

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on  
Thursday, 14 December 2006

**PRESENT:** Councillor Dr DR Bard (Leader of Council)  
Councillor Mrs DSK Spink MBE (Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder and Deputy Leader of Council)

<b>Councillors:</b>	SM Edwards	Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder
	Mrs VG Ford	Community Development Portfolio Holder
	JA Hockney	Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder
	RMA Manning	Environmental Health Portfolio Holder
	Mrs DP Roberts	Housing Portfolio Holder

**Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:**

Holly Adams	Democratic Services Officer
Andy Glaves	Choice Based Lettings Project Officer
Steve Hampson	Executive Director
Greg Harlock	Chief Executive
Caroline Hunt	Principal Planning Policy Officer
Denise Lewis	Head of Strategic Housing
Simon McIntosh	Corporate Manager for Policy, Performance and Partnerships
Guy Moody	Democratic Services Officer
Kelly Quigley	Communications Officer
Dale Robinson	Corporate Manager for Health & Environmental Services
Paul Swift	Policy and Performance Review Manager
Alison Talkington	Senior Planning Policy Officer
Gwynn Thomas	Principal Accountant (Housing)
Tim Waller	Planning Policy Officer (Monitoring)

Councillors RE Barrett, JD Batchelor, NN Cathcart, R Hall, Mrs EM Heazell, Mrs CA Hunt, SGM Kindersley, Mrs CAED Murfitt, Mrs HM Smith, RT Summerfield, RJ Turner and Dr SEK van de Ven were in attendance, by invitation.

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### **Procedural Items**

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#### **1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Leader was authorised to sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2006.

#### **Disabled Facilities Grant Policy and Funding (Minute 6)**

The Executive Director undertook to provide Councillor Mrs EM Heazell with details about virement after his meeting with the Strategic Lead for Community Living for the Primary Care Trust.

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following personal interests were declared:

Councillor Dr DR Bard	As a member of Sawston Parish Council, previous occupiers of 57 High Street (minute 10)
Councillor JD Batchelor	As a member of Cambridgeshire County Council (minutes 8 and 11)
Councillor SGM Kindersley	As a member of Cambridgeshire County Council (minutes 8 and 11)
Councillor Mrs HM Smith	As a member of Milton Parish Council and Milton Community Centre (minute 13)
Councillor RT Summerfield	As a member of Milton Parish Council and Milton Community Centre (minute 13)
Councillor RJ Turner	As a member of Cambridgeshire County Council (minutes 8 and 11)

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### Recommendation to Council

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#### 3. WORKFORCE PLAN 2006/07 TO 2008/09

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder commended the revised Workforce Plan, which incorporated the many changes undergone since the original plan was approved in June 2005, and which would support the Council's continuing evolution and link with the forthcoming review of portfolios. He highlighted the improvement in staff retention and the appointment of staff from ethnic minorities. There was strong support for the Council taking a lead role in the re-introduction of trainee and apprenticeship programmes, even on a small scale. The Constitution Review Working Party would be making recommendations to Council before May 2007 on new portfolios which aligned with the new corporate structure.

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the Workforce Plan 2006/07 to 2008/09 be approved.

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### Decisions made by Cabinet

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#### 4. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder advised members that the complete report, which was available for download from the Council's website, demonstrated the Council's progress against key milestones for plan preparation established in the Local Development Scheme.

Cabinet **AGREED** to delegate to the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder agreement of the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report for submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government.

#### 5. SUB-REGIONAL CHOICE-BASED LETTINGS SCHEME: DRAFT ALLOCATIONS POLICY

Cabinet, at its meeting of 8 September 2005, had agreed in principle to proceed with the implementation of a sub-regional choice-based lettings (CBL) scheme in order to

achieve compliance with CBL delivery by 2010. The Choice-Based Lettings Advisory Group had been considering the detail of the scheme and a draft policy had been produced for consultation with partner Registered Social Landlords, statutory agencies, tenants, applicants, Parish Councils and other locally-based organisations whose clients might be affected.

