

## **CABINET: MINUTES**

**Date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2007

**Time:** 10.00 a.m. – 12.10 p.m.

**Present:** S Johnstone (Chairman)

Councillors, M Curtis, D Harty, V H Lucas, L W McGuire, A Melton, D R Pegram (Vice Chairman), J E Reynolds J M Tuck and F H Yeulett.

### **Also in Attendance**

Councillors: A Kent and J West

**Apologies:** None

## **386. MINUTES 11<sup>th</sup> June 2007**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2007 were approved as a correct record.

## **387. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Cllr Tuck declared a personal interest in item 7 “Taking forward Neighbourhood Management in Huntingdonshire” as the chairman of Fenland Links.

## **388. PETITIONS**

### **Petition relating to Primary School Provision to Serve Cambourne**

Cabinet noted that a petition of 242 signatures had been received in line with the County Council’s Petitions procedure. Karen Partridge, Viv Wales and Michelle Downes who were objecting to the proposed site for the third school for Cambourne near to the junction at Jeavons Lane/Eastgate Road presented the petition to Cabinet. A coloured map was tabled for Cabinet Members at the meeting to aid identification issues. The petitioners’ contention was that placing a new primary school on the site proposed would lead to substantial increases in vehicle traffic along the route of Jeavons Lane and Eastgate and would represent an increased accident hotspot for the children attending both the proposed new school and those travelling to the Vine School. In their view, the identified feeder road highlighted on the map in pink, was in the wrong place, as the majority of parents whose children attended the Vine School would still have to travel along Jeavons Lane and have to pass

the proposed new school. With the expected additional traffic flows, this would lead to greater traffic congestion. They were also concerned at the detrimental effect on local wildlife and nearby trees from the further proposed development, as well as noise nuisance to the residents occupying the retirement homes opposite. It was also highlighted that police were frequently visiting the Vine School because of existing road safety concerns.

The petitioners wished to see consideration given to an alternative site, especially as there was currently little built development in the area of land between Jeavons Lane and south of Lancaster Way.

## **CHANGE IN THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA**

With the agreement of Cabinet Members agenda item 6 “Primary School Provision in Cambourne” was taken as the next item of business.

### **389. PRIMARY SCHOOL PROVISION IN CAMBOURNE**

Cabinet received a report seeking approval for the establishment of a third primary school in Cambourne and providing information on the issues surrounding the proposed site of the school.

Cambourne was currently served by two 420-place primary schools, Monkfield Park Community Primary School currently at full capacity, and The Vine Inter-church Voluntary Aided Primary School which was also filling rapidly. As a result of the housing growth detailed in the report, there was a requirement for a third primary school to provide 420 places by September 2008, although it was recognised that permanent accommodation would not be possible until September 2009. It was expected that a headteacher could be recruited within this timescale.

Cabinet was informed that from May 2007, The Education & Inspections Act 2006 required a competition process to operate for the opening of any new school. However the local authority could apply to the Secretary of State for an exemption from the competition process, if circumstances were deemed necessary and appropriate. The report set out the timetable for a competition and given the need to open the school by 2008, this date would not be achievable, if the competition rules were observed.

Cabinet noted the results of the initial consultation undertaken and that there was no consensus/or strong view on the type of school to be created but that support had been received for the use of temporary accommodation on the proposed site until the school was constructed.

A greater concern highlighted had been the impact on younger siblings of establishing a third school and the subsequent redrawing of

catchment area boundaries. The suggested solution in the short term being for the Cambourne schools giving priority to siblings over catchment area, a proposal which had the support of both existing schools.

Cabinet members commented/noted that:

- like some other recent cases, the report highlighted the need to identify school sites at a much earlier stage.
- There was a need to ensure future school sites were located within practical walking distances of the settlements they served.
- It was clarified that the car parking provision envisaged for parents at the proposed new school was standard short stay provision.
- In view of the issues raised by petitioners, there was a need to go back to the developers one last time to see whether another site location was feasible.
- The local Member for Bourn supported the report's recommendations.

