

# **NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **CABINET**

**Meeting held at Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City  
on 23 August 2005 at 7.30 p.m.**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive, Strategic Director of Customer Services, Head of Financial Services, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of Community Development, Head of Planning and Building Control, Planning Officer (Planning Policy and Projects), Principal Planning Officer (Planning Policy and Projects), Chief Engineer, Democratic Services Manager, Public Relations Manager.

**58. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A.D. Young and Tricia Gibbs.

**59. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 26 July 2005 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

**60. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was submitted for consideration by the Cabinet.

**61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

**62. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr. David Dixon made a presentation to the Cabinet regarding the future provision of housing for those on the housing register. Mr Dixon referred to an article that had appeared in the Hertfordshire on Sunday about two ladies who had been evicted by Aragon Housing Association and were forced to sleep rough in Stotfold Cemetery. Mr Dixon asked the following questions:

*"I would like to know why Aragon Housing Association were able to charge two lots of rent for one property. (Apparently they are not forthcoming with a defence, and the reporter says that the issue cannot be pursued because they are not willing to say anything about the case.)"*

*I would also like to know if the 1996 housing legislation has changed anything with regard to the council's obligation to re-house the homeless and whether our right to be housed still exists. (I was told by NHDC that they were only obliged to investigate cases, not to re-house.)"*

The Leader of the Council thanked Mr Dixon for his presentation. The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Environmental Health gave the following response.

*"North Hertfordshire District Council is unable to comment on the circumstances of the case referred to by Mr Dixon as it involves a housing application in another Council area. Any specific questions should be referred to Mid Bedfordshire District Council or Aragon Housing Association."*

*Any local housing authority is obliged by the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, to investigate the circumstances of any household applying*

*to them and claiming to be homeless. We are only required to provide temporary accommodation for those for whom there is evidence that they are unintentionally homeless and in priority need until they are permanently housed."*

**63. ITEM REFERRED FROM THE MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19 JULY 2005 – SUPPORT FROM OFFICERS TO MEMBERS**

**RESOLVED:** That this item be withdrawn from the agenda to permit the Scrutiny Committee to give further consideration to the issues.

**64. ITEM REFERRED FROM THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE, AUDIT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE – 28 JULY 2005 – ANTI MONEY LAUNDERING POLICY**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Financial Services and noted that CIPFA had concluded that, although public organisations were not covered as a "relevant body" as defined in the money laundering legislation, it was considered prudent to adhere to the main tenets of the legislation. It was also regarded as good practice to do so.

**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:**

- (1) That Council approve:
  - (i) the Anti – Money Laundering Policy as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
  - (ii) the Guidance Notes to the Anti – Money Laundering Policy as set out in Appendix 2 to the report;
  - (iii) the Money Laundering Briefing Note as set out in Appendix 3 to the report;
- (2) That all NHDC staff be made aware of the Anti –Money Laundering Policy and their own responsibilities under the legislation and regulations;
- (3) That all officers involved in treasury management, conveyancing activities, cash transactions, issuing of grants or the assessment of claims be given proportionate and appropriate training.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

To allow NHDC to embrace the underlying principles of the Terrorism Act 2000, The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and the Money Laundering Regulations 2003.

**65. ITEM REFERRED FROM THE MEETING OF THE BALDOCK AND DISTRICT AREA COMMITTEE - 15 AUGUST 2005 – TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY CONSULTATION DRAFT**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control presented to the Baldock and District Area Committee held on 15 August 2005 which contained the draft Town Centre Strategy. The Cabinet noted:

- the recommendations to Cabinet of the Baldock and District Area Committee;
- that it was not the Council's current practice to necessarily allocate capital reserves that arise from the sale of assets in a particular area, to specific projects within the area of the District where the asset disposal has taken place;
- that the Council treated all capital receipts from asset disposals as benefiting the District as a whole and applied such reserves towards projects that meet the Council's corporate objectives.

**RESOLVED:** That the Baldock Town Centre Strategy Consultation Draft, August 2005, in its original form be approved with the following amendment:

- that in the fourth sentence of paragraph 3.6.4 the word “should” be replaced with the word “could” and read as follows:

“This could release funds, which could be channelled into improvements or refurbishment of existing facilities or provision of new facilities in partnership with other organisations and potential developers.”

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

To ensure public comment on the draft Baldock Town centre Strategy.

**66. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW OF THE NORTH HERTS MUSEUM SERVICE**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director of Customer Services, which set out the findings of the Review.

