

CABINET: MINUTES

Date: 2nd March 2004

Time: 10.00 – 11.35 pm

Present: Councillor J Reynolds (Chairman in the absence of Councillor Walters)

Councillors: S Johnstone, V H Lucas
A Melton L J Oliver D R Pegram J A Powley
R Wilkinson and F H Yeulett.

Apologies: Councillor K Walters

Also in Attendance:

Councillors: S Brinton J Gluza A Kent S King and J Tuck

460. MINUTES

It was resolved:

To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 11th and 13th February 2004 as a correct record.

461. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

462. ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Integration of Older People's Services – Report from Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee of 12th February

Councillor Tuck the Chairman of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee was invited to present the report. In her introduction Councillor Tuck set out The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee's concerns in respect of outstanding issues that required resolution in advance of the proposed integration on 1st April.

Areas of concern drawn to the attention of the scrutiny committee included:

- Outstanding issues on the creation of pooled budgets, in respect of consistency of investment across the County, which if not resolved presented a serious risk to effective integration.
- The need to finalise VAT arrangements for the pooled budgets.
- Issues of concern raised by the Trade Unions regarding the proposed TUPE transfer of staff. The scrutiny committee had requested assurances that negotiations on the detailed arrangements would be concluded to the satisfaction of the unions and the staff they represented.

Cabinet thanked Councillor Tuck for bringing Cabinet's attention to these specific issues on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee. An update from the Director of Social Services indicated that the Section 31 draft had been updated following further consultations and that by 1st April it was expected that most issues will have been resolved. Agreement on the pooled budgets had been reached with three of the four Primary Care Trusts (PCT's) and it was expected that negotiations with the fourth would be concluded shortly.

It was confirmed that further meetings were to take place between senior officers and the trade unions. In respect of keeping staff informed, in addition to the two staff briefing sessions already held, five more were planned before the end of the consultation period. It was noted that the concerns of the trade unions had been around the speed of implementation rather than the principle of transferring the staff across to the health authority.

Further to a request from Cabinet, an assurance was given by the Director of Social Services that the Lead Member would not be asked to sign the Section 31 agreement on 1st April should major issues remain outstanding.

It was resolved:

To note the comments made by the Health Social Care Scrutiny Committee and the reassurances provided by the officers that the issues of concern that had been raised were being addressed and should be resolved before 1st April.

463. PROSPECTS (CORPORATE PLAN) AND POLICY FRAMEWORK STATEMENTS, INCLUDING CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S IMPROVEMENT AGENDA

Cabinet considered the draft "Prospects 2004–08" document, which comprised the Council's Corporate Plan and the Policy Framework Plan Statements. The document aimed to clarify the Council's priorities and the key service agendas for the year ahead. It also made appropriate links to the Council's improvement agenda. It was noted that this document would be subject to formal approval by Council on 30th March 2004.

It was recognised that due to the documents' size, it was not readily accessible to all staff. For this reason, it was proposed to produce an additional leaflet to communicate in summary, the key values and priorities for the organisation.

The Corporate Plan reflected and built on the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) undertaken in 2002, which had identified the Council as 'a good authority, which showed every sign of continuing to improve'. The purpose of the Plan was to bring together policy making and financial planning and to set clear strategic priorities and show how these would be met through performance management. It included specific reference to:

- A vision for quality of life in Cambridgeshire.
- The Council's core values – Customer Focus, Partnership, Accountability, Value for money, Equity.

- Details of challenges and changes ahead and plans to manage the agenda of change.
- Ways in which local people can influence the planning of Council services.
- The financial base, medium term service priorities and plans to make the most of the resources available.
- Improving services – reviewing, rewarding and measuring performance.