**It was resolved:**

- i) That an application is submitted to the Secretary of State for approval for exemption from competition for the third  
  
primary school to serve Cambourne;
- ii) That in the event approval is not granted, the competition process is undertaken;
- iii) That the Council proposes the provision of a new foundation school;
- iv) That the new school opens in September 2008 in temporary accommodation on the site of the permanent school.
- v) That the officers undertake further consultations with the developers to establish whether it was possible to identify a different site for the proposed third primary school.
- vi) To endorse the suggested approach to over-subscription in Cambourne at primary school level to give priority to younger siblings who already have siblings at an existing school over catchment area requirements, in order to avoid families having to send their children to different schools.

### **390. ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

None.

### **391. SECTION 31 PROJECT / AGREEMENTS**

Cabinet received a report providing recommendations with respect to new Section 31 Agreements between the County Council and the Primary Care Trust (PCT) in respect of three agreements covering:

- Older People and Occupational Therapy (OP&OT) which includes Older People with Mental Health Needs (OPMH): PCT lead, with staff transferred and a pooled budget.
- Learning Disabilities (LD): CCC lead, with lead commissioning transferred and a pooled budget.
- Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES): CCC lead, with lead commissioning and a pooled budget.

and one with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Trust covering:

- Adults Mental Health (AMH): MHT lead, with staff transferred and a hosted budget.

The Section 31 Agreements required review following the changes the Government introduced in July 2005 via the paper 'Commissioning a patient led NHS' (CPLNHS) that required Primary Care Trusts to separate their commissioning and provider functions. This had provided an opportunity to develop more robust agreements based on the experience of working with the existing agreements.

As part of the integrated planning process it was intended to review the budget and performance baseline, in readiness for agreeing the starting point for 2008/09. If when doing this, it became apparent that one, either or both parties contribution had been set incorrectly to meet the balance of cost and performance pressures in 2007/08, then a separate variation would be agreed, in line with the clause allowing such changes as detailed in the full agreement.

Cabinet noted that the agreements also required approval by the relevant NHS body, i.e. the Boards of Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Trust. Presentation to these Boards was to take place after the full Council meeting.

It was noted that details on the agreements would be included as a hot topic at the next Members seminar. In terms of future training/ensuring

awareness of the new requirements, substantial training was to follow for key officers, PCT Board members and County Council Members to facilitate implementation of the proposed agreements and to ensure all relevant parties were aware of their individual responsibilities.

**It was resolved:**

To recommend to Council that they approve the re-written Section 31 Agreements.

**392. TAKING FORWARD NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE**

Cabinet received a report setting out the proposals for a succession strategy from the Oxmoor Single Regeneration Budget programme, following the cessation of Government funding and seeking approval to new mainstream arrangements to support the further development of Neighbourhood Management in Huntingdonshire.

Cabinet supported the need for the Council to further develop existing Cambridgeshire Neighbourhood Regeneration Programmes within Service Plans, as a central part of the 'mainstream' project of ensuring community cohesion in Cambridgeshire. Oxmoor had been agreed as part of a joint 'Neighbourhood Management' approach including Oxmoor, Ramsey and St Neots (Eynesbury), The proposals for the Huntingdonshire area neighbourhood management approach, whilst locally determined, were set within a wider framework of effective mainstream service co-ordination and delivery with the approach endorsed by the Huntingdonshire Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

Cabinet supported the proposals moving toward firmer arrangements for local delivery and governance, including more direct structural linkage to the Huntingdonshire LSP and the Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement. (LAA).

Cabinet noted that:

- In respect of ongoing negotiations with partners and the current resourcing commitment for the Oxmoor area, the key process was based on 'managing resources in the neighbourhood' and the need through service partner agreements to make better use of the resources already available to the area. However, it was expected that having both a dedicated project and neighbourhood manager should enable the leverage of additional external funding to support the regeneration area. The Cabinet Member for Communities expressed some caution regarding committing County Council resources until funding issues had been clarified.

- There would be a need to monitor carefully the officer support required to ensuring continued resident involvement in the Neighbourhood approach.
- The local member for Ramsey had provided comments in writing and whilst supporting the recommendations, made the point that the County Council should not be burdened with additional work without appropriate additional resources being provided. In respect of questions she had raised in respect of which villages would be included in the Ramsey area arrangements and the detail in respect of which conditions made up 'a 'Deprived Super Output Area' it was agreed that a reply would be provided by officers outside of the meeting.

**It was resolved:**

1) To support the further development of Neighbourhood Management in Huntingdonshire.

2) That County Council Services should review their service/business plans to include an objective relating to engaging with local neighbourhood regeneration programmes in Cambridgeshire

### **393. SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL TRAVEL STRATEGY**

Cabinet received a detailing the requirements under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 for local authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport.

The Sustainable School Travel Strategy aimed to:

- promote alternative, sustainable modes of travel that improve the physical well being of the user such as walking and cycling
- promote the use of sustainable modes of travel that will bring environmental benefits from reduced levels of congestion and pollution e.g. bus use rather than individuals travelling by car
- make travel to school safer

Cabinet noted that:

- The overarching aim of the strategy covering the period September 2007 to August 2012 aimed to move parents and pupils away from using cars as a means to travel to and from school.
- The strategy had the potential to make a significant contribution towards improving outcomes for children and their families.
- The Strategy developed for consultation has been written, and would be further developed, in the context of Cambridgeshire's Local Travel Plan.

- A comprehensive audit of data on how children and young people travelled to and from school and college had been undertaken to inform the development of the Strategy and the associated action plan.
- The report to Cabinet set out the results of the initial consultation exercise and that the Strategy agreed had been updated to reflect the comments received.
- Many of the action targets contained in the Strategy did not have additional cost implications in that they built upon existing practice within schools or related to services already delivered by the Authority.

Cabinet's attention was drawn to two areas with financial implications, namely the cost of unsafe routes and the future funding of two School Travel Advisors (STA). For the latter, confirmation of continued Government funding to March 2010 would not be known before August 2007. Due to the considerable cost of assisted travel involving unsafe routes, work was underway to review all the existing identified unsafe routes in order to identify the capital cost of making the routes safe to walk and cycle. It was suggested this should also be linked to County Council initiatives in respect of the promotion of greater car sharing and encouraging other means of travel.

Members again highlighted that in respect of new developments; the priority should be to ensure that new school sites were located within easy walking/ cycling distance.

**It was resolved:**

To approve the publication of the Sustainable School Travel Strategy.

### **394. REVIEW OF CURRENT SPEED LIMIT POLICY**

Cabinet received a report informing it of

- the current County policy regarding speed limits;
- the new guidance on setting local speed limits, issued recently by the Department for Transport (DfT)
- a DfT Circular asking all Traffic Authorities to review the speed limits on all of their A and B rural single carriageway roads, in accordance with the guidance, and to implement any necessary changes by 2011.
- the views expressed at the Speed Limit Review Workshop, held on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2007 and at subsequent meetings of the Area Joint Committees, the Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils (CALC), and the Highways & Transport Policy Development Group (PDG).
- the proposed new speed limit policy for the County.

While proposing a new speed limit policy, it was recommended that a decision on whether or not to accept the Department for Transport request for a full review of all A and B class roads should be deferred until a trial site had been investigated to determine the probable level of funding and the staff resources necessary to successfully complete what was an extensive review. This work was expected to be completed by mid August, in order for it to be included in the budget process for the following year. If the results suggested that it was unaffordable within the existing budget, then it might be necessary to seek further resources from DfT.

Cabinet noted that:

- In terms of establishing speed limits in the new communities, it was hoped that a report would be able come forward to Cabinet in October.
- if the new requirements were adopted, this would lead to a need to reprioritise the current speed limit review programme, in order to recognise the priority for A and B class roads set by DfT.

One Member was concerned that expectations of lower speed limits could be unduly raised at parish council level. In reply it was explained that the priority process for selecting speed limits would continue to be based on accident statistics and the number of schemes that could be implemented was constrained by budget.

**It was resolved:**

- i) To agree that the proposed new speed limit policy as detailed in Appendix D of the officer's report to Cabinet should be adopted as County Council policy.
- ii) That a decision on whether or not to accept the Department of Transport (DfT) request is deferred until a trial site has been investigated to determine the probable level of funding and staff resources necessary to successfully complete the review.

**395. INVEST TO TRANSFORM FUND ADDITIONAL PROPOSALS 2007/08**

Cabinet received a report seeking approval for a number of Invest to Transform loans, as the total value of the loans was above the delegated powers of the Director of Finance, Property and Performance. The combined value of the bids was £1.12m called down over the next 4 years, with £1.05m called down in 2007/08.



With reference to the bid for the cost of consultants in for Transport Stage 2 there was a request to ensure that their costs should be kept within funds allocated.

In respect to a question raised regarding the loan to support Workwise assurances were provided that the monies could be repaid as more properties were due to come forward which would release the necessary finances.

**It was resolved:**

To approve the six Invest to Transform loans in respect of

- Touchpaper Support & Maintenance
- Internet Protocol Virtual Private Network (IPVPN) Project Co-ordinator
- Centralised Agency and Locum Management
- Transport Review Stage 2
- Savings from reducing business mileage (loan to be recovered through reductions in future years funding of mileage budgets)
- Workwise – supporting project cashflow

**396. PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS**

Cabinet received a report seeking Cabinet approval to dispose of Camfields, Ditton Walk, Cambridge, property at Hall Farm, Guilden Morden and Signet Court, Cambridge as these properties were surplus to requirements and their disposal would generate capital receipts for the County Council as well as helping to reduce current maintenance/running costs. The acquisition of Amundsen House (8a) at St Ives would meet the demand for low maintenance office accommodation.

**It was resolved:**

- i) To declare Camfields, Cambridge, property at Hall Farm, Guilden Morden and Signet Court Cambridge as surplus to Council requirements and to authorise the Director of Finance, Property and Performance to dispose of the properties on terms to be agreed with the receipt from Signet Court being reinvested into the WorkWise programme.
- ii) To acquire the extension (8a) to Amundsen House, St Ives on terms to be agreed by the Director of Finance, Property and Performance.

### **397. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT FUNDING USE SUB AGREEMENTS**

Cabinet received a report setting out the need for Local Area Agreement (LAA) funding use sub agreements with partners and which sought approval mechanisms for them.

A formal funding use sub agreement had been developed setting out the conditions under which funding would be distributed to partners based on the requirements placed on the County Council as the accountable body for the funding. This would ensure that funding conditions were known by all relevant partners, formalising financial relationships under the LAA and enabling a mechanism for any required claw back of funding.

#### **It was resolved:**

To approve the delegation of the amendment and finalisation of the funding use sub agreements to the Director of Finance, Property and Performance in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and to authorise the subsequent sealing of the agreements.

### **398. EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE PILOT PROJECT**

Cabinet received a report setting out a model for Cambridgeshire County Council to run a local version of an Empowering Young People Pilot, funded by Department of Education and Skills (DfES) for 12 months setting out the intended solution, financial implications and risks to the local authority.

Cabinet noted that:

- The pilot scheme would place spending power to in the hands of a group of disadvantaged young people and Looked After Children (approximately 2000) through issuing a prepaid debit card to them with approximately £40 of cash benefit loaded onto the card each month for a 12-month period.
- The funding would provide new opportunities to economically disadvantaged young people to engage in positive activities including cultural, sporting and leisure opportunities.
- Young people would also be able to use the card to pay for transport to engage in positive activities although Cabinet noted that there was still work to be undertaken on how to secure low value payments for bus journeys.

In agreeing to the proposed pilot, Cabinet asked officers:

- to undertake early work on an exit strategy to help identify possible future funding, in order to seek to continue funding the scheme

beyond the current 12 month funding. Part of the exit strategy would need to ensure that when the card and subsidy came to an end, young people would be able to access other opportunities, e.g. through extended schools with lead professionals being trained to broker such provision.

- To ensure that the relevant local County Council and district council Members were involved.
- The progress on the consortium to help reduce the costs of the card provider detailed in paragraph 4.3 of the report. In reply it was indicated that this was still in negotiation, but that the scheme would still be progressed if no agreement could be reached.

