

## **CABINET: MINUTES**

**Date:** 31<sup>st</sup> October 2005

**Time:** 10.00 a.m. – 11.20 a.m.

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

**Councillors:** V H Lucas, M W McGuire, L J Oliver, D R Pegram, J M Tuck and F H Yeulett

**Apologies:** S F Johnstone, J A Powley and J E Reynolds,

**Also in Attendance:** Councillors I Bates, M Ballard, J Eddy, J Huppert and S Normington

### **70. MINUTES 27 SEPTEMBER 2005**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 27th September 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **71. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

### **DECISIONS FOR COUNCIL**

None.

### **72. FUNDING OF THE YOUTH SERVICE - REFERENCE FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Councillor Bates as the Chairman of the scrutiny committee was invited to present the report. The report requested that Cabinet consider the Scrutiny Committee's concerns about the historic underfunding of the Youth Service and the recommendation for Cabinet to look at making a phased increase in the funding for the Service starting in 2006/07.

Councillor Bates with the addition of a tabled summary made the following points:

- The under-funding of the services had led to an inability to meet targets.
- He highlighted the future challenges arising from the "Youth Matters" proposed legislation giving local authorities a statutory duty to provide a 'Youth Offer' of activities for young people.
- That while progress had been made with the improved management of the service, this could only go so far with the current level of resources.
- There were issues in relation to implementing some aspects of the Ofsted action plan due to the lack of funding.

- It was highlighted that the Youth Service was struggling to meet its targets with participation rates at only 12% of Cambridgeshire's young people population against the Government target of 15%. In addition, contact rates were considerably short of the Government target of 25%.
- The Youth Service was still below target on accreditation and learning outcomes, which was linked to the low level of staff available on the ground.
- There was currently a national expectation of a spend of £100 per year per young person while Cambridgeshire currently spent £52.
- The expected economies of scale from pooling Connexions and Youth Services budgets would be limited, as Connexions were still required to meet national targets.
- It was recommended that there should be a phased increase in funding in order to ensure the County Council could meet the identified challenges.

Scrutiny Committee's suggestions for finding the money included:

- That the 2.5% efficiency savings required for every service should not apply to the Youth Service.
- That efficiencies identified from other services should be put back into front line Youth Service work.
- That the funding for the Youth Service should be considered as part of the Medium Term Corporate Priorities (MTCP) process.
- Setting up a Task and Finish working group, including some CYP scrutiny panel members and relevant portfolio holders.

In response, Cabinet indicated that it shared the scrutiny committee's deep concerns regarding the historic under-funding of the Youth Service, but reminded all those present that the key issue was still to identify where the funding shortfall could come from.

Cabinet welcomed the positive approach in the current report which did provide possible options, but was still concerned that scrutiny committees were putting forward reports requesting more money for services, without identifying necessary savings.

Cabinet considered the various funding options suggested by the scrutiny committee, indicating that it would not support the idea of excluding any single service from Gershon savings. Cabinet preferred the option of considering the Youth Service's funding issues through the MTCP process. Cabinet supported setting up a Task and Finish working group to look further at innovative spend solutions/offset cost savings to increasing funding for the service and to highlight specific areas of concern that had not been addressed before. It was accepted that any proposals brought back from this working group would be after the current MTCP process.

In terms of funding considerations the report as part of the MTCP process should include:

- identifying "Spend to Save" initiatives,
- how the current funding affected individual areas of the County (to be undertaken with the new CYPS Area Directors),

- identifying cross boundary issues,
- and to consider whether any inequalities identified required additional targeting.

**It was resolved:**

- i) That the funding for the Youth Service should be considered as part of the MTCP process.
- ii) That the proposed Task and Finish Working Group should be asked to consider within its remit, alternative funding solutions to facilitate the possible future enhanced funding of the Youth Service.

## **CHANGE TO THE RUNNING ORDER OF THE AGENDA**

At the request of a local member who wished to speak in support of a report but who was required to attend another meeting later that morning, Cabinet agreed to take the next report out of sequence as the next item of business.

### **73. SECONDARY EDUCATION AT RAMSEY**

Cabinet received a report seeking its support for proposed changes in the organisation of secondary education provision in Ramsey.

The changes being recommended by the governors of the Ramsey Abbey and Ramsey Ailwyn Schools, and by the Ramsey Grammar School Foundation Charitable Trust were aimed at providing children in the Ramsey area with the best education. The merger was expected to raise expectations, aspirations and goals for all pupils.

Cabinet extended its congratulations to all the Local Education Authority staff involved in the merger proposals and how the issues had been handled. It was reported that no local opposition to the proposal had been expressed to date, with the proposals being supported by local members Councillors Normington and Eddy, who both spoke in support of the amalgamation at the meeting. Councillor Lucas declared a personal interest as a local member who had attended the consultation meeting discussed in the officers' report.

A proposal to provide a covered walkway between the schools was not supported by the portfolio holder, as this was not a capital programme priority and as pupils would not be required to move between schools. As movement between open buildings would only affect staff, this could be managed internally, through sensible timetabling.

