the Letchworth Garden City Town Centre Strategy draft SPD (October 2006);
- Appendix 4 – Representations to SA/SEA Final Report on the Letchworth Garden City Town Centre Strategy draft SPD (October 2006)

The comments and proposed amendments of the Letchworth Committee in respect of the Strategy document were set out in the draft Minute presented to Cabinet.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

- (1) That the Letchworth Garden City Town Centre Strategy Revised Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report, and incorporating the major amendments referred to in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.19 of the report, and as amended by the Letchworth Committee, be adopted;
- (2) That the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport, be authorised to agree any further typographical and textual amendments which are needed that do not alter the policy intent of the SPD prior to its finalisation and publication.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable the Council to produce a Strategy that provides an overall framework for guiding development and enhancement opportunities within the town centre over the next 15 years and, in doing so, contribute towards achieving the Council's strategic objectives.

**137. REFERRAL FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9 JANUARY 2007 – NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE PLAY STRATEGY**

The Chairman informed Cabinet that consideration of this referral would take place in conjunction with agenda item number 9 (see Minute 143 below).

**138. REFERRAL FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9 JANUARY 2007 – TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP FUNDING PROPOSALS**

The Chairman informed Cabinet that consideration of this referral would take place in conjunction with agenda item number 10 (see Minute 144 below).

**139. REFERRAL FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9 JANUARY 2007 – MARKETS: POLICY FOR FUTURE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

The Chairman informed Cabinet that consideration of this referral would take place in conjunction with agenda item number 11 (see Minute 145 below).

**140. REFERRAL FROM ROYSTON & DISTRICT COMMITTEE – 20 DECEMBER 2006 – SCOPING REPORT FOR ROYSTON TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY**

On behalf of the Royston & District Committee, the Chairman presented an extract from the draft Minutes of the meeting of that Committee held on 20 December 2006 regarding the scoping report for the Royston Town Centre Strategy. A copy of the report considered by the Committee was included with the draft Minute, as was the following appendix:

Appendix 1 – Scoping Report and Project Plan for Royston Town Centre Strategy: December 2006.

**RESOLVED:** That sufficient funds to cover the budget shortfall to enable the appointment of consultants to undertake a car parking and access assessment study of the Royston Town Centre as part of the necessary background work required for preparing the Royston Town Centre Strategy be agreed, the source of funds to be identified by officers and reported to Cabinet.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To proceed with the necessary work to produce a draft Town Centre Strategy for Royston and its associated SA/SEA for public consultation in September 2007. This would enable the Council to adopt the Strategy as SPD following 'public' involvement, that would provide an overall framework for guiding development and enhancement opportunities within the town centre over the next 10 years, and in doing so, contributed towards achieving the Council's strategic objectives.

#### 141. REGIONAL & STRATEGIC PLANNING ISSUES

The Head of Planning & Building Control presented a report of the Head of Planning and Building Control informed Members of the current positions regarding:

- West of the A1(M) at Stevenage and Stevenage Local Development Documents;
- The draft East of England Plan;
- Growth Area Liaison for the Luton conurbation;
- Luton & Dunstable Northern Bypasses;
- London Luton Airport and Stansted Airport.

The Head of Planning & Building Control reported that the unilateral agreement in respect of development west of the A1(M) at Stevenage remained unsigned. He added that a Joint Authority Member/Officer meeting to discuss a response to the draft East of England Plan would take place on 22 January 2007.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure that Cabinet was made aware of current developments.

#### 142. GRANT AID FOR TALENTED SPORTSPEOPLE

The Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement & Rural Affairs presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services proposing a new method for allocating grant aid to talented sporting individuals, pursuant to the cessation of the operation of the North Hertfordshire Sports Council (NHSC), the organisation which had previously carried out this function under the terms of a Service Level Agreement with the Council. The report contained the following appendix:

Appendix 1 – Proposed criteria for individual sports grants.

Cabinet was advised that, in the short term, it was proposed that the Council undertook directly the grant allocation work formerly carried out by the NHSC. In the long term, the proposal was for the work to be undertaken by a Community Sports Network, required by the Council's adopted Sports Development Strategy to be established by April 2008.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the existing grants policy be amended to allow financial assistance to be allocated specifically to sporting individuals, until such time as a Community Sports network is created which can then undertake this task instead;

- (2) That the criteria for allocating sports grants, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable local sportspeople to continue to receive limited financial assistance which will enable them to further develop their skills.