**It was resolved:**

- i) To endorse the proposal for a pilot scheme as outlined in the report.
- ii) That local members from both the County Council and the relevant district councils should be notified of the pilot in their area in order to enable them to become involved.

**399. THE BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE (BSF) PROJECT - THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S STRATEGY FOR CHANGE PART 2**

Cabinet received a report providing an update over progress with the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) project; and recommending a process for securing approval of the Strategy for Change Part 2, which required to be sent to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) before the next meeting of the Cabinet.

Cabinet was informed that Part 1 of the Strategy for Change setting out the basic outline of the BSF project in Fenland had been submitted and approved by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). Cabinet Members expressed their appreciation of the work undertaken by the BSF Project Director and his staff in reaching the present position.

Cabinet noted that the Strategy for Change Part 2, provided the basic outline of what would be achieved, in terms of high level issues and options, and addressed both the physical aspects of the programme and the expectations over the transformational impact of the project on teaching and learning, and improved outcomes for young people.

**It was resolved:**

- i) That as the deadline for the production of the document will see much of the detailed work completed at a time when no meetings of the Cabinet are scheduled, the Lead Cabinet Member

for Children and Young People's Services in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive for Children and Young People's Services be authorised to approve a final version of Part 2 of the Strategy for Change.

- ii) That before the final version was approved, a draft version should be circulated to all Cabinet Members for their comments.

#### **400. WELFARE BENEFITS TAKE UP INITIATIVE EXTENSION OF FUNDING**

Cabinet received a report analysing the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) Welfare Benefits Take-up Initiative. In addition a paper from CAB championing the continuation of the funding had been provided in advance to Members of the cabinet with paper copies being made available at the meeting.

Cabinet was reminded that:

- During 2002/03 a Member led review of welfare benefits had concluded that there was a strong case for investing in the funding of welfare benefits advice for both social and business reasons. The social reason was seen as the increase in income for those people on low incomes, who successfully claimed additional benefits. The business case was the increase in the Government settlement for the Council, due to the increased number of claimants of benefits, as at that time the local government funding formula used socio-economic data to identify relative need across Local Authorities. As a result in July 2004 an advance of £150,000 was agreed from the Good Housekeeping Fund with the contract for advice services won by the County's Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) following a competitive tender exercise.
- In October 2005, Cabinet had agreed to award the CAB an extension of funding of £284,656 for a further twelve months on the basis that 'no further extensions would be considered until there had been a more detailed analysis of the Formula Spending Share (FSS) gain, following Government grant settlement.
- In line with the Cabinet decision, and based on benefit take-up information provided by the CAB, work was progressed to establish the level of gain for the Council. While this work was finalised, Cabinet agreed a further extension of the contract via a non-repayable loan from the Invest to Transfer Fund (£136k) to cover a six-month extension of the contract to allow full consideration of the issues and a final analysis of any FSS gain.
- there was no longer a direct link between the increased uptake of benefits and reduced expenditure by any Directorate within the Council and that the link in the past to the increase in Government

grant to the Council had now changed. It was no longer known how secure any linked gain in the Government grant would be in the future, as the uptake of benefits influenced the Council's share of a specified pot of money that was also shared with all other Local Authorities.

- It was likely that in the future, relative need would have less impact on the funding formula, with the "floors and ceilings" used in grant allocation being drawn closer together.
- Continuing to fund the project for a further 12 months at the level awarded for the six-month extension would result in an annual cost of £272k. It was also recognised that the "Invest to Transform Fund" was not an appropriate funding mechanism to fund such an initiative, as this required a commitment to repay the investment from tangible savings resulting from the investment in the initiative.
- As there are no tangible savings in any particular Directorate, the only way to pay back further investment would be through top slice funding at County level, linked to the possible increase in the Government grant received. This if implemented would have the result of requiring further cuts to be made to other County Council provided services.

Taking into consideration all the details set out above, in coming to its decision, Cabinet also took account that CAB already received a grant from the County Council and it took the view that it was appropriate for CAB to now reprioritise its own resources if it wished to continue with the initiative, which included contributions from other funding partners.

**It was resolved:**

Not to approve further funding for the Benefits Take-Up initiative.

