

CABINET: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 24 September 2002

Time: 10.00 – 11.10

Place: Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present: Councillor J K Walters (Chairman)

Councillors S F Johnstone, V Lucas, A K Melton,
S B Normington, L Oliver, D R Pegram, J A Powley
J E Reynolds and R Wilkinson

206. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 3 September 2002 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

207. REFERRALS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were no referrals from Scrutiny Committees to report.

It was noted that the Chairman of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee had decided to call-in the decision made by Cabinet on 3 September 2002 regarding the Social Services revenue budget position. However, following its investigation into the matter, the Scrutiny Committee had decided not to refer any of the decisions back to Cabinet for further consideration.

208. STRUCTURE PLAN REVIEW - THE EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC

Cabinet considered a report which outlined the Council's proposed stance for the Structure Plan Review Examination in Public (EiP), which would be held between 29 October and 4 December 2002.

Members were reminded that consultation on the draft Plan had taken place during the spring. The Strategic Planning Service Development Group (SDG) had been considering the representations received, together with further studies, which have been completed since the draft Structure Plan had been placed on deposit. Members of the SDG had also considered the overall approach to be taken at the EiP.

Whilst no major changes to Council policy as embodied in the draft Structure Plan were proposed by the SDG, some amendments to the detail of policies had been suggested along the following lines:

- Clarify the protection of important open spaces from development.
- Allow more flexibility for development in villages identified as Rural Centres with good public transport access to Cambridge, including

minor amendment to Green Belt boundaries in Local Plans where justified.

- Clarify the level of detail to be given in local plans regarding infrastructure to support development.
- Greater emphasis on the inclusion of information and communications technology in new developments.
- More emphasis on the strategic importance of Cambridge University and Anglia Polytechnic University.
- The importance of providing homes for key workers, particularly in the Cambridge Sub-Region, should be highlighted.
- Consideration should be given to strengthening the guidance on parking standards as applied to Cambridge, Peterborough and the market towns.
- The policy relating to the selective management of employment development in the Cambridge Sub-Region should be modified to make it clear that the intention is to follow a more restrictive approach closer to Cambridge with a more relaxed approach in market towns.
- Clarification of the role of the new settlement as strategic employment location to be considered.
- The evaluation of the potential of Hampton in Peterborough to accommodate additional housing.
- The concept of Countryside Enhancement Areas requires further discussion at the EiP.

As the deadline for submissions to the EiP on general matters was 23 September 2002, the general submissions would need to be prepared on the basis of the points identified above, subject to any final views of the Council, which would be asked to endorse the stance at its meeting on 1 October 2002.

Following consideration of the findings of the Eastern Cambridge Study and further discussion by the Strategic Planning SDG, the Cabinet Lead Member for Strategic Planning proposed that Policy P9/3c ('location and phasing of development land to be released from the Green Belt') of the Plan be revised and that a new policy (Policy P9/3d) and supporting text be included relating to the safeguarding of land to be released from the Green Belt East of Cambridge Airport. It was proposed that the revised Policies (attached at appendix 1) be agreed as the Council's position on the Cambridge Green Belt at the EiP.

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED** that Council:

- (i) Confirms that the broad strategy of the draft Structure Plan should be maintained, subject to the detailed issues for debate identified above.
- (ii) Confirms the broad approach to Cambridge Airport and land to the east of Cambridge, as outlined in the Cambridge Airport Study and the Eastern Cambridge Study, and includes the revised policy for the location and phasing of development land to be released from the Green Belt (Policy 9/3c and new Policy 9/3d with supporting text), as set out at Appendix 1.
- (iii) Proposes a criteria based approach to the identification of any regional airport (Policy P8/12) if a need is confirmed following the outcome of future Government decisions on the SERAS study.

209. ANNUAL LIBRARY PLAN FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE 2002-2005

Having already agreed the outline development proposals arising from the strategy review of the Libraries and Information Service at its meeting on 3 September 2002, Cabinet considered a report which set out the overall shape of the Annual Library Plan for Cambridgeshire and highlighted key sections that referred to strategic decisions for the future. Cabinet was advised that the complete draft Plan could be accessed via the Council's internet site.

The Annual Library Plan covered the period 2002-2005 and would have to be approved by Council (on 1 October 2002) before being submitted to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The Plan demonstrated how the library service would work within the context of the County Council's key aims and objectives during the next three years and also showed the Council's current performance and proposed strategy for improvement against Public Library Standards.

The Plan was particularly crucial for two main reasons:

- Nationally there was a significant change in requirements; for the first time authorities' Plans would be assessed in three ways - not only on their quality as planning documents, but also from two other aspects:
 - Evidence that the authority has realistic plans to meet the Public Library Standards.
 - Evidence that the authority was improving its library service.
- Locally the Plan summed up and reflected:
 - The background to the strategic review of the Service currently in progress.
 - The outcome of the recent Best Value Inspection.