The second part of “Prospects” covered the Council’s Policy Framework, as defined by the Local Government Act 2000. This required approval by full Council and set the context within which the Leader of the Council and Cabinet would make decisions. The policy framework includes the Corporate Plan, Annual Budget and Best Value Performance Plan along with a number of specified Statutory Plans. The key elements of these specified Statutory Plans had been condensed and reflected in the thirteen Policy Framework Statements, which had been included in “Prospects” and formed the core of the Council’s corporate policy. It was stressed that these Statements were in a précis of the Policy Framework as represented by the Statutory Plans and could not over-ride it.

Cabinet noted that it was not proposed to submit the Statutory Plans to full Council this year due to the fact that:

- A number were multi-year plans and had already been approved.
- Others had different production timetables as defined by the Government.
- Some were no longer required to be submitted to the relevant Government department.

Where required, annual updates and monitoring reports would be produced and submitted to Cabinet for endorsement.

In considering the document, Cabinet’s noted some changes to the Proposed Best Value Programme compared to the programme approved last year.

At the meeting some minor amendments were requested as set out below with other Cabinet members indicating they would liaise with officers following the meeting to agree minor wording amendments to be included in the report to be agreed at the Council meeting.

Page 10-11 Section titled “Listening and Involving”

Including a reference to young people/Youth Parliament.

Page 12-14

To ensure a reference was included of the recent additional Government allocation of grant of £1.75 m.

Page 17 Key Areas of Work for Environment and Transport

To make clearer the distinction between the Revenue Budget and the

Capital Budget for clarity and to help understanding for those people not familiar with Council budgets.

Page 47 Waste Management Strategy

Under the section headed "Other Area Priorities" inclusion of references to the following legislation Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (W.E.E.E) and the Waste and Emissions Trading Act (W.E.T).

A general reference was made recommendations in the Ofsted report, Youth Inspection Plan and the re-inspection of Library Services and the resource implications that these would involve. It was confirmed that these would be subject to separate, detailed action plans.

In answer to a question raised, It was noted that the relevance of a separate School Organisation Plan in terms of the move to a Single Education Plan, was an issue that officers would be looking into.

It was resolved:

To endorse the document titled "Prospects 2004-08" and
RECOMMEND it to the full Council for approval.

464. GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

During 2003 the County Council had reviewed the grants made to voluntary organisations managed by Social Services and Economic and Community Development. The review had resulted in Cabinet approving a new policy framework and proposals for involving the community and voluntary sector in service development and delivery. The key elements of the framework were in developing compacts, involving the sector in Best Value reviews and in early consultation on policy development and service design as well as development and strengthening partnerships for engaging in the monitoring and review of the policy framework.

Cabinet had previously agreed that the budget would be allocated between four funding blocks in accordance with current allocations, as it was too early to establish the case for reallocating resources between the blocks. The four blocks were:

- **Local Development Agencies** - to support the development and work of the sector.
- **Services** - to support health and social care commissioning strategies.
- **Legal Advice Services** - to support access for all to legal advice and information.
- **Community Groups** - for grants of less than £3,000 to support communities responding to local needs through self help and mutual support.

In addition within three of the blocks (the exception being Legal Advice Services) there were also separate Youth Service Grants, administered by the Youth Service. All appropriate Service Development Groups (SDGs) had first considered the grants applications received and had advised the relevant Cabinet member on the officer recommendations for the allocation of grant aid

for 2004/05. It was agreed that the level of grant funding for voluntary organisations would be maintained at current levels for 2004/05 and subject to budget arrangements 2005/06. In a few cases renewed grant funding had not been sought by the organisation, or the responsible officer had not recommended renewal for reasons reported to the SDG. These cases had enabled grant funding to be provided to a few additional organisations not previously funded.

In answer to request, officers provided orally the following statistics on the district by district allocation of the agreed grants compared to their proportion of the total Cambridgeshire population:

District	% of the total grant attracted	% of Cambridgeshire Population
Huntingdonshire	31.5	28
Fenland	16	15
East Cambs	12.5	13
City and South Cambs	40	44

It was resolved:

To approve the allocation of the grants to voluntary organisations in 2004/05 as outlined in appendices 1-4 to the report and as set out in the signed copy of the Minutes.

465. NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK (NPF) AND FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICE DELIVERY PLANS (SDPs FOR TRADING STANDARDS

Cabinet received the proposed Service Plan for Food Law Enforcement Food Service Delivery Plan and the National Performance Framework Service Plan both of which are required to be submitted to Cabinet for approval to meet statutory requirements. For the past four years, the Trading Standards Service has had to submit a Food Service Delivery Plan to the Food Standards Agency (FSA). In addition, this is the third year that a Service Delivery Plan has been compiled to implement the National Performance Framework (NPF) developed by the Consumer Affairs Directorate of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

The National Performance Framework (NPF) shows how its aims are implemented and how the Trading Standards Service contributes to local, corporate and national priorities. Food safety is of fundamental importance to the people of Cambridgeshire and the Trading Standards SDP in this area aimed to ensure that everyone could enjoy the right to safe, wholesome and accurately labelled food that is an essential contributor to the long term health of the people of Cambridgeshire. Cabinet placed on record their appreciation of the importance of the activities carried out and the exceptional service provided by Trading Standards to the public of Cambridgeshire.

It was expected that the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) would be introducing a Service Level Agreement for Trading Standards for animal health and welfare duties in the very near future and

therefore in anticipation of the requirements of a service level agreement, the NPF plan made reference to animal health matters.

The report set out details of several important issues and challenges facing the Trading Standards Service during the coming year.

It was agreed that as there were new requirements built into the plans and with service reductions required as part of the Budget process, it would be appropriate to receive a six month progress report outlining activity and the costs associated with delivery of the plans.

It was resolved:

- i) To approve the National Performance Framework and Food Law Enforcement Service Delivery Plans for Trading Standards.
- ii) To receive a progress report to Cabinet after six months.

466. YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN

Cabinet received a report seeking approval for the Youth Justice Plan for 2004/05. The County Council has a duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to submit a Youth Justice Plan describing how the Youth Offending Service will deliver services designed to meet the statutory aim of preventing criminal offending by young people.

The Plan provided an overview of the performance undertaken for the calendar year 2003 and described how the plan would achieve the revised performance measures in 04/05. It was noted that the service was on track to meet the two Public Service Agreement (PSA) performance indicators.

Cabinet requested that as the Plan was a mainly technical document, in future all acronyms and technical terms referred to in the plan should be explained in the body of the Plan.

It was resolved:

To approve the Youth Justice Plan prior to submission to the Youth Justice Board on 31st March 2004.

467. HISTORICAL RESOURCE AND CULTURAL CENTRE

Cabinet noted that until recently the only site being considered for the Historical Resource and Cultural Centre was on the Arbury Development, as this appeared to be an attractive and affordable site for such a centre. However, information provided by the initial bidders to a tendering exercise had indicated that the Council's stated affordability criteria to provide the core facilities on this site could not be met. This was as a result of the cost of the land that would need to be purchased and also that the required revenue stream was unachievable. It was noted that in mid December, given the affordability issues and problems being experienced within their own

consortia's, two of the initial three private consortia's who had submitted expressions of interest had decided to withdraw from the bidding process.

One of the initial bidders had suggested an alternative site that they owned at a building next to Cambridge Railway Station. Council officers and external advisers were currently evaluating this site. The intention was to have a completed initial evaluation of the remaining bids by the end of February and to hold further clarification meetings in February/March.

Issues were raised regarding the suitability of the alternative proposed site in terms of how it fitted into the Council's agreed policies, which made up the Local Transport Plan and this would also need to be investigated further by the officers.

Cabinet agreed that it was important to appoint a preferred bidder as soon as possible in order to meet the proposed timetable of opening a building by 2006 so that the facility was available for use by the Council and the public.

It was considered appropriate that Cabinet should receive a further report prior to the award of any contract in order to endorse and approve any proposed terms and the costings which the officers negotiated with the preferred bidder.

It was resolved:

- i) That Cabinet note the progress of the HRCC PFI Project and the timetable for negotiations with the private sector partner.
- ii) That the Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage in consultation with the Director of Education, Libraries & Heritage be given delegated responsibility to appoint a Preferred Bidder.
- iii) That Cabinet should receive a further report prior to the award of the contract in order to approve the proposed terms and costings negotiated with the preferred bidder
- iv) To note that as part of the final consideration there should be consideration of how the site fitted into the Council's agreed planning and transport policies.

468. CAMBRIDGESHIRE'S SECOND LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT 2004/07

Preparatory work had been undertaken to allow Cambridgeshire to enter into a second LPSA with the Government during 2004/05. Authority from Cabinet was sought to submit an LPSA framework, covering improvement objectives and supporting topics to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) by the deadline of 5th March.

The report informed Cabinet of:

- The progress on the second Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA),
- The progress on the development of a service level agreement between partners and management arrangements for the LPSA
- The outline timetable for further work and
- The draft set of topics for the LPSA prior to the submission of the LPSA framework to the ODPM.

It was noted that approval would make available pump priming grant of approximately £1.3 million and potential maximum reward grant of approximately £16 million should all targets be met which would be shared between partners to the LPSA in accordance with the proposed service level agreement.

A member of Cabinet indicated concern at the previous lack of wider Member involvement and input into the targets that was required to ensure appropriate political ownership of the LPSA. Officers agreed that the detail on the targets would be the subject of consultation with relevant Spokesmen, other relevant member groups, Service Development Groups, as well as with appropriate local schools. It was noted that the relevant Local Strategic Partnerships were expected to play a significant role in overseeing the LPSA, including actions to ensure appropriate performance and monitoring on any district based targets.

Concerns were expressed that some of the targets could be affected by limitations on the Government funding for the initiatives required under “Supporting People” legislation.

It was resolved:

- i) To note the progress being made towards the agreement of Cambridgeshire’s second Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA).
- ii) To delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the authority to approve the submission of Cambridgeshire’s LPSA framework to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. (ODPM).
- iii) That the detailed targets should be the subject of appropriate consultation with relevant Spokesmen, other relevant member groups and appropriate local Schools.
- iv) That there would be regular reports to Cabinet on progress being made.

469. COMPREHENSIVE EQUALITIES POLICY

A new Equalities Standard for Local Government was introduced in October 2002 to extend the scope of the Commission for Racial Equality Standard “Equality means Quality”

To achieve the first level of the Equalities Standard, the Council was required to produce a Comprehensive Equalities Policy, a copy of which was now included as an appendix to the Officers' report.

It was resolved:

- i) To approve the Comprehensive Equalities Policy and approach to implementing the Equalities Standard and target levels.
- ii) To agree that consultation should commence with schools to consider the policy as a best practice approach.

470. PROGRESS REPORT ON CHILDRENS SERVICES

Cabinet was provided with an update regarding progress on developments affecting the provision of services to children and families resulting from the bill based on the Green paper "Every Child matters". It was noted that a joint Social Services/ Education Libraries and Heritage Spokesmen meeting had been held the previous day and this meeting had received details of the significant changes that would be required. Further reports would be presented in due course once full details had been obtained.

It was resolved:

To note national and local developments that would influence the County Council's approval to securing improved integration of services for children and families.

471. DECISIONS DELEGATED TO OFFICERS AND CABINET MEMBERS

A draft report for information had been circulated to Members of Cabinet prior to the meeting with copies made available at the meeting.

An updated, finalised report would be prepared for the April meeting.

472. CABINET OUTLINE AGENDA

It was resolved

To note the agenda for 27th April meeting and the oral update of an additional key decision report to be added on the provision of Youth Facilities in St Neots.

Chairman
28.04.04