#### **401. CLOSURE OF RURAL POST OFFICES**

Cabinet noted that on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2007, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) had announced that 2,500 post offices across the UK were to close by 2009 representing a 17.5% reduction in the network. If this reduction applied on a pro rata basis across the East of England, 228 branches would close which represented approximately 20 – 30 branches out of a 150 when applied across Cambridgeshire.

While no decision had been made regarding which Post Offices would close, over the Summer the DTI expected area-based plans (based on Parliamentary Constituencies) to be drawn-up detailing the likely future provision. Local Authorities had been specifically identified as having a key role as the area plan proposals were developed for public consultation. The point was made that to provide alternative facilities in lieu of the closure of a post office was not easy, as currently it required a

payment of approximately £17500 to be made to Post Office Counters in order to have a facility retained in a local area. Currently the Local Government Association response was seeking clarification in relation to the technicalities of the consultation/appraisal process to be used.

While Cabinet acknowledged that the post office network was under considerable commercial pressure to increase efficiency and cut costs there had to be recognition by Government that for many vulnerable people in rural areas, the loss of the post office/local shop was often the only community facility in their area.

Cabinet agreed that it wished:

- the County Council to play an active role with other partners in identifying and highlighting the implications of possible closures at an early stage, as part of a proposed “Post Office Network Change Group” suggested by the Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE). This Group was likely to include representatives from the district councils, the business support sector, rural community support associations and organisations involved in Post Office Network support.
- To lobby for an increase in the consultation period from six weeks to twelve weeks as a minimum.
- To ensure local Members of Parliament were actively involved.
- to encourage an increase in usage of post office facilities through the launch a press and publicity campaign focussing on the theme of “use it or lose it”.

**It was resolved:**

- i) to note the position on the proposals by the Government on Post Office closures and confirm that
  - the County Council should play an active role with other partners in doing everything possible to prevent closures of the local post office network,
  - given that some closures will be inevitable, the Council should pro-actively work with partners to pursue opportunities for providing an alternative post office service and for the exercising maximum of flexibility in achieving this.
- ii) To note that given the numbers of potential closures, and the current proposals to carry out consultation by Parliamentary Constituency areas, it will be necessary to redirect some officer resource to play an active role in this.

- iii) agree that the portfolio holder for Communities be given lead Member responsibility in respect of the Post Office Network Change Group.

#### **402. 2006/2007 BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATOR ANALYSIS**

Cabinet received a report analysing performance against the 2006/2007 Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) requesting approval of the Best Value Performance Indicators and the 3-year targets as required by the Audit Commission. An update on several of the figures in the published report was tabled at the meeting and was mainly correcting the position of decimal points. Updated figures with a significant change included sickness absence, which showed a decrease in recorded absences, while the provisional bus usage statistics showed that there had been a further increase.

It was noted:

- That overall 60% of indicators had improved, 25% of indicators had dipped in performance and 17% had stayed the same. In all 61% of targets had been met.
- In 2005/06 54 indicators had improved, this figure had dropped by 9 to 41 indicators in the current year. The majority of these had been in respect of education, community-safety and well-being and corporate health (although in some cases performance had dropped from a high base, e.g. The County Council was likely to still remain in the top quartile for some indicators.)
- That the percentage of PIs that have met their targets increased to 64%.
- The details of the plans for improvement for those indicators with particularly significant dips in performance.
- The details of performance by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Service Areas. In respect of these Cabinet was pleased to note that there had been a net increase in banding/blob ratings (critical for inspection ratings) for Adult Care, compared to a decrease last year, and that for the second consecutive year there has been a significant increase in the percentage of Children's Social Care indicators that have gone up a banding.
- In terms of comparative performance against all other local authorities in England as detailed in the Cabinet report, 7 indicators appeared to be at risk of dropping down a quartile rating, while 9 indicators could move up a quartile rating and was highlighted as an area of concern to Members.
- That the reason the BVPI 156 for Disabled Access to Council Buildings had a reduced target for 2006/07 compared to performance in 2005/06 resulted from the Council having taken over a number of non-compliant buildings.

- That in reply to a question raised officers were able to confirm that the latest national Office of Statistics growth/population information was used to inform Adult Social Care performance indicators.