- The future vision for the Libraries and Information Service arising from that review activity.
- The development proposals for rationalising the service delivery pattern.
- The resource implications and further work needed to proceed with this approach.

During consideration of the Plan, Cabinet noted:

- Comments made by the Education, Libraries and Heritage Scrutiny Committee. Members welcomed the support given by the Committee for the proposed strategy and vision for the future of the Libraries and Information Service in Cambridgeshire.
- That additional funding for the Information and Libraries Service had been given a higher priority within the Medium Term Service Priorities in order to ensure that the proposals outlined in the Plan were sustainable. However, the provision of additional funding for the Service would need to be considered when the outcome of the Government's Review of the Grant Allocation Formula was known, at which time further consideration would be given to all service priorities.

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED** that Council:

Adopts the Public Library Plan for Cambridgeshire for 2002-2005, so that it can be submitted to the DCMS.

210. BURNSFIELD INFANT AND KING EDWARD JUNIOR SCHOOLS, CHATTERIS: PROPOSAL FOR RELOCATION / AMALGAMATION OF THE TWO SCHOOLS

Cabinet considered proposals for the relocation and amalgamation of the Burnsfield Infant and King Edward Junior Schools, Chatteris.

Members were reminded that, at its meeting on 18 June 2002, Cabinet approved the publication of a notice outlining the Council's intention to close the two schools and open a new primary school in their stead. The notice had subsequently been published on 10 July 2002 and action taken to consult the local community on the proposals.

Members noted that:

- The proposals to amalgamate the two schools would provide a means of achieving a balance of provision across the town and, most importantly, of improving educational provision for the children served by the schools.
- No objections to the proposals had been received as a result of the consultation exercise.

Cabinet decided:

- (i) To cease to maintain the following schools on 31 August 2003:
 - Burnsfield Infant School, Chatteris
 - King Edward Junior School, Chatteris
- (ii) To establish on 1 September 2003 a new Community Primary School in Chatteris on the site of the existing schools in significantly improved accommodation.

[Note: Councillor A K Melton declared a personal interest in this item under paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct by reason of his being Chairman of the Board of Governors and having a child attending one of the schools.]

211. MEDIUM TERM SERVICE PRIORITIES - OPTIONS FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Cabinet considered a report which proposed that, in view of the uncertainties surrounding resource projections over the next three years, the Leader of the Council be authorised to agree the drafting of Prospects 2003-06. Cabinet was asked to agree the proposed public consultation period, which would commence in early October and continue until late November 2002.

Members were advised that much of the uncertainty surrounded the possible outcome of the Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) review. However, there were also other factors such as a lack of clarity on what had or had not been included in the recent Government Spending Review and, consequently, what assumptions were implicit in the Government's control totals for local authority spending for next year.

During discussion of the report, Members:

- Commented on the need to include reference to the Council's proposals to manage the budget within Prospects in order to improve public awareness about why the Council needed to identify additional revenue funding.
- Expressed the view that Prospects could not be accurately drafted at this stage, given the amount of uncertainty surrounding future funding levels for the Council.

Cabinet noted that arrangements had been made for a seminar for all County Councillors on 8 October 2002, which would focus on the MTSP and budget prospects for 2003-04.

Cabinet decided:

- (i) To give authority to the Leader of the Council to agree the drafting of Prospects 2003-06.

- (ii) To agree that the consultation period should commence in early October and continue to late November 2002.

212. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2001/02

Cabinet received the Statement of Accounts for 2001/02, which would need to be approved by the County Council by 30 September 2002, as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996. It was noted that the Council would be meeting a day later than the 30 September deadline, but that this was not considered to be material.

At its meeting on 3 September 2002, Cabinet noted the outturn results for 2001/02 and authorised the Director of Resources to formally close the accounts in the best interests of the Council. Some very minor changes had been made to the revenue accounts and reserves since that Cabinet meeting, but these were considered to be insignificant. The revenue spending results for Services remained unchanged.

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED**:

That Council formally approves the Statement of Accounts for 2001/02.

213. GRANT FORMULA REVIEW: COUNTY COUNCIL'S PROPOSED RESPONSE

Cabinet considered a report which outlined the Council's response to the Government's consultation paper on the Formula Grant Distribution Review, which would need to be submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) by 30 September 2002.

In general terms, the Government's consultation paper proposed revisions to the current Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) formula, but did not represent a radical change in the system for grant distribution. The Government had stuck to the concept of distributing grants in accordance with a 'needs based' assessment. Many of the options contained within the paper entailed adjusting the data, the weightings given to individual factors or the number of factors included in the formula. The basic structure of SSA – a needs based formula broken down into different service blocks – had remained intact.