#### **143. NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE PLAY STRATEGY**

The Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement & Rural Affairs presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services seeking endorsement of a proposed Play Strategy for North Hertfordshire. The report contained the following appendix:

Appendix 1 – Play Strategy: Executive Summary.

Cabinet noted that the Strategy linked with many other Council Strategies, and indicated the desire to promote a range of different opportunities to local children.

Cabinet was advised that the Scrutiny Committee had supported the adoption of the Play Strategy.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:** That the proposed North Hertfordshire Play Strategy 2007-2012 be adopted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To assist the Council in meeting its strategic objectives of promoting first class leisure and cultural facilities to contribute to healthy living for all our citizens; and targeting resources at areas of disadvantage in the District to reduce social exclusion and improve the quality of life for everyone.

#### **144. TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP FUNDING PROPOSALS**

The Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement & Rural Affairs presented a report of the Head of Policy, Partnerships & Performance proposing a business plan for future funding of the existing Town Centre Partnerships, and the establishment of town centre support for Baldock, in order to support Growth Bid RG9 in the 2007/08 Service and Financial Planning process.

Cabinet was informed that the Scrutiny Committee was supportive of the proposal to ensure greater parity in funding for the Town Centre Partnerships from April 2007, and of the proposal to provide additional budgetary resources to increase support to the Partnerships in the short term. However, the Scrutiny Committee had recommended that Cabinet should not approve the proposal to reduce funding in the long term, until further investigations had been made and sources of alternative funding found, and the comments of Area Committees sought.

Cabinet was supportive of the Scrutiny Committee's request to inform the Area Committees of the long term proposals for the Town Centre Partnerships, but was not willing to defer a decision on the matter, as the Council would be reducing its funding to the Partnerships gradually over a six year period, thereby allowing them sufficient time to identify alternative sources of funding.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the proposal to ensure greater parity in funding for Town Centre Partnerships, commencing in April 2007, be approved;
- (2) That the proposals to provide additional budgetary resource in order to increase support to the Partnerships in the short term, as outlined in 5.2 of the report, be approved, and the reduction in Growth Bid RG9 of £2,085 in year one, as outlined in 5.3 of the report, be noted;

- (3) That the proposal to reduce funding in the longer term, thereby encouraging other sources of funding to be sought, as outlined in 5.5 of the report, be approved;
- (4) That the Area Committees be informed of the general situation in respect of the funding of the Town Centre Partnerships.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To establish a more equitable method for each Town Centre Partnership to secure funding from NHDC, and to ensure that the Partnerships are fully aware of the Authority's intention to withdraw funding at the end of 2013.

#### **145. MARKETS – POLICY FOR FUTURE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure & E-Government presented a report of the Head of Leisure & Environmental Services seeking approval of the Service Profile and Policy Statements that provided the foundation for the future management arrangement of the Council's markets operation. The report contained the following appendices:

Appendix 1 – Service Profile;  
Appendix 2 – Policy Statements.

The Leisure Project Manager informed Members of the selection and evaluation criteria in respect of the contractor submissions.

Cabinet was advised that the Scrutiny Committee had supported the recommendations contained in the report.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Service Profile and the Policy Statements for the future management arrangements of the Council's markets, as shown in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report, be approved;
- (2) That the evaluation process for contractor submissions, as detailed in paragraph 5.8 of the report, be approved.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure that the project for the future management arrangements for the Council's markets remains on schedule.

***[Note: At this point, Councillor F.J. Smith had to leave the meeting. Councillor T.W. Hone assumed the Chair for the duration of the business recorded in Minute Number 146 below.]***

#### **146. WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT – RENEGOTIATION AND POLICIES**

The Portfolio Holder for Waste Management & Environment presented a report of the Head of Leisure & Environmental Services updating Cabinet on the progress of negotiations to accommodate contract revisions needed to increase recycling and composting participation, and to introduce the alternate weekly collection of residual waste. The report also sought approval to policies which needed to be established in order to accommodate the contract changes, in respect of Collections; Provision of Containers; Overfull Containers and Side Waste; and Segregation of Waste. These policies were attached as Appendix A to the report.