Cabinet requested:

- That the Social Care and Health BVPIs required updating to include the relevant lead Cabinet Members.
- A way of identifying from comparative data analysis whether the County Council was improving faster or slower than other authorities.
- The need to ensure financial integrated planning was at an advanced stage for County Council priority areas.

**It was resolved:**

To formally approve the Best Value Performance Indicators set out in the report, as required by the Audit Commission.

#### **403. EAST OF ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY (EERA) PUBLIC CONSULTATION PLANNING FOR GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION IN THE EAST OF ENGLAND ISSUES AND OPTIONS**

Cabinet received a report regarding a proposed response to the consultation from the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) in relation to the “Planning for Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation in the East of England Issues and Options” consultation document. The consultation document formed part of the single-issue review of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) concerning Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites. Cabinet noted that the County Council was working with district councils regarding the possibility of presenting a co-ordinated County response on areas of agreement.

EERA’s consultation document sought views on four key issues:

- the appropriate scale of additional pitch provision across the region,
- the distribution of provision,
- delivery and implementation issues, and
- provision for Travelling Showpeople.

Overall, based on the evidence available, EERA’s assessment of need (of around 1200 additional pitches) was considered a reasonable estimate for the region for the period to 2011. For the period thereafter, however, the position was less clear as more technical work was needed to establish a more robust basis for assessing longer-term need and it was suggested this would be better undertaken as part of the future RSS review.

A key issue for Cambridgeshire was the distribution of provision across the region. Currently, the East of England had the highest number of



Gypsy and Traveller caravans of all the regions in England (nearly 24% 2006) and Cambridgeshire had the highest share of authorised and unauthorised pitches within the region at 35%. Two options had been presented relating to pitch provision. Option 1 was based upon Consultant's advice on where need arose while Option 2 was based on Option 1 amended to increase the minimum level of pitch provision within each local council area to 15 pitches. Based on the two options EERA presented, it was considered that Option 2 should be the preferred option for the period up to 2011 at least. Option 2 was seen as more likely to deliver the step change in provision needed in the short term by requiring all Local Planning Authorities to make a minimum level of provision. Cabinet highlighted the importance of providing sites, which were well managed, noting that travellers themselves managed some of the best sites.

In terms of Delivery and Implementation, the suggestion for a new special delivery body was not considered necessary, but EERA would be recommended to carry out a review of existing powers and arrangements to maximise their efficiency.

Regarding Travelling Showpeople, the current evidence base for assessing their distinctive needs was considered to be weaker than that for Gypsies and Travellers. While Cabinet accepted the view that additional provision needed to be made, it was considered that this would be best achieved as part of the thorough assessment of all types and sectors of housing that would form part of the forthcoming RSS review.

In terms of the public perception of increased numbers of pitches and the possibility of unnecessary local alarm, the public needed to be made aware that the figures being quoted only represented 3% growth. In terms of this growth figure this would require careful future monitoring to ensure that the level of County Council Education provision was still appropriate. While nationally there were still issues regarding travellers accessing healthcare and education services, it was highlighted that the County Council had undertaken a great deal of liaison work to improve access to education, and primary and secondary school attendance of Travellers children had continued to improve.

**It was resolved:**

- i) To approve the proposed response to EERA's "Issues and Options" consultation document as set out in Appendix A.
- ii) To Delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive for Environment and Community Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning & Regional Matters the authority to modify the

response in the light of comments from the Planning & Regional Matters Policy Development Group (PDG) on 10 July 2007.

**404. DELEGATIONS FROM CABINET TO CABINET MEMBERS/OFFICERS**

Cabinet received a report detailing the progress on delegations.

**It was resolved:**

To note the progress on delegations to individual Cabinet Members and/or to officers previously authorised by Cabinet to make decisions/take actions on its behalf.

**405. CABINET DRAFT AGENDA PLAN 11<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2007**

The Cabinet agenda Plan was noted with the following changes:

New Additional reports:

Under “Other Reports” an Update Report on Transport Innovation Grant (TIF)

Chairman  
11<sup>th</sup> September  
2007