

## **CABINET: MINUTES**

**Date:** 14th December 2004

**Time:** 10 00 am – 11 20 am

**Present:** Councillor J K Walters (Chairman)

Councillors: S F Johnstone, V H Lucas, A K Melton, D R Pegram, J A Powley, J E Reynolds, F H Yeulett and R Wilkinson

### **Also in Attendance**

Councillor A C Kent

Apologies for Absence: Councillor L J Oliver

## **583. MINUTES**

It was resolved:

To agree that the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2004 be confirmed as a correct record and should be signed by the Chairman.

## **584. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

## **585. TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ACT IMPLICATIONS**

This report set out the implications of the “Traffic Management Act 2004” on the way the Council delivered its Highways Service in the short and the medium term.

The Act placed a duty on the Highway Authority to “secure the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority’s road network”. It would have significant implications on the way the whole authority considered projects that might have an impact on the highway. Cabinet was advised that the Department of Transport (DfT) would be empowered to intervene, should the Authority fail to perform adequately.

Cabinet noted the seven parts of the Act. Part Two of the Act required the appointment of a Traffic Manager by January 2005. As a result of this timetable, it was proposed that in the interim, the Assistant Director (Highways and Engineering) would be appointed to this post and that later, as part of the reshaping of the organisation, a specific post would take over the role at Head of Service level. Although the DfT had considered that the requirements of the Act would be self-funding, financial implications had been identified, particularly the funding of staff capacity and systems, such as the upfront funding required for permit schemes. £60,000 had been included as a pressure in the 05/06 Base Budget to finance required activities.

It was resolved:

- i) To note the contents of the report and the implications for the Authority.
- ii) To approve the proposed approach for complying with the Traffic Management Act duty to appoint a Traffic Manager for the Authority by January 2005, as set out in section 4 of the officers' report.

#### **586. PROPOSED CYCLEWAY NETWORK FOR THE CAMBRIDGE SOUTHERN FRINGE DEVELOPMENT**

Cabinet received a report providing details of proposals for a new and improved cycleway network to serve Cambridgeshire's Southern Fringe Development to fulfil the need to improve the network of cycle-ways in the south of the City. The package involved 10 cycleway schemes at a cost of £900,000 which was to be completely financed from Central Government, Growth Area Delivery Grant (GADG) and would therefore not be a cost to Council Tax payers or a charge on the County Council Capital programme. It was noted that the projects approved from the funding would need to be completed by March 2006.

The scheme proposals were to be the subject of public consultation in the New Year, including consideration by the Cambridge Transport and Environment Area Joint Committee.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Kent who had requested the opportunity to speak as the local member for Trumpington Electoral Division set out some concerns on the proposed schemes. She drew attention to the environmental sensitivity of Hobson's Brook and local concerns about the proximity to a wildlife area. She stressed the importance of ensuring that the cycleway surface used along Hobson's Conduit should be in keeping with the area.

Councillor Kent requested that as part of the consultation process, the report should also be presented to the Southern Fringe Member Reference Group. She also asked for information on the assumptions that had been made on cyclists' desire lines and how it was planned to continue the cycle route into the Southern Fringe developments south of Long Road. She particularly required clarification on whether there would be access to the railway station as she understood that financing for the Guided Bus route and thus the parallel cycle route south of the Station was not guaranteed.

She also drew attention to problems with the proposed Brooklands Avenue section, where in her view, a Grade 2 listed wall and hedge made it impossible to widen the existing cycleway.

In response, the portfolio holder for Transport and Waste agreed that it was entirely appropriate for the Southern Fringe Member Reference Group to receive and comment on the report as part of the consultation exercise. In terms of the Guided Bus route, it was confirmed that there was funding for the entire scheme running from Huntingdon to Addenbrooke's and on to the

railway station. The north route would include both a bridleway and a cycleway, while the south route to the railway station would include a cycleway. There was an acceptance of the points made regarding the sensitivity regarding Hobson's Conduit and reference was made to the good practice employed on cycleway surfacing undertaken at other sensitive locations, including Coe Fen. Account would be taken of the points raised regarding the cycleway in Brooklands Avenue

The first recommendation as set out in the officers' report was amended to ensure it reflected that Cabinet was only approving the scheme for the purpose of further public consultation and was not making a final decision on the proposals set out in the report. Reference was also made to the importance of ensuring early consultation with local Members on schemes such as this.

It was resolved

- i) To note and approve for the purpose of public consultation the package of schemes to be funded under the Government's Growth Area Delivery Grant (GADG) as listed in Section 3 (paragraph 3.4 of the officers' report)
- ii) The consultation should include the report going to the Southern Fringe Member Reference Group.

**587. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON PREFERRED OPTIONS FOR SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND CAMBRIDGE CITY LOCAL PLAN RE-DEPOSIT**

This report was withdrawn as it had already been considered at the meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December and had only been provisionally listed, in case it had not been possible to consider it at that meeting.

**588. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN**

Cabinet received a report setting out the current position on the responses received in respect of the consultation exercise on the Draft Corporate Plan. It was appropriate to receive the report at this time in order to consider the views so far received in advance of the report included later on the agenda, on the Provisional Revenue Grant Settlement.

It was reported that that most replies received broadly supported the Council's vision.

Cabinet Members expressed concern that by 2<sup>nd</sup> December, from a distribution of over 1,150 copies of the draft plan sent out in early November, only 17 replies had been received. In response, it was explained that the previous years exercise had included a large orchestrated response from schools and governing bodies and at the present time this had not been repeated. It was hard to gauge whether the lack of responses indicated apathy or whether people who read the draft plan were content with it, but did not wish to take the further step of replying.

It was resolved:

To note the responses so far received on the consultation on the draft Corporate Plan.

## **589. QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE ON KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 2004/05**

This report provided Cabinet with a summary of the second quarter performance relating to the Council's top 30 key performance indicators for the period July to September.

The indicators showed that there had been an improvement against the first quarter performance for 9 indicators, a worsening of performance for four indicators with performance remaining steady for another two indicators.

Against the targets for 2004/05, currently it was forecast that the targets would be exceeded against five indicators, with performance generally on target for three indicators and that for six indicator targets were unlikely to be met.

Areas of progress included:

- The proportion of household waste recycled or composted
- The number of physical visits to libraries per thousand population
- The number of households receiving intensive homecare

Areas where further work/action was required included:

- Increasing the performance on the prompt payment of invoices
- Halting the decline in the number of children in stable placements
- Reducing the number of delayed transfers of care for people aged 75+

It was noted that the target for the number of deaths and injuries on the roads would not be met, as a result of an increase in accidents. As accidents were random events, the figures could vary by a relatively large amount. The wet weather was also likely to have been a contributing factor. Between August and October 2003, rainfall levels were significantly below average in the south of England while the rainfall in August 2004 was 100% above average, and in October 76% above average.

In adding an additional resolution, Cabinet wished to receive more detail in future reports than was possible with the current diagrammatic representation. This was particularly the case where some services had improved their performance but as they had narrowly missed the targets set, they were shown only as a unsmiling face. The position on telephone transactions was highlighted as an area where the County Council was well on its way to achieving the target, but this had not currently been reflected in the report.

Cabinet asked that future reports should include:

- A forecast end of year position on each indicator,
- Where targets were being forecast as unlikely to be met, what further management action/resources would be required to achieve the target.

- Highlighting those indicators that were affected by seasonal fluctuations.

It was resolved:

- i) To note current performance on the Council's "Top 30" Key Performance Indicators for the second quarter 2004/05.
- ii) To request that future reports provide a forecast of year-end outturn performance for each indicator and that the report should also highlight any indicators with seasonal fluctuations.

## **590 PROVISIONAL REVENUE SUPPORT GRANT SETTLEMENT 2005/06**

Cabinet received a report summarising the main elements of the Provisional Revenue Support Grant Settlement for 2005-06 announced by the Minister for Local Government and the Regions.

The main points of the provisional settlement were that:

- After adjustments, Cambridgeshire's Formula Spending Share (FSS) for 2005/06 had provisionally been set at £500.3m, an increase of 7.6%.
- The revenue grant allocation had increased by 11.2%
- FSS was £875.89 per head, the sixth lowest FSS per head of the 34 Shire Counties.
- After adjustments the Government were assuming a Council Tax increase at County level of 4.9% with the expectation that Council Tax increases would be significantly lower than the national increase for 2004/05 of 5.9%.
- Funding through specific grants had increased by 7.9%.
- Personal Social Services had seen a 22.4% increase in total specific grants.
- The cash increase in the schools budget required to be equal or more than the cash increase in Schools FSS.
- There should be a minimum funding guarantee of 4% increase in funding per pupil for secondary and special schools and 5% for primary and nursery schools.
- The increase in the schools budget should be no less than the percentage increase in the centrally managed schools budget.

While Cabinet acknowledged that the Council had received the highest increase in Formula Spending Share (FSS) and grant of any County Council in the country, it was concerned to note that changes to the ceiling mechanism had resulted in a loss of £2.2 million in grant. Cabinet considered that it was important to emphasise that there were still no arrangements in place to refund this loss and earlier losses in the previous two years totaling another £20m in lost grant. As a result of these grant losses and at the level of funding available, there continued to be a significant impact on the ability to provide the appropriate level of services for the people of Cambridgeshire.

In discussion it was highlighted that the Highways FSS has only increased by 4.2%, which fell considerably short of current inflationary levels for Highways Services. Additionally, Cabinet was also informed that inflationary cost levels for the provision of services for looked after children in private placements were currently running at approximately 31%.

It was resolved:

That in the light of the Provisional Settlement representations be made to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) covering the following issues:

- Welcoming the recognition of the difficulties caused to ceiling authorities and the changes that spread the burden of the floors to all authorities above the floor.
- Urging that these changes should be maintained in the final settlement.
- That the withhold of £2.2 million to the County Council was still the highest of any Shire County and to highlight that the Government had not announced any arrangements to re-fund the earlier losses which over three years represented a £22 million grant withhold for Cambridgeshire County Council. This contrasts with Government (DfES) requirement that Cambridgeshire pay back the £1.75m advance of Standards Fund grant that had been required to compensate for the impact of the ceiling grant loss on schools budgets in 2004/05.
- That while welcoming the increase in grant, Government assurances were sought that this level of funding would at least be maintained and where possible enhanced in future years.
- That foreseeing major changes to the funding system in future years as a result of Council tax revaluation, ring fenced Schools budgets and the end of the formula freeze, requesting that such changes should not be made by increasing the burden on council tax payers or through pressure on local authority budgets.

Chairman  
25<sup>th</sup> January 2005