The consultation paper included a number of options for each of the issues that had been considered. There was, therefore, a wide range of potential outcomes from the review. At best, the Council stood to gain £36m; at worst it would lose £11m. It was highly likely that any changes would be subject to damping mechanisms to limit the impact on an Authority in any one year. It had been proposed, but not confirmed, by the Government that an annual ceiling of an 11% cash increase would be applied to authorities that gain from the review.

It was anticipated that the results of the consultation process would not be known until the Council's Provisional Settlement for 2003/04 had been released by Central Government in late November 2002.

In considering the Council's response, Cabinet considered comments made by Members of the Resources and Education Resources Service Development Groups. The Groups had indicated support for the proposed response, but had requested that reference be made to:

- The importance of a needs based approach for Resource Equalisation (should it be implemented) in order to ensure a closer match between a Local Authority's need to spend and the actual allocation of funding from Central Government.
- The need for a national activity lead formula for the distribution of funding for schools and Local Education Authority's.

Cabinet decided:

- (i) To agree the Council's proposed response to the Government's Grant Formula Review consultation, subject to reference being made within the response to specific points raised by the Education Resources and Resources SDGs, as outlined above.
- (ii) To delegate authority to the Leader of the Council to finalise and submit the Council's response to the ODPM by 30 September 2002.

214. BEACON COUNCIL STATUS: APPLICATIONS BY CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Having agreed to endorse work to investigate the scope for making applications at its meeting on 7 May 2002, Cabinet received a report which provided further information regarding the proposed applications under the Government's Beacon Council Award Scheme.

Members were reminded that Councils had been invited to submit applications for the fourth round of Beacon awards to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) by 26 September 2002. Successful Councils would be announced in April 2003 and would hold Beacon status from April 2003 to June 2004.

It was proposed that the following schemes be put forward:

- Rethinking construction
- Social inclusion through ICT (joint bid with East Cambs. and Hunts. District Councils)
- Street and Highway Works

Cabinet decided:

To confirm the three applications and delegated authority to the Chief Executive to finalise and submit them to the ODPM by 26 September 2002.

215. COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: CORPORATE ASSESSMENT

Cabinet were advised that, following the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) Corporate Assessment of the Council, which had been undertaken by the Audit Commission's inspection team between 15 and 24 July 2002, a draft Corporate Inspection Report had been received from the Audit Commission.

Some of the key findings of the draft Report were as follows:

- The report had said: *"Cambridgeshire County Council is a good authority which shows every sign of continuing to improve in future"*.
- Overall, the Council's "capacity to improve" was at the top end of the "good" category (just short of "excellent").
- The Council had earned top marks for three themes – Focus, Learning and Future Plans; and good scores for the other six themes (Ambition, Prioritisation, Capacity, Performance Management, Achievement, Investment); no themes were marked down as weak.

Key recommendations included strengthening member development, involvement and challenge, some rationalisation of partnerships and ensuring change management is adequately resourced.

The final version of the Corporate Assessment Report was unlikely to be issued until November 2002. However, it was proposed that this should not delay the production of an Action Plan to address issues identified within the draft Report, consisting of Council's own Draft Improvement Plan submitted as part of the Self-Assessment and the recommendations contained in the draft Corporate Assessment Report.

Cabinet joined the Chief Executive in thanking all Council staff who had contributed to the Assessment. Overall, the Assessment had indicated that the Council was performing well and showed good capacity for improvement.

Cabinet decided:

To note the key findings of the CPA Corporate Assessment.

**216. 2002/03 PERFORMANCE ON
PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT & KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

Cabinet received a summary of the Council's performance against Cambridgeshire Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets and other key Performance Indicators for the first quarter of 2002/03.

This was the first report to Cabinet which examined performance against the Council's 'top 30' indicators. In relation to PSA targets, it was noted that out of the 27 components, for 6 there was cause for concern, for 4 there was slight under performance, for 8 it was too early to tell or there was no data and for 9 there was evidence that the target was on course or better.

Of the remaining 13 indicators, for 2 there was cause for concern, for 2 there was slight under performance, for 6 it was too early to tell or there was no data and for 3 there was evidence that the target was on course or better. It was noted that many of these indicators were recorded annually, so information was not available at this stage.