Councillor Mrs EM Heazell, Chairman of the Choice-Based Lettings Advisory Group, reported that the term “adequately housed” was still under discussion, as what was deemed to be adequate varied from person to person. Other issues being considered were the relative sizes of bedrooms and the allocation of a two-bedroom dwelling to a pregnant woman after 24 weeks of pregnancy, which removed that property from the stock even if, in a worst-case scenario, the pregnancy did not go to term or the child died at birth or in infancy.

Cabinet **AGREED** that the draft policy be approved for a twelve-week consultation starting in January 2007.

Cabinet **NOTED** the contents of the draft lettings policy.

## 6. AMENDMENTS TO LETTINGS POLICY

The current lettings policy required minor amendments to address current targets and priorities before it would be superseded by the introduction of the Choice-Based Lettings scheme in 2007. Overall performance was good, except for the Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) for average length of time spent in hostel accommodation for homeless families including a dependent or expected child. The Executive Director confirmed that the existing partnership arrangements to provide private sector accommodation through King Street Housing Association provided better alternatives to B&B or hostel accommodation for the benefit of homeless households, but disadvantaged the Council in terms of BVPI targets.

Cabinet **AGREED** that the Council’s lettings policy be amended by the addition of the following paragraphs:

- (a) The additional points for residing in temporary accommodation are given:
  - (i) To hostel residents either when they move into hostel accommodation or when a rehousing obligation is accepted by the Council, whichever is later;
  - (ii) To other occupants of temporary accommodation if they are adequately housed in their current accommodation and this can be provided permanently;
  - (iii) Prior to six months in other exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Housing Advice and Options Manager in line with the delegated authorities;
- (b) Add an additional category of ‘A need for move on accommodation’ under the reasons for awarding welfare points; and
- (c) Formalise the practice of giving reduced priority to applicants with current or former tenant arrears to ensure that this is covered by the policy, unless there are exceptional circumstances, through adding the following into the lettings policy: “Applicants with current or former tenant arrears or other outstanding debt to the Council will receive less priority for an offer of accommodation unless there are exceptional circumstances. In these circumstances consideration will be given to the date and amount of the debt outstanding and any arrangements made to clear the arrears and adherence to these arrangements.”

## 7. WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Cabinet had considered the revised Whistleblowing Policy in September 2006 and the Standards Committee had subsequently confirmed the amendments made at that meeting.

Cabinet **AGREED** to adopt the revised Whistleblowing Policy.

## **8. CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH MINERALS & WASTE DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

The Cambridgeshire County Council had published a consultation document on preferred options for the Minerals and Waste Development Plan (MWDP). The District Council had objected to the two Issues and Options Papers for the emerging MWDP due to the absence of a clear strategy for provision of major waste management facilities, lack of Sustainability Appraisals and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the various options, and the move directly from a general approach in the Issues and Options papers to a Preferred Option without an interim consultation stage on the overall strategy and site options.

The Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) at the Regulation 26 stage should include a clear spatial strategy for both waste and minerals, but the Preferred Options stage of the DPD still did not provide such a strategy. Whilst there was now an indication of the scale of the waste issue and the overall type and number of major waste facilities required across the whole plan area, this was not contained in a preferred option in the Core Strategy. Furthermore, there was no indication in the DPD of the number of household waste recycling centres (HWRC) required, although a paper presented alongside the Preferred Options documents provided information.

There was no broad spatial strategy for the type and number of facilities needed in different parts of the plan area and an indication of their intended catchments; in the absence of this type of spatial element to the Core Strategy, there was no clear policy framework against which to judge the allocations in the Site Specific Policies DPD and to assess whether there was an appropriate level of provision and whether it was in the right locations. Whilst the District Council accepted the need to provide new waste facilities to meet the needs of current and future populations, this must be considered in the context of a clear strategy.