**RESOLVED:** That the Improvement Plan developed by the Review be deemed acceptable and that the following activities be undertaken in order to implement it:

1. A detailed costed scheme proposal and timetable be developed, complete with funding options so that the scheme can be included in the capital programme at a future date;
2. That Officers enter into consultation with the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation to look at the possibility of partnership working for the provision of museums, arts and storage within Letchworth Garden City;
3. That Officers contact district wide voluntary museums, heritage and arts providers to establish more detailed communication and development plans;
4. That a project board be established and PRINCE 2 methodology be used for the development of a business case for the Capital Works projects identified within the Improvement Plan;
5. The possibility of securing external funding to support the implementation of parts of the Improvement Plan be investigated further;
6. That all Area Committees be consulted in formulating and recommending proposals.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

To allow more detailed plans to be developed ahead of a formal request for funding and resources.

**67. PROGRESS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECRIMINALISED PARKING ENFORCEMENT**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Environmental Services which set out the progress made six months into the implementation of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE). The Leader of the Council thanked the Chief Engineer and the staff involved for what has been a significant achievement during the implementation period.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That Cabinet note the progress and performance of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement.
- (2) That Cabinet note the progress and proposed programme for the review of Traffic Regulation Orders.

- (3) That Cabinet note the progress and programme for the implementation of Controlled Parking Zones.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

To ensure that the Cabinet is fully informed of the development and progress on parking issues across the District

**68. SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL/STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE CORE STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICIES – SCOPING REPORT**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control. The report informed the Cabinet about the public consultation exercise on the Draft Scoping Report of the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Council's Local Development Framework.

**RESOLVED:** That the Cabinet endorses the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

To ensure an agreed framework for appraising Local Development Documents

**69. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: OPTIONS PAPER ON CORE STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL OPTIONS**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control. The report set out the options forming the first public stage in the preparation of the Council's Core Strategy and Core Development Control Policies which formed part of the Local Development Framework (successor to the Local Development Plan).

**RESOLVED:** That the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies: Options Paper set out as an appendix to the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control be authorised for public consultation.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

To allow public consultation to progress.

**70. REGIONAL AND STRATEGIC PLANNING ISSUES**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control. The report informed the Cabinet of the latest position regarding the draft East of England Plan; the Luton Conurbation Growth Area; the Luton and Dunstable Northern By Passes and the London Luton and Stansted Airports.

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

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

To ensure that the Cabinet is aware of evolving issues in regional and strategic planning matters.

**71. PLANNING FOR HOUSING PROVISION**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control. The report described the content of a consultation paper suggesting a new approach for local authorities (and regional authorities) in distributing new housing across their areas, together with suggestions for a response from this Council.

**RESOLVED:** That officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport, respond to the consultation paper taking into account the suggestions within the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control and copy the response to local Members of Parliament.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

To ensure that the Council's views are taken into account in the development of the final version of this policy.

**72. FUTURE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS IN NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive. The report set out a draft response to the Boundary Committee's draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements in North Hertfordshire.

**RECOMENDED TO COUNCIL:** That the draft response to the Boundary Committee's recommendations on future electoral arrangements in North Hertfordshire be approved subject to officers taking into account any further comments received from Members of the Council prior to the dispatch of the agenda for the meeting of the Council scheduled for 5 September 2005.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

To assist the Council in making a response to the Boundary Committee for England on the proposed revised electoral arrangements for North Hertfordshire.

**73. QUARTERLY REVENUE MONITORING – APRIL to JUNE 2005/2006**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director of Financial and Regulatory Services. The report provided a summary of the position on income and expenditure for the first quarter of the financial year 2005/2006.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That the transfer of £11.8k from the General Fund to the DSO reserve identified from Customer Services budgets be approved;
- (c) That the General Fund Budget of £17.577million be approved.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

To ensure that the Cabinet is able to monitor and request action from Directorates who do not meet the budget targets set as part of the Service and Financial Planning process and ensure that changes to the Council's balances are monitored and approved.

**74. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2005/2006**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director of Financial and Regulatory Services. The report provided an update on the Capital Programme indicating the impact on the programme for 2006/2007 and upon available capital funding resources.

**RESOLVED:** That the changes to the provisional capital programme for 2005/2006 onwards be approved.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:** That a de minimis level of £15,000 for capital expenditure relating to vehicles, plant and equipment be approved.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:**

To ensure that Cabinet meets the requirement to approve the revisions to the provisional capital programme for 2005/6 onwards and ensure an appropriate de minimis level for capital expenditure.

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

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Chairman