Overall, performance during the first quarter was considered to be 'middling', with some areas performing better than others. Members noted that:

- Whilst achievement against educational attainment targets had been disappointing, it was encouraging to note that performance in this area was improving steadily over time. It was pointed out that, nationally, very few Local Education Authorities had been able to meet the performance targets set by Government for Key Stages 2 and 3. The County Council's results for these Key Stages had shown an improvement which was above the national average.
- PSA targets were deliberately stretching and grants would be awarded if the Council had met over 60% of the targets. It was therefore proposed to take this into account when presenting information in future reports to Cabinet.
- A revised internal performance monitoring report had recently been introduced, which would enable more detailed information regarding performance issues to be obtained from Service Directorates. It was anticipated that the revised report would improve the quality of information presented to Cabinet and that this information would be available for the second quarter results, which would be reported on 10 December 2002.

Cabinet decided:

To note current performance against key Performance Indicators and the Cambridgeshire PSA for the first quarter of 2002/03.

217. CABINET OUTLINE AGENDA – 29 OCTOBER 2002

The Cabinet agreed:

To note the outline agenda for the meeting scheduled to take place on 29 October 2002 and the following proposed amendments:

- Corporate Improvement Plan (including Draft Revised Best Value Programme) – deferred to 19 November 2002.
- Fair Access to Care – deferred to 28 January 2003.

POLICY P9/3c - LOCATION AND PHASING OF DEVELOPMENT LAND TO BE RELEASED FROM THE GREEN BELT

- 1) The Eastern Cambridge Study has indicated that development at Cherry Hinton could take place both to the North and the East of Cherry Hinton at an early stage. The current Policy refers only to land release to the “**North of Cherry Hinton**”. It is therefore proposed that the reference to Cherry Hinton in the second bullet point should read “**North and East of Cherry Hinton**”.
- 2) The current Policy includes a section about the release of land to the east of Cambridge Airport which reads:

“Land east of Cambridge Airport is to be safeguarded for development after 2016 and only developed following the substantial development of Cambridge Airport and provided that a joint study shows it can be developed whilst maintaining the fundamental purposes of the Green Belt.”

This text now needs amendment as the joint study is complete. There will also need to be a more detailed Policy relating to the land East of the Airport (referred to below as Policy P9/3d). It is proposed that the replacement Section in Policy P9/3c should read:

- “Land east of Cambridge Airport is to be safeguarded for development after 2016 according to the principles set out in Policy P9/3d.”

- 3) The Proposed new Policy P9/3d and its supporting text would read as follows:

“Policy P9/3d Safeguarding land to be released from the Green Belt East of Cambridge Airport

East of Airport Way, the inner Green Belt boundary will be drawn to safeguard a reserve of land for long-term development needs in the vicinity of Teversham and to the north-east of Fulbourn. This land will be designated an area of special restraint. No development incompatible with the Green Belt will take place in the area of special restraint until the substantial development of Cambridge Airport has been completed.

In accordance with Policy P9/3b, the Green Belt will be retained where it is needed to provide:

- **green separation between Teversham and the Airport development;**
- **green separation between Teversham and Fulbourn; and**
- **a green corridor running from open countryside north/west of Fulbourn, between the Airport development and Cherry Hinton, and on to Coldham's Common.**

Until early landscaping, recreation access and biodiversity

improvements have been put in place in these areas, no development will take place in the area of special restraint.

The reserve of land at Fulbourn will not be made available for development until the Teversham development is substantially complete and subsequent studies have demonstrated that further development at Fulbourn is acceptable in relation to additional environmental, water management and transport impacts.”

Supporting text:-

The joint study of Eastern Cambridge has confirmed that a major eastern expansion of the city can and should be viable and pursued. Initially, and for a number of years ahead, the development effort has to be focused upon the airport site and adjacent areas to the north and south. In time this expansion should continue first to the area around Teversham and then possibly to the area north of Fulbourn. The study outlines the creation of a high quality and sustainable new sector of the City with generous green areas to be safeguarded to provide separation between communities and protection of important countryside and amenity areas.

In drawing the Green Belt boundary the County Council’s view is that the Green Belt is required to protect generous areas separating the villages of Teversham and Fulbourn and the green corridor running from open countryside into Coldham’s common, despite the conclusion of the study that measures other than Green Belt could provide this protection. Otherwise it is intended that the broad principles of the study should be followed in preparing for longer term growth. In particular, the development areas at Teversham and Fulbourn should be of sufficient size to be sustainable by supporting public transport links, local employment and community facilities.

The study clearly places Fulbourn as the third and final phase of development and identifies a number of issues to be resolved. Because of its own reservations, the County Council considers that development could not proceed at Fulbourn until expansion at Teversham has been completed and further studies at that stage have established how the implications for transport, the environment and water management are to be resolved.

The sequence of development is vital to the orderly planning of the new communities. Where the Policy requires previous phases to be substantially completed before the next phase commences, it is intended that at least 80% of the earlier stage shall be built prior to the grant of planning permission.