### ***Proposed Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) at Hauxton***

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder read out a letter from Councillor Mrs JE Lockwood, local member for Hauxton, detailing the residents' objections to the proposals for a waste recycling and recovery facility on the former Bayer CropScience (West) site, citing as reasons traffic on the A10, forthcoming residential development nearby and access roads cutting across proposed new sports fields. Councillor Mrs EM Heazell, local member for Haslingfield, supported Mrs Lockwood's statement and added the objections from residents of Haslingfield. She reported that Cambridgeshire County Council officers had confirmed that there was no intention to close the existing HWRC at Thriplow. Councillor SGM Kindersley, a member of the Cambridgeshire County Council Development Control Committee, explained that there had been a unanimous decision of that body to return the Hauxton site for re-consideration and that a wider search area be considered, but that this had been over-ruled by the County Council's Cabinet. There was agreement amongst many members that it felt as if the County Council already had taken a decision on the site and that the public consultation on this and other proposals was 'cynical'.

***Proposed Waste Water Treatment Works at Honey Hill, Horningsea / Fen Ditton***

Councillor Kindersley reported that the County Council Development Control Committee had been informed that there were no options other than Honey Hill being considered for the proposed waste water treatment works, even though that site was not supported by the County's own site selection assessment. No consideration had been given to allowing Anglian Water to remain on its existing site, although that company had said that it had adequate land for a new facility on its current site. The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder felt that Anglian Water needed to make a definite statement about its future plans and whether or not it intended to relocate.

Councillor Mrs CA Hunt, local member for Teversham, highlighted the risk to the Bridge of Reeds project, which was unlikely to proceed if the waste water treatment works were moved to Honey Hill. She felt that the City Council had not proven that it had failed to find alternative suitable brownfield sites for the facility within its own borders, or demonstrated that the proposed housing was needed. She queried whether the Honey Hill facility could be sustainable, with an approximate £1.2 million additional annual operating costs arising from energy required to transport waste water through increased pipeline lengths. She reported that the County Council's Head of Strategic Planning had commented at a public meeting on 26 November that other sites, and retention of the existing site, would be considered and that some level of public consultation on these options would be undertaken.

***Conclusion***

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder assured members that the Council was making every effort to object to consultation being carried out on a single set of preferred options in the absence of a clear spatial strategy, and that she had met with Cambridgeshire Horizons and representatives of other authorities to discuss the situation. Sites were needed for the waste and other facilities, but it was premature to undertake consultation on proposed sites without a spatial strategy to determine the number of sites required and the best locations for accommodating the needs of the growing population.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer explained that the County Council had carried out two Issues and Options consultations and had now reached the Preferred Option stage of the planning process, during which they had to demonstrate why the preferred sites had been chosen. Members expressed concern that the next stage in the planning process was submission. The Council could put forward further objections at this stage and make formal representations through a Public Examination if the County Council made a submission without addressing the District Council's concerns; it was noted that this would incur some financial cost. Officers undertook to include members' comments in the response to the County Council.

Cabinet **AGREED** the responses to the Minerals and Waste Development Plan consultation as contained in Appendices 2 and 3 to the report, with the inclusion of comments made by members at the meeting.

**9. CRIMINAL RECORDS BUREAU (CRB) CHECKS FOR COUNCILLORS**

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee had recommended that Cabinet develop a policy on Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for members, but a Cabinet decision was deferred pending a visit from the CRB Assurance Manager. The Assurance Manager had clarified that the position held by an elected member did not meet the CRB eligibility criteria to enable the Council to request that a disclosure check be undertaken.

Cabinet **AGREED** not to proceed with the proposal to require that all members be

subject to a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check but, in the event of a councillor commencing in a role which does meet the CRB eligibility criteria, that the Leader or Democratic Services Manager advise the Council's CRB lead counter-signatory and that a CRB check be undertaken and the reasons for the councillor being CRB checked clearly be documented against the eligibility criteria.

Cabinet **NOTED** the guidance provided by the CRB Assurance Manager.

**10. SAWSTON: 57/59 HIGH STREET, DISPOSAL OF COUNCIL PROPERTY ON OPEN MARKET**

The Housing Portfolio Holder confirmed that there had not been any Registered Social Landlord interest in the redevelopment of the properties on High Street, Sawston. Councillor Dr DR Bard, local member, reported that Sawston Parish Council supported the proposals provided that the conservation aspects were dealt with appropriately.

Cabinet **AGREED** that planning consent be sought for the change of use of 57 High Street, Sawston to residential, and that both 57 and 59 High Street, Sawston be placed for sale on the open market, valued for retail use (no. 59) with potential for residential use above (no. 57).

