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CABINET

23 January 2008 – 6.30 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor B Coleman (in the Chair); Councillors Peck, Plant, Shrimplin, Smith and Stone

Councillors Castle, Wainwright and Williamson attended by invitation.

Mr R Packham (Managing Director), Mr P Hardy (Executive Director – Environment and Economy), Mr T Howard (Head of Regeneration and Environment), Mr S Duncan (Head of Financial Services), Mr M Burns (Head of Community Services), Mr S Earl (Conservation and Heritage Manager) and Mr R Hodds (Member Services Manager and Scrutiny Officer).

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the 19 December 2007 were confirmed.

2. ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY, ADVISORY GROUPS AND REGULATORY COMMITTEES

(a) Choice Based Lettings

Cabinet considered the report by the Community Advisory Group into that Group's review of Choice Based Lettings.

The Cabinet Member (Community) reported on the work carried out by the Advisory Group in respect of this review. He reported that during the review, the issue of the length of time that someone was on the Housing Register had been raised and how some Councils had adopted a policy where after a set number of applications or number of years, they were in a band, they would then advance to the next band or receive a property. Although this would speed up application for those in the silver band, it would then increase the waiting time for applicants in the gold band. The affect of promoting applicants from the bronze band would be that people who were already adequately housed would be re-housed. The Advisory Group had agreed that there was a shortage of social housing in the borough and that the Council currently owns available land that could be used for development.

In discussing this issue, Cabinet were advised that the Borough Council was still awaiting guidance from the Government's Green Paper on this issue which would have to be taken into consideration as part of the recommendations made by the Advisory Group on this issue.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the following recommendations be agreed:-
 - (a) That the Council's local connections policy time of residence for the applicants should be amended to a minimum of two years.
 - (b) That the local lettings policy be amended to allow residents of rural villages to be given preference when applying for properties in their village.
 - (c) That the owner/occupiers criteria of over £50,000 should be increased to a more realistic figure in line with inflation.
 - (d) That joined up activities to help young people into employment along with activities to assist young people in the borough to access intermediate housing be investigated.
 - (e) That schemes involving developers building affordable housing in the borough such as the one in the Breckland area be investigated.
 - (f) That the Council investigates using its own land to build IKEA module houses for first time buyers.
 - (g) That the Council considers giving priority to people leaving the Armed Forces in housing need, providing they can demonstrate a local connection.
- (ii) That the following recommendations be referred to the Local Development Framework Working Party for consideration:-
 - (a) That the Council ensures that they enforce Section 106 Conditions on developers to ensure that they are building the required type of properties for the borough, particularly social housing.
 - (b) That the Council continues to treat the development of affordable housing as a priority, with a recommendation that the percentage of affordable housing be increased to 35%.

3. FORWARD PLAN – 1 JANUARY 2008 TO 30 APRIL 2008

Cabinet received the Forward Plan for the period 1 January to 30 April 2008.

4. 2007/08 BUDGET MONITORING

Cabinet considered the Head of Financial Services report which presented the General Fund Revenue Budget Performance as at 30 November for the eight months from 1 April 2007 to 30 November 2007.

RESOLVED:

That the Head of Financial Services report be noted.

5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION

Cabinet was advised that there was no further information on this matter at the present time.

6. ISSUES DETERMINED BY THE CABINET UNDER THE TERMS OF THE CONSTITUTION

(a) Management of Seafront Advertising

(Councillors Shrimplin and Plant declared a personal non prejudicial interest in the above item.)

- (b) **Arrangements for Leisure Service Provision at the Marina Centre and Phoenix Pool – April 2008 Onwards**

- (c) **Exclusion of Public**

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

- (d) **Townscape Heritage Initiative – Bretts Project**

(Councillor Williamson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in the above item in his capacity as Chairman of the PCT.)

- (e) **Bure Harbour Quay**

(This item was withdrawn.)

7. **CONFIDENTIAL COUNCIL PAPERS**

Cabinet was reminded that at its last meeting when considering a confidential item, it had been agreed that the Managing Director should carry out an investigation as to how or why confidential information contained in a confidential report had become known to the press.

Accordingly, Cabinet now considered the joint report of the Member Services Manager and Scrutiny Officer and the Executive Officer (Strategic Projects) into how or why confidential commercial information became known to the press and recommendations for amendment of procedures.

RESOLVED:

That the Member Services Manager and Scrutiny Officer and Executive Officer (Strategic Projects) report be noted and that a reminder be sent to all Members and relevant Officers of the need to maintain confidentiality in respect of Council Papers which are so marked.

8. **CLOSURE OF MEETING**

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm.