

CABINET: MINUTES

Date: 24th May 2005

Time: 10.00 a.m. – 10.35 a.m.

Present: Councillor J K Walters (Chairman)

Councillors: V H Lucas, M W McGuire, L J Oliver, D R Pegram, J A Powley, J E Reynolds, J.M. Tuck and F H Yeulett

Apologies: Councillor S F Johnstone

1. MINUTES 12th APRIL 2005

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 12TH April 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None made.

3. ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

No issues.

4. DECISIONS FOR COUNCIL

No decisions to be made.

5. LOCAL AUTHORITY PARKING ENFORCEMENT EXEMPTION AND CHARGING POLICY

Following approval by Cabinet in January 2004, Local Authority Parking Enforcement (LAPE) was introduced in Cambridge on 25th October 2004. The LAPE inherited a number of informal arrangements with regard to exemptions to parking regulations and these needed to be formalised to promote an open, equitable and consistent system for exemptions. The current report requested approval to a Parking Enforcement Exemption Policy, to address this issue, and associated charges as set out in the officers' report.

It was reported that the Cambridge Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee supported the policy, but had opposed the proposed officer recommendation to double the administration charges for suspensions from £15 to £30. Cabinet Members supported the views of the joint committee. Cabinet did however agree that the cost of administering the scheme would need to be kept under review, to ensure that there was no adverse impact on the intention that LAPE should be self-financing.

The Chairman of Cabinet drew attention to a letter he had received describing the situation of a person with disabilities who was unable to receive appropriate home assistance from health care workers due to the current charging policy. After discussion, it was proposed that the portfolio holder should investigate this further, in order to see if it was appropriate to extend the current list of exemptions to include social care workers on home visits. There would also be a need to be appraised of the likely consequences of any further changes.

It was resolved:

- (a) To approve the Parking Enforcement Exemption Policy and charges set out as an appendix to these Minutes including the agreed amendment to the charge regarding the administration fees for suspensions to be £15 and not £30.
- (b) That the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive, Environment and Community Services should investigate whether it would be appropriate to extend charging exemptions to health care workers.

**6. EASTERN SHIRES PURCHASING ORGANISATION (ESPO)
SUPPLEMENTAL AGREEMENT RELATING TO THE PURCHASE OF LAND
AND CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW WAREHOUSE FACILITY**

Cabinet received a report on the need for a supplement to the current ESPO Terms of Agreement. The Council had a spend of £20m a year with ESPO which was now the largest purchasing consortium managed by a joint committee in the UK and which provided improved purchasing performance through a comprehensive professional purchasing service, taking advantage of economies of scale gained from volume purchasing.

It was reported that ESPO had outgrown its premises and had negotiated with a developer for the construction of new warehousing and office accommodation. Leicestershire County Council as the servicing authority, had agreed to raise the necessary capital finance to purchase the site and build a new warehouse. As the current ESPO constitution did not cover the risks surrounding the possibility of any failure on behalf of ESPO to meet its obligations to service the loan, Leicestershire had sought a supplemental agreement from the other 6 members including the County Council, to act as sureties.

It was noted that while Cambridgeshire's liability could extend to £1.8m (its share of the value of assets of the organisation), expert advice concluded that the risks were low and the benefits significant in the longer term.

It was resolved:

To approve the County Council signing the ESPO Supplemental Agreement.

7. CHANGES TO THE THRESHOLD FOR DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT APPLICATION

Cabinet received a report detailing the issues surrounding raising the existing £250 threshold for Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) applications to £1,000 as required by the Community Care (Delayed Discharges etc.) Act, 2003. The Act legally required Councils to provide all minor adaptations costing £1000 or less (which included the cost of buying and fitting the adaptation) free of charge. The changes would help more vulnerable people to stay in their homes for a greater period of time.

A flow chart was tabled to help explain the Occupational Therapy (OT) assessment procedures and the routing of applications depending on whether the total cost involved was above or below the assessment.

It was noted that at the present time owner occupied properties adaptations costing over £250 were passed to the District Councils' Home Improvement Agencies at which point the DFG process commenced. Raising the threshold to £1000 would have an impact for the Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES) and while it was not possible to provide an exact figure, it could be in the region of £20,000 per annum. This cost pressure had been allowed for and would be funded from the uplift to the ICES pooled budget, in line with the Section 31 ICES Partnership Agreement.

Some Cabinet Members were concerned that the financial implications might have been underestimated but assurances were given by the officers that there would be monthly monitoring to ensure that the contractual requirement to deliver equipment/minor adaptations against set performance indicator targets was being adhered to.

It was noted that those with more complex needs requiring equipment over £1,000 could suffer and not receive appropriate provision as a result of the Government cap on DFG funding levels to district councils which had previously been vigorously opposed by the County Council and its partners.