**11. LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER**

The government had issued a white paper on local government, "Strong and Prosperous Communities", a summary of which was presented to Cabinet to inform members of matters arising from the paper. The paper was a statement of intent, not a consultation document.

The Leader reminded members of the previous local government re-organisation exercise from 1992-5, during which arguments were made against a merger with Cambridge City Council, and supported the recommendations that the Council not apply for unitary status for the same reasons as in 1995. He also noted that surveys conducted prior to the introduction of new political structures in 2001 had demonstrated that the majority of residents related more to their local parish councils than to the district council, making it very difficult to justify having a directly elected mayor. Although there could be benefits for applying to become a partner pathfinder authority pioneering an enhanced two-tier local government model, current resources were insufficient to pursue this option. There was surprise expressed at the reference to re-warding an area to have single member wards, following the Electoral Commission's creation of multi-member wards during the last Periodic Electoral Review, and members noted that representatives of single-member wards could be excluded from debates due to personal and prejudicial interests, leaving their residents without local representation.

There was support for strengthening the overview and scrutiny role, especially provisions for requiring public service partners to appear before or provide information to the Council's Scrutiny and Overview Committee. Councillor R Hall, Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, welcomed the proposals and stated that the body's enhanced role and powers should not be underestimated.

Councillor SGM Kindersley expressed concern that Cabinet was being asked to agree recommendations not to pursue unitary status, as there had not been much recent debate about the proposals, and he felt that the government eventually would not allow the current two-tier system to continue. In response to requests to refer the issue to full Council, the Leader explained that the short timescale given to debate the issue precluded its reference to full Council and that Cabinet had to make a decision now to

inform officers and partners of the way the authority wished to proceed.

The Chief Executive, responding to queries from Councillor Mrs EM Heazell, explained that he had received a letter from the Cambridge City Council Chief Executive asking if the two authorities, along with Cambridgeshire County Council, wanted to submit a joint response, but that all three Chief Executives acknowledged that the government's timescale made it impossible to schedule special meetings of their authorities. Having conducted an informal consultation with members of the Cabinet and with the leader of the Liberal Democrat group, the Chief Executive responded that there was no support to seek unitary status at this time; his letter made clear that this was a conclusion reached on informal discussions with members and did not commit the Council to any course of action.

**Cabinet AGREED**

- (a) Not to apply for unitary status at this time, nor to become a partner pathfinder authority pioneering an enhanced two-tier local government model at this time; and
- (b) To wait until the enabling legislation, regulations and guidance were published before requesting appropriate bodies and / or lead officers to consider the principles the authority wishes to adopt and the practical implications of implementing the legislative, etc., requirements.

**12. SHEPRETH: 74-76 FROG END: OUTCOME OF OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

In view of the anticipated costs of refurbishing two semi-detached three-bedroom houses at 74-76 Frog End, Shepreth, an options appraisal had been undertaken to determine whether the properties could be acquired for refurbishment by a partner Registered Social Landlord (RSL), sold on the open market, sold for general redevelopment purposes or disposed of to an RSL partner for redevelopment of the site as affordable housing. The Housing Portfolio Holder drew members' attention to the results of the local consultation exercise, which showed that the proposal for the Council's retaining and redeveloping the site as shared ownership housing was supported by the local member, parish council, Frog End Residents' Association and tenants. She confirmed that the refurbishment would result in better properties than existed at present and that the Council would seek to ensure that 100% of the equity could not be available for purchase, therefore retaining the properties within the Council's affordable housing stock.

Councillor Dr SEK van de Ven, local member, reported that the number of responses she had received from residents demonstrated the need for affordable housing in Shepreth and suggested that redevelopment within the existing footprint would be acceptable as long as adequate parking were provided. She clarified that she supported the recommendation, but also a small-scale development as, due to traffic issues, she could not support any high-density development.

Cabinet **AGREED** that retention and refurbishment of the existing units for shared ownership be the preferred option for the pair of semi-detached properties at 74-76 Frog End, Shepreth.

**13. MILTON COUNTRY PARK - IMPROVING FACILITIES / FUTURE MANAGEMENT**

Cabinet had considered the future management of the park at its February, June and September 2006 meetings and, in line with previous decisions, car parking charges were being introduced from January 2007, catering arrangements were being re-tendered, the College of West Anglia would be using the park for aspects of its country park

management curriculum and negotiations were underway with external organisations for the establishment of a Trust to take on the park. The Community Development Portfolio Holder thanked the Head of Community Services and the Rangers for their work on the report. She urged park users to help support the park, explaining that it was necessary to raise a substantial proportion of the £75,000 identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, as well as a proportion of the £30,000 estimated annual parking charges, by the end of summer 2007 or else the park risked closure.

The Leader clarified the Council's position: the Council could not afford the continuing running costs of the park and could keep the park open only with an external partner. Councillor R Hall, Chairman of the Milton Country Park Advisory Group, concurred with this statement, and supported the establishment of an external Trust to manage the park. Other members agreed that a deadline must be set to focus attention on the risk that the park could be closed, and that, although it was primarily a resource for Cambridge City, Milton and the surrounding villages, it was paid for by all South Cambridgeshire taxpayers.

The Head of Community Services clarified that discussions were on-going about the identification of the park as a strategic open space around Cambridge and that he would be meeting on 15 December 2006 with the Cambridgeshire County Council Head of Property Asset Management about the County Council, a Beacon Council for asset management, undertaking an arms-length review of the park land. In light of Cabinet's intention to set a deadline for establishment of a Trust, this review might not be progressed.

Councillors Mrs HM Smith and RT Summerfield, local members for Milton, urged the Council to commit resources to work with Milton Parish Council to establish a Trust, and the Community Development Portfolio Holder explained that officers would participate in such a partnership only if the Trust were to save the Council money in the long run. Councillor Mrs Smith cautioned that closing the park would not be a cost-neutral option and asked for a further report outlining the ramifications.

Cabinet was minded not to proceed with applying for Local Nature Reserve designation of all land in the park north of the 13<sup>th</sup> Public Drain at this time, as such a status could affect the uses of the site and its attractiveness to organisations interested in forming a management trust.

Cabinet **AGREED** to establish the medium / long-term future of Milton Country Park through:

- (a) Undertaking an Asset Management Review with the assistance of Cambridgeshire County Council, subject to the outcome of the 15 December 2006 meeting between the Head of Community Services and the Cambridgeshire County Council Head of Property Asset Management, and
- (b) Seeking an appropriate external organisation to take on by 31 August 2007 the management and possible ownership of the park, whether through a Trust or by another suitable agency, but if no suitable partnership could be arranged or appeared likely by that date, that officers be instructed to take the necessary steps to close the park.

Cabinet **NOTED** the proposals for reducing the current and future net cost of the park through increasing income through car parking charges, re-tendering the catering operation, lettings of the visitor centre and obtaining sponsorship for the park, and reductions in expenditure on services.

Members congratulated the Head of Community Services on his new appointment.



#### 14. CAPITAL AND REVENUE ESTIMATES FOR STAFFING AND CENTRAL OVERHEAD ACCOUNTS

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder presented the estimates, which included the savings identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Two corrections were made to Appendix A: the recharges to all Portfolio Direct Services from Staffing and Admin Buildings (inc. Depot) were (15,897,700) in the 2006/07 Revised column and (16,595,430) in the 2007/08 Estimate column.

Cabinet **AGREED** to:

- (a) Confirm the inflation figure of 2½% both for general expenditure and pay awards, on which all the estimates were being prepared;
- (b) Approve the revenue estimates and recharges as presented and shown at Appendices A and B to the report; and
- (c) Approve the capital programme as shown at Appendix C.

#### 15. INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE TENDER EXERCISE

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder had agreed at his September meeting that invitations to tender be issued to five organisations for the internal audit contract. Bentley Jennison had ranked first for both three- and four-year contract periods.

Cabinet **AGREED** the intention of awarding the internal audit service contract to Bentley Jennison for an initial four-year period from 1 April 2007, subject to conditions and to the mandatory standstill period required under EU procurement rules.

