

CABINET

11 JULY 2005

Councillor I.S Gollop (Chairman)

Councillors:	P. Feeney V. McCrossen R.A. Poynter (a)	W.H. Golland (a) R.J. Nicholson R.F. Spencer
Observers:	A.J. Gillam J.M. Parr (a)	G.J. Griffiths (a)

36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Golland, Poynter and Parr.

37 TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 JUNE 2005.

RESOLVED:

That the above minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

38 PRESENTATION ON WASTE MANAGEMENT

Melvyn Trigg of the Nottinghamshire County Council gave a presentation to Cabinet on progress on the County Council's waste management Private Finance Initiative Scheme.

RESOLVED:

To thank Mr Trigg for the Presentation.

39 COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND USE OF RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

Stephen Bray, Head of Cabinet Office gave a Presentation on the proposals for a Use of Resources Assessment of all Council's.

The Chief Executive reported that notification had recently been received from the Audit Commission that they had published (under the heading 'CPA – the harder test') the new framework for comprehensive

performance assessment of single tier and County Councils from 2005 to 2008. They had concluded, however, that more work was required in order to develop the detail for the future CPA framework for District Councils and they intended to undertake a national consultation exercise from the end of July 2005.

At the same time, the Audit Commission had published their final arrangements for the new 'Use of Resources Assessment' which would be carried out annually by the District Auditor.

Members noted from the guidance that this new assessment was intended to be significantly more testing for Councils than the old auditor judgments used in the comprehensive performance assessment of District councils. Members were reminded that the Council had scored very highly in this in the CPA, with scores of 4 ("good") in every category apart from one, where a score of 3 had been given ("adequate"). Having looked at the documentation for the new use of resources assessment, however, it was clear that, certainly in the first year, the Authority would find it very difficult to achieve a score above 2 – which, as could be seen from the introduction to the guidance, was considered to be 'at only minimum requirements – adequate performance'. Whilst it was believed that it would be possible to work to achieve a 3 in future years, this would require some significant effort.

For the future, the Authority would consider what developments were required to be put in place in order to demonstrate an upward direction of travel, secure a higher score and improve the Council's chances of doing well in the next CPA.

RESOLVED:

To note the report and to agree that meetings of the Cabinet for September be re-scheduled for 8th and 22nd of the month to allow Cabinet to consider the draft self-assessment before its submission to the Audit Commission.

40

LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report that outlined the current situation with respect to Local Area Agreements.

The Head of Cabinet Office also submitted a supplementary report on the key points from the ODPM guidance that had not been sent out with the agenda, as the guidance had not been received until 1 July.

A Local Area Agreement toolkit had also been jointly developed by the

ODPM and the Local Government Improvement and Development Agency and Cabinet were update on further issues at the meeting.

RESOLVED:

To agree in principle that:-

- The Council works with the County Council and other partners on the development of the LAA to ensure appropriate structures for governance are developed,
- The conurbation theme be developed as part of the countywide approach.

41 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Councillor Wright suggested that all members should be informed of the re-scheduled Cabinet dates for September.

42 STRATEGIC SUB-REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS REVIEW

The Head of Cabinet Office submitted a report that informed members of the East Midlands Development Agency's (EMDA) review of strategic sub-regional partnerships (SSPs) and of the potential implications for Greater Nottingham Partnership.

The report also sought Members' views on whether any representations should be made on the issue.

The Head of Cabinet Office advised that further notification had been received from EMDA advising of their general support for SSPs.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the Council write to EMDA with a copy to the Greater Nottingham Partnership advising that they support recommendations 6 and 8 extracted from East Midlands Regional Assembly Review of Strategic sub Regional Partnerships - 2004 and that the Council believes that SSPs should have greater responsibility devolved to them rather than less.
- ii. That a copy of the letter also be forwarded to the MPs for the Borough to seek their support and to ask that they encourage other East Midlands MPS to express support.