As there were still concerns about the financial impact of raising the threshold, it was agreed that an update report should be provided to SMT/Cabinet and that a report should only come back to Cabinet if there were financial implications beyond what had already been budgeted for.

It was resolved:

- a) That with immediate effect the County Council's threshold for Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) application should be reset at

£1000 in line with legislation contained within the Delayed Discharges Act 2003.

- b) That in due course the officers should provide a monitoring report to SMT/Cabinet on the financial impact of the change to the threshold.

8. BUDGET MONITORING

Cabinet received a report providing monitoring information on the fourth quarter financial position and forecasts for 2004/05. The report summarised the financial results for revenue, and capital to the end of March 2005, including forecast outturn results for the current year. It was cautioned that the figures might change following the closedown of the accounts in April and May, with the final County Council budget outturn to be reported to the July Cabinet meeting.

Cabinet observed that analysing some of the figures for actual spending compared to the outturn variation in Appendix 1 to the officers' report could lead to misinterpretation, as the table did not show income received from various sources. Officers were requested to ensure that future financial monitoring reports provided clearer explanations in footnotes regarding the information included in budget tables.

It was resolved;

To note the report, taking into account that the figures might change as the accounts were closed.

9. DELEGATIONS FROM CABINET TO CABINET MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Cabinet received a progress report on matters delegated to individual Cabinet members or to officers on behalf of the Cabinet.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the delegations from Cabinet to individual Cabinet Members and/or to officers to make decisions/take actions on behalf of the Cabinet, which had been, or were still to be discharged.

10. CABINET DRAFT AGENDA – 14th June 2005

It was reported that report 7 “Bar Hill Junction Improvements” had been withdrawn from the agenda as it had already been agreed as part of the Network Service Plan.

Additionally, an additional Key Decision item report had been added titled “Second Public Service Agreement Process”

It was resolved to note the Cabinet Draft Agenda Plan for 14th June 2005.

Chairman
14th June 2005

PARKING ENFORCEMENT EXEMPTION POLICY

Waivers

- 2.1 The Parking Service will issue waivers by application in advance. There will be no fee for this service as motorists are normally entitled to load or unload on yellow lines. However, if no prior application is made and a vehicle is found in contravention of the regulations on street, a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) will be issued.

Waivers will be issued on a one-off basis to exempt vehicles that are required to park on waiting restrictions for the purpose of essential work on or adjacent to the highway.

(Example: a builder's lorry being used to remove spoil from site)

Suspensions

- 2.2 The Parking Service will vet and approve / reject requests for meter bay and residents' parking bay suspensions in advance. An administration fee per suspension of a residents' bay will be charged (£15) and a £1 per day charge per residents' bay will apply (consistent with the cost of a resident daily visitor permit). An administration fee will be charged (£15) for suspending a meter bay, with an added element to cover a notional level of "lost meter revenue". The administration fees have been set to reflect the actual level of costs involved and to support the principle that LAPE should be self-financing.

Suspensions will be issued on a one-off basis to allow parking in a parking bay for the purpose of essential work on or adjacent to the highway by vehicles not normally permitted to park.

(Example: a contractor's vehicle working on the highway in or around a parking bay)

Dispensations

- 2.3 Vehicles that are exempt from parking restrictions such as public utility vehicles working on the highway will not need to display a dispensation, by virtue of the fact that they can be observed carrying out essential action. Vehicles that will be eligible for dispensations (if they meet the criteria set out below) will be charged a £50 administration fee for the dispensation. The exemption granted through dispensation will only apply in residents' parking bays and pay and display bays. Dispensation arrangements will be subject to regular review.

Dispensations will be issued on a permanent basis to:

- *Doctors / Nurses / lone-working health care workers carrying drugs or heavy medical equipment necessary for preserving life to / from patients homes*
- *Other health care workers visiting patients' homes without prior appointments (e.g. calls considered to have an emergency element to them and not of a planned or routine nature)*
- *Mobile workshops equipped to undertake essential works on or by the highway*
- *Persons using dangerous / heavy equipment or handling and using approved cleaning agents for essential works on or by the highway.*

Exemption Permit Issue

- 2.4 Penalty Charge Notices in Cambridge are processed using the Spur Debt Management database. This database has the capacity and is being developed to accommodate the management and administration of multiple types of permits. Whatever approach and policy is ultimately taken in relation to exemption, it is proposed to use this system to issue and administer all waivers, suspensions and dispensations through the LAPE Parking Service using approved, controlled and secure stationery. Through these developments, "real-time" information about waivers, suspensions and dispensations will be able to sit alongside other pre-paid permit data, enabling more effective and sensitive enforcement. The Parking Attendant's hand held terminal will contain up-to-the-minute information about current vehicle exemptions.