#### 16. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS - PROGRESS TOWARDS STRETCH TARGETS

The majority of Local Area Agreement (LAA) interventions, or actions, were on track, with nearly two-thirds being delivered to plan, although there were areas where performance needed to be strengthened if targets were to be met by the end of the three-year agreement. The Leader drew members' attention to the new indicators in the priority areas of affordable housing, sustainable communities and climate change, community cohesion and sport, which aligned closely with the Council's corporate objectives.

Cabinet

- (a) **NOTED** the progress on current Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets and requested portfolio holders and service heads to continue to maximise performance on LAA targets in general and in particular on those which would earn reward grant;
- (b) **SUPPORTED** the direction being taken by the LAA refresh; and
- (c) **REQUESTED** portfolio holders and service managers to give realistic consideration as to how they could contribute towards LAA targets through the 2007/08 service plan process (in January, February and March 2007) while still giving priority to the three Council priorities.

#### 17. LOCAL AUTHORITY FINANCE SETTLEMENT 2007/08

The government had confirmed that the local authority finance settlement 2007/08 would be £7.562 million, the same amount given as a provisional figure nearly twelve months ago, despite the challenges facing the Council.

Cabinet **AGREED** that the letter attached at Appendix B to the report be issued in response to the consultation on the Local Authority Finance Settlement 2007/08, subject to an amendment in paragraph (iii) to state that £102.26 was the maximum Council Tax the Council was allowed to set, and with authority delegated to the Chief Executive to finalise the wording of paragraph (v).

#### 18. **BANKING SERVICES**

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder had agreed that negotiations with the Council's present bank be undertaken, as the service was considered to be satisfactory and good working relationships had been established between Council staff and the bank.

Cabinet **AGREED** that a five-year contract be negotiated with the Council's current bankers to comply with Contract Standing Order 4.5.

#### 19. **TRADE WASTE BUSINESS PLAN**

Cabinet **DEFERRED** this item pending further investigation of financial and resource implications.

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#### **Information Item**

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#### 20. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) OVERVIEW / SUBSIDY**

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented this information item, explaining that it was the first time such a report had been prepared, giving a broad overview of the present Housing Revenue Account (HRA) situation and the likely financial pressures it would face over the next few years. Members acknowledged the urgency of the capital programme funding which would be reduced unless the Council could identify additional grants and / or contributions, or made recourse to borrowing. The Chairman of Council and Housing Portfolio Holder agreed to liaise to consider an extra-ordinary meeting of Council to consider the HRA Business Plan.

Cabinet **NOTED** the report.

Cabinet thanked the Principal Accountant (Housing) for her report.

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#### **Standing Items**

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#### 21. **MATTERS REFERRED BY SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

None.

#### 22. **UPDATES FROM CABINET MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Leader reported on the extensive negotiations he had been undertaking with the Council's partners about the future of Cambridgeshire Horizons as the local development vehicle, and about joint planning services. He would be attending a Cambridgeshire Horizons board meeting after Cabinet finished.

He highlighted his concerns about the demands of the Leadership in addition to his personal and professional life. Due to professional commitments, he felt unable to do justice to the role of the Leader and he announced his intention to resign the office after the 11 January 2007 Cabinet meeting. Councillor RMA Manning, Environmental Health Portfolio Holder, had indicated his willingness to serve as interim Leader until Council made a formal appointment on 25 January 2007. The Leader envisaged that the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder would accept the responsibilities of the Environmental Health Portfolio. Councillor Dr DR Bard would focus on the growth agenda and continue as the Council's representative on Cambridgeshire Horizons and the other growth area partners. A review of the portfolios would be presented to Council before the annual meeting in May 2007, taking into consideration the new organisational structures and also the workloads of the existing portfolios.

Councillor RMA Manning supported Councillor Dr Bard's decision to stand down as Leader to focus on the growth agenda, and members expressed their support of Councillor Manning's candidature for the interim Leadership.

The Chairman of the Council led members in thanking Councillor Dr Bard for his work as Leader, especially in light of the many stressful situations facing the Council, and for his dignified manner in standing down from the Leadership.

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**The Meeting ended at 1.15 p.m.**

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