43 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The Head of Cabinet Office submitted a report that sought Cabinet's views on and agreement for the draft Communications Strategy and Improvement Plan that was submitted with the report.

RESOLVED:

- i. To agree the Communications Strategy and Action Plan.
- ii. To incorporate a reference to the roles and responsibilities of Members into the Action Plan.

44 21ST CENTURY TOWNS FUNDING

The Head of Cabinet Office submitted a report that sought Cabinet approval for the retention of £10,000 in the current year's town centres budgets, following withdrawal from the 21st Century Towns funding bid.

The report detailed the reasons for the actions described in the report.

RESOLVED:

To retain the £10,000 budget for 21st Century Towns to contribute to delivery of town centre action plans.

45 PROGRESS REPORTS FROM PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

The following progress reports on items within their purview were received from Portfolio Holders:-

Development and Economic Regeneration

Surveys of Town Centres proceeding

Local Plan

Finance

Statement of Accounts being considered at Personnel and Resources Committee on 25 July.

Contracts determined on Payroll and FMS systems

Revenues section short listed for an award.

Housing Benefits temporary staff.

Agenda 21 Crime and Community Development

Consultation on Community Strategy

Area Based Initiatives progressing

Public Meetings proceeding.

Contacts magazine articles.

Housing

Stock Option survey and Business Plan to be considered at the next meeting of the Cabinet

RESOLVED:

To note the information.

46

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS AT GEDLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Head of Finance and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report that updated members on the Corporate Governance Arrangements at Gedling Borough Council.

The report appraised members of the level of Internal Control at the Authority and confirmed to members of Cabinet that the Manager of Resource Services considered that controls were in the main operating satisfactory.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the work undertaken in relation to Corporate Governance, Risk and the Assurance Statement by the Manager of Resource Services.
2. To note the points raised in the Assurance Statement from the Manager of Resource Services, which will feed into the Statement on Internal Control and forms part of the Published Statement of Accounts.

47

HOUSING AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT PROSECUTION POLICY

The Head of Finance reported that in June 2000, Members had endorsed the Housing and Council Tax Benefit Prosecution Policy that

outlined the actions this authority would take against an individual who they believed had committed benefit fraud.

This policy was based on guidance laid down by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) at that time. Due to the joint working agreement between Local Authorities and the DWP, it was recommended that their Prosecution Policies were similar to ensure consistency in dealing with any investigations that were carried out.

In November 2004, the DWP announced they had revised their Prosecution Policy from 11 November 2004 and it was recommended that Local Authorities who worked jointly with DWP also revise their policies for the purpose of joint working and a more uniform approach.

The Housing and Council Tax Benefit Prosecution Policy had been amended to incorporate the changes made to the DWP policy. The revised policy gave investigators and local office managers greater flexibility when taking the needs of the customer into account in deciding what sanction should apply. The new policy also ensured that only the more serious cases would enter the judicial system.

RESOLVED: to approve

- 1.The implementation of the Revised Policy
- 2.That the Head of Finance have the authority to make any decision in respect of any investigation in line with the Policy,
- 3.That the Head of Finance be authorised to make any future amendments to this Policy such as recommendations from the DWP after consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder.

48 FORWARD PLAN 01 AUGUST TO 31 OCTOBER 2005

RESOLVED:

To approve the Forward Plan as submitted.

49 PERFORMANCE PLAN AND BUDGET OUTTURN

The Senior Management Team submitted a report that presented the Performance Plan and Budget outturn reports grouped by Portfolio.

Members were asked to note the final outturn position and to recommend to Council the method of financing the 2004/2005 capital expenditure which included making the Capital Determinations required

by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the Performance Plan and Budget outturn figures for 2004/05.
2. To recommend that Council approve:
 - i. The overall method of financing 2004/05 capital expenditure as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.
 - ii. The capital determinations in Section 3.4.2 and 3.4.3 of the report.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm.