

**CABINET
HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2005
(FROM 5.30 PM – 6.08 PM)**

PRESENT: Councillor Dr Gardner in the Chair. Councillors Jean Butterfield, Cooper, Ellington, Pat Jones, Skidmore and Sturdy.

Late Arrivals: None.

Early Departures: None.

100/05 - **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** There were no apologies for absence.

(5.30 pm)

101/05 - **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Councillor Cooper declared a personal interest in relation to any reference on the agenda in connection with the Harrogate International Centre, arising from the use of the facility by his employer for conference purposes.

(5.30 pm)

102/05 - **MINUTES:** The Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 16 November 2005 were approved unanimously as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

(5.30 pm)

103/05 - **EXEMPT INFORMATION:** There was no exempt information.

MATTERS REFERRED TO COUNCIL FOR CONSIDERATION

104/05 - **HARROGATE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE – HALF YEARLY REPORT:**

The Director, Harrogate International Centre, submitted the Harrogate International Centre six monthly report/summary accounts for the period to 30 September 2005. The report had been submitted to and approved by the HIC Board at its meeting held on 18 November 2005.

In respect of business tourism, the Director explained that the reduction in the net surplus on the account over that experienced in past years reflected the reinvestment commitment agreed in respect of HIC as indicated by an increase in premises costs for the current year, together with the loan repayment for the new Queen's Suite facility. In responding to concerns over past outturn compared with the original estimate, the Director explained that whilst the original estimate for 2005/06 was again based on stretch targets, it was considered a more accurate forecast than previous years, and although the projected surplus was likely to be exceeded, it was not expected to be by a significant amount. For the benefit of Cabinet, the Director amplified the principal reason for such variation, relating to the use of Hall Q on a "Show and Go" basis with resultant annual variations in usage which made it difficult to forecast with accuracy the income to be received for this

particular facility. In concluding, the Director stated that the Centre was competing in an extremely competitive business, and compared favourably with other conference venues, all of which were in some form of public ownership which reflected the commercial difficulties in such operations.

RECOMMENDED:

That the report be noted.

(Six Members voted for the motion and there was one abstention).

(5.31 pm – 5.44 pm)

105/05 - **GM FOOD:** The Chair of the Environment, Overview and Scrutiny Commission, Councillor Heather Adderley, submitted a written report in respect of the above, following receipt of a request from the Friends of the Earth for the Council to adopt a policy to become GM free and commit to associated principles. The report, therefore, explained details of the work undertaken by the Environment, Overview and Scrutiny Commission which had, as part of a two year review, held an informal public meeting during 2004, at which time evidence from interested parties had been gathered. Section 7 of the report provided Cabinet with a summary of the findings of the Commission, which had concluded that the Council could not practically adopt a fully GM free policy, but should support it as far as possible by encouraging the use of GM free products. In considering those findings, in particular that requiring that no GM crops were grown on land over which the Council had control, Cabinet accepted the finding that this proposal could not be adopted, but supported as far as possible by communicating this principle to all tenants which in respect of Council House tenants was thought better, not by a specific letter, but as part of the regular newsletter issued to all the such tenants.

RECOMMENDED (UNANIMOUSLY):

That:-

(1) the Environment, Overview and Scrutiny Commission's summary of findings as detailed below be approved, subject to the qualification detailed above with regard to the inclusion of an article in the Council House tenant's newsletter in respect of finding (c).

Adopting a Policy to become GM Free

- (a) The Council cannot practically adopt a full GM free policy but should support it as far as possible by encouraging the use of GM free products.

Adopting a GM Free policy for all goods and services for which the Council is responsible.

- (b) This proposal cannot be adopted in full but the Council should have a policy that promotes GM free products throughout the Council accepting that it could only be actively considered where the Council had, or was intending to have, a contractual relationship with the supplier ie where practical.

Ensuring that no GM crops are grown on land over which the Council has control

- (c) This proposal cannot be adopted but the Council should support it as far as possible by writing to all tenants (including Council house tenants relayed via the Tenants Newsletter) promoting GM free crops/products.

To consider each prospective GMO Marketing Consent and, where appropriate, writing to both the Secretary of State for Environment Food and Rural Affairs and to the European Commission requesting that a condition under Article 19(3)(c) of 2001/18/EC be added to such marketing consent so as to exempt the Harrogate District from the scope of such consent.

- (d) This proposal should not be adopted.

Declaring the Harrogate District to be a GM Free Zone.

- (e) The Council cannot declare that the Harrogate District was GM free but should support it as far as possible by “encouraging GM free in the Harrogate District”.

(2) the Chair and Members of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Commission be thanked for their significant contribution to this particular topic.

(5.44 pm – 5.51 pm)