The Head of Leisure & Environmental Services drew Members' attention to the maps displayed at the meeting which showed the proposed bring bank sites. He advised that the current contractor's response to the change notice was expected on Friday, 19 January 2007. Therefore, a further report on the future contractual arrangements would need to be submitted to the Cabinet meeting to be held on 30 January 2007.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the verbal report of the Head of Leisure & Environmental Services be noted;
- (2) That the following policies in respect of the contract revisions, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be adopted:
  - (A) Collections;
  - (B) Provision of Containers;
  - (C) Overfull Containers and Side Waste;
  - (D) Segregation of Waste.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** The adoption of policies is an integral part of the introduction of alternate weekly collection of waste.

**147. ROYSTON AND NEWNHAM CONSERVATION AREA REVIEWS**

The Head of Planning & Building Control seeking approval to a number of consultation documents to be used for a six week public consultation period in respect of the review of Royston and Newnham Conservation Areas. The following appendices were submitted with the report:

Appendix A – Report to Royston & District Committee – 20 December 2006;  
Appendix B – Report to Baldock & District Committee – 15 January 2007.

The appendices considered by the Area Committees at the above meetings had also been circulated to Cabinet Members.

The minor amendments suggested by the Royston & District Committee in respect of the Royston Conservation Area had been incorporated into the paperwork submitted to Cabinet.

The Head of Planning & Building Control reported orally that the Baldock & District Committee had supported the process in respect of the Newnham Conservation Area Review, and had requested that full consultation take place with Caldecote and Newnham Parish Council.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the format and processes for public consultation in respect of the Royston Conservation Area Review, as outlined in Appendix A to the report, and in accordance with the wishes of the Royston & District Committee, be approved;
- (2) That the format and processes for public consultation in respect of the Newnham Conservation Area Review, as outlined in Appendix B to the report, and in accordance with the wishes of the Baldock & District Committee, be approved.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure that the Council's statutory duties are carried out and that targets set by the Council with regard to BVPI 219 are satisfied; and to enable the Council to adopt a Register of Buildings of Local Interest and an up to date review of Royston and Newnham Conservation Areas in order to inform future planning decisions.

**148. ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN – ANNUAL REVIEW**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report of the Head of Financial Services seeking consideration and approval of the 2007 Asset Management Plan. The following appendix was submitted with the report:

Appendix 1 – Asset Management Plan.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:** That the 2007 Asset management plan, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** The Council is required to approve the Asset Management Plan as an integral part of its Community Strategy.

**149. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER**

The Chief Executive presented a report in respect of the Local Government White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities, published in October 2006, and seeking the views of Cabinet on whether or not the Council should make a bid for either unitary or pathfinder status. The following appendices were submitted with the report:

Appendix A – Draft Hertfordshire Bid for Pathfinder Status.

The Chief Executive advised that the recent all-Member workshop held to discuss the White Paper had been very successful, with over two thirds of Council Members attending. He referred to the latest (ninth) version of the Draft Hertfordshire Bid for Pathfinder Status, which had been circulated to all Members since the production of the report.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the following comments on the draft Pathfinder bid be noted by the Leader of the Council in order to assist him in the discussions on the matter with the other Hertfordshire Council Leaders on 17 January 2007:
  - The bid should be confined to straightforward proposals on which all Hertfordshire Authorities could agree;
  - The cost implications to the Council should be low;
  - There should be no relinquishing of democratic control.
- (2) That the Leader of the Council reports the position on the Pathfinder bid to Council on 18 January 2007, so that Council can decide whether or not NHDC should be part of a Pathfinder bid in conjunction with the County Council and the other District Councils in Hertfordshire.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

- (1) That North Hertfordshire District Council does not submit a bid for unitary status;
- (2) That should the Council agree to NHDC participation in the bid for Pathfinder status, the Chief Executive be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Policy, to agree the final wording of the submission.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To allow Cabinet and the Leader of the Council to advise Council of the position on Unitary and Pathfinder status, to enable Council to decide on how to proceed.

The meeting closed at 8.53pm

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Chairman