**It was resolved:**

To confirm the Council's support for the establishment of an 11-18 voluntary controlled non-denominational, non-selective school in the place of the Ramsey Abbey and Ailwyn Schools.

## **74. LONG TERM CAPITAL STRATEGY TO 2016**

Cabinet received a report on the Long Term Capital Strategy document produced to cover the period up to 2016, to align with the Structure Plan time scale for new growth in the region. The Plan had been designed to provide a framework for the necessary capital investment required to meet projected growth levels and to identify major risks in funding and delivery. The Strategy formed the final part of a suite of strategies designed to drive forward asset management to support Cambridgeshire County Council's vision.

The key challenge would be to ensure sufficient resourcing of the programme of new infrastructure provision in terms of funding, forward planning and implementation. From the initial estimates of investment costs and funding sources for the period, a funding gap of £316 million had been identified and proposals/strategies would need to be undertaken to reduce or eliminate the funding gap. In developing the Strategy and addressing the issues, Cambridgeshire County Council would be at the forefront of good practice as encouraged by Government thinking and with regard to their recommendations on asset management practice.

A number of minor amendments were requested to the document. These included reference being made to ensure buildings were designed to support the effective inclusion of children with special educational needs, including autism and not just those with physical disabilities, and the recognition of the need to provide for children excluded from school.

In answer to a question raised about whether Whole Life Costing was being fully utilised on future capital projects, it was indicated that by mid 2006 this would be included as part of the tender evaluation stage process used before committing to a project.

There were concerns expressed on potential risks regarding both, delays in receiving forward funding streams, and also whether sufficient capacity and skills were available in the building industry to avoid delays in projects/budget overruns. As a result, Cabinet was anxious to be kept informed of progress on the strategy with greater frequency than through an annual report. It was considered that regular exception reports, as used for performance targets reported to Cabinet, would form a reasonable model. The exact frequency could be determined in due course.

### **It was resolved:**

- i) That the Long Term Capital Strategy should be reviewed with officers from the Office of Children and Young People's Services, and where amendments affected the area of a particular portfolio holder, he or she should be consulted for suggestions, with the final version to be agreed by the Leader of the Council.

- ii) That exception reports should come forward to Cabinet based on the High Level Action Plan to be developed, following agreement of the strategy.

## **75. WELFARE BENEFITS TAKE-UP INITIATIVE**

Cabinet received a report on progress with the County Council-funded Benefit Take-up Campaign recognising that the Citizen's Advice Bureau had carried out a good job with the resources provided. As current funding was due to cease in January 2006, the report also requested consideration to extending funding through a further advance from the Good Housekeeping Fund.

It was noted that the Citizen's Advice Bureau had indicated that demand for benefits advice far exceeded their capacity to supply it, which if provided, would enable significant additional numbers of people to claim benefits they were entitled to. Additional funding would have undoubted social benefits and in the longer term would also have increased financial benefits to the County Council through potential increases in Formula Spending Share (FSS).

Reference was made to the need to link with initiatives being undertaken by some district councils on providing additional benefits advice, including the successful golden age fairs.

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

- i) Note the good progress reported in respect of the benefits take-up initiative.
- ii) Agree to a further advance from the Good Housekeeping Fund of £213,292 to fund continuation of the current contract for another twelve months to address pressures around staff retention, information technology and management support.
- iii) Agree a further £71,364 for twelve months to fund two additional workers, with the possibility of an allocation being made from the increased Formula Spending Share (FSS) settlement to cover the investment in the project.
- iv) That no further extension to the scheme should be considered until there had been a more detailed analysis of the FSS gain following the settlement.

## **76. PRIMARY EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IN ST IVES**

Cabinet received a report to Cabinet providing details of the proposal to amalgamate Wheatfields Infant and Junior Schools, St Ives to create an all-through primary school. The proposed amalgamation was seen as a natural transition from the current close working arrangement between the two schools.

It was reported that the expected benefits for pupils from the

amalgamation would be a smooth and seamless progression from Foundation to Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 and continuity of provision through a single set of policies across the whole age range, as well as improved continuity for pupils with special education needs. For the management team, benefits included flexibility in terms of resource allocation and utilisation, and more effective targeting of resources to meet the needs of individuals and groups as well as greater flexibility in staff deployment.

Consultation had included a series of meetings held at both the Junior School and the Infant School on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October. It was reported that everyone who had commented on the proposals during the course of the consultations had spoken in favour of the amalgamation. Local member Councillor Kevin Reynolds had provided comments indicating that there did not appear to be any local opposition to the proposal. Lead officers were thanked for their contribution to the successful consultation exercise.

Following Cabinet approval, it was proposed to publish a Public Notice on Thursday 10 November inviting representations during a statutory six-week period ending on 22 December. If there were no written objections raised during this period, Cabinet would be asked to determine the proposal during January 2006. If objections were received, this would require the proposal to proceed for consideration by the independent School Organisation Committee for Cambridgeshire.

At the meeting the following oral amendments were made to errors in the printed draft public notice as follows:

- With reference to part 1, the description that Wheatfields Infant was a school serving the 3-7 age range required amendment to read ages 5-7.
- The reference to Wheatfields Infant having a maintained nursery school was deleted.
- In part 2, the deletion of the wording referring to establishing a nursery class at the new foundation primary school.

**It was resolved:**

To approve the publishing of a Public Notice, with the necessary amendments made at the meeting, proposing the closure of Wheatfields Infant and Junior Schools in St Ives on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2006, and the establishment of a new 420-place, 4-11 Foundation Primary School with effect from 1 September 2006, to serve primarily residents of the housing developments around the current Wheatfields schools.

**77. DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI) FOR THE PREPARATION AND REVISION OF THE FORTHCOMING MINERALS AND WASTE DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS AND THE CONSIDERATION OF COUNTY PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Cabinet received a report on the details of the “Statement of Community

Involvement” (SCI), which set out how the County Council intended to involve local communities in:

- The preparation and revision of forthcoming Minerals and Waste Development Documents and
- The consideration of planning applications that the County Council was responsible for deciding.

A key objective of the new planning system was to strengthen community involvement in the land use planning system. As a result, all planning authorities were required to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement, which would then also be the subject of public consultation.

It was intended that the SCI would develop a consensus on what were the best methods and techniques of community involvement to apply in the preparation and revision of Minerals and Waste Development Documents and County Matter (minerals and waste, service developments) planning applications. The draft SCI proposed a new criteria based framework to help developers distinguish much earlier in the process between the different types of planning application and the appropriate methods and techniques for community involvement. Three categories of development requiring different levels of pre-application community involvement had been identified. They ranged from category A (high level), category B (enhanced level) and category C (standard level).

It was noted that Development Control Committee and the Environment, Waste and Business SDG had suggested that the draft would benefit from:

- a fuller executive summary,
- inclusion of some replacement photographs,
- minor changes to the presentation of diagrams, and
- greater emphasis on the positive role that quarry/waste management site liaison groups could play in the process.

In response to questions raised about whether the consultation process would be the same for hazardous waste site planning applications, it was reported that such applications would also be covered under category A - “High Level community involvement”. It was noted that while planning applications could not be turned down if companies had not undertaken pre-planning application consultation, this lack of consultation would be a material consideration at the formal stage when considering the planning application.

It was noted that following Cabinet approval of the draft SCI, formal public consultation would be undertaken for a period 6 weeks during November and December of this year.

**It was resolved:**

To approve the Draft Statement of Community Involvement for public consultation, and to delegate to the Lead Member For Environment and Regulation, in consultation with the Deputy

Chief Executive of Environment and Community Services, the authority to approve any amendments required.

**78. CONTRAFLOW CYCLING FACILITY CORN EXCHANGE STREET/WHEELER STREET CAMBRIDGE**

This report asked Cabinet to consider further whether to support a scheme to introduce contra-flowing cycling facilities in Corn Exchange Street and Wheeler Street, Cambridge following the recent site visit.

This visit followed Cabinet's previous decision in April not to support the scheme until further information had been received on concerns raised at that meeting. The issues had been in relation to the safety auditors concerns regarding the risks associated with potential conflict at the car park exit between cars and oncoming cyclists as well as the potential liability to the County Council as a result of any accidents involving cyclists using the contra-flow lane. In addition, Cabinet members had wished to see the potential risks for themselves and had therefore requested that officers organise a site visit.

As a result of the site visit, Cabinet was generally satisfied that the proposed measures would, on balance, be more beneficial for all highways users rather than relying on enforcement to deter or prevent the anticipated increase in contra flow cycle movements. Regarding potential liability to the County Council in relation to any subsequent accidents, Cabinet received assurances that officers would undertake all appropriate mitigation action to minimise potential accidents through appropriate signage, including signs indicating that cyclists should yield and through the use of coloured cycle lanes.

It was reported that Councillor Gaynor Griffiths the member for Market Ward and her ward City councillor colleagues C. Rosenstiel, J. Rosenstiel and M. Dixon were fully in favour of the recommendation to Cabinet to support the contra-flow cycling measures in Corn Exchange/Wheeler Street. They had long been concerned that cyclists used the route as a contra flow route, which under the present circumstances, was extremely dangerous. They considered that the proposed measures would greatly improve safer cycling in the city centre and provide good access to the new shopping arcade and the new 500 space cycle park.

**It was resolved to:**

- i) Support the contra-flow cycling measures in Corn Exchange Street as shown in Plans 1-3 attached to the officers' report.
- ii) Ask the Cambridge Environment and Traffic Management Area Joint Committee to consider any objections raised at formal advertisement; and
- iii) Review any measures implemented after 12 months and if any changes were necessary to receive a further report.



**79. CABINET AGENDA PLAN - 6<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER**

In respect of agenda item 11 Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme – Operation of Interim Policy – it was agreed that this report should be deleted as nothing had changed at the current time to warrant a further report, but that there would be a report back to Cabinet in due course.

**It was resolved**

To note the Cabinet Draft Agenda Plan for 6<sup>th</sup> December 2005 as amended.

Chairman  
6<sup>TH</sup> December 2005