

CABINET: MINUTES

Date: 28th September 2004

Time: 10.00 am –10.58 am

Present: Councillor J K Walters (Chairman)

Councillors: V H Lucas, A K Melton L J Oliver, D R Pegram J A Powley, J E Reynolds. and R Wilkinson

Also in Attendance

Councillors A C Kent.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors S F Johnstone and F H Yeulett

545. MINUTES

It was resolved:

To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 9th September 2004 as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

546. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

547. ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were no matters from Scrutiny Committees to report.

548. PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS REPORT 2004

Cabinet received the draft of the Public Library Standards Report demonstrating the authority's performance against the public library standards, with contextual information about the position of the library service within the authority. Cambridgeshire's *Public Library Position Statement 2003* had been awarded the top mark of "excellent" for the quality of the evidence that the County Council were pursuing excellent policies and practice to implement "*Framework for the Future*" (the statement of national public policy published by the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS)) in line with local needs.

As a consequence, Cambridgeshire has been exempted from providing a full Public Library Position Statement and Standards Report for 2004/05 with the authority able to choose from two methods of providing information on its progress towards the Public Library Standards. The County Council have chosen to provide the current report as it enables standards of performance to be assessed in a more informed way against a background describing the position of the service within the authority's corporate framework and showed the Council's continued commitment to the outcomes of the Strategy Review

of 2002/03.

It was reported that the County Council was currently meeting 18 out of the 26 standards set and is within 5% of meeting a further 4.

Cabinet noted that where the appropriate Council meeting follows the required submission date, (the Council meeting was not until the 19th October) the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) requires that the Standards Report is signed off by the elected member who has main responsibility for the library service, to indicate that the document has political backing within the authority. Due to the need to submit the report to the (DCMS) by the deadline of 30th September, Cabinet reluctantly agreed to delegate signing off the Standards Report, but asked that officers recognise that this was on an exception basis and that this should not be as a result of officers not timetabling reports appropriately.

It was resolved:

- i) To agree the Public Library Standards Report
 - a) for adoption by the full Council – and subsequent publication in libraries and on the website
 - b) for submission to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) as the Council's statement of progress against the national library standards, in the context of the library service's position within the authority.
- ii) To agree to delegate signing off the Standards Report to the Portfolio Holder for Life Long Learning in order to meet the DCMS requirement for submission by the deadline of 30th September.
- iii) To agree that Appendix 2 should be reformatted for submission to the Council meeting to provide greater clarity by re-arranging the current columns.

549. EAST OF ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY (EERA) REQUEST FOR ADVICE ON REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE

Cabinet received a report on the outcome of the independent background studies undertaken to inform the final version of Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) 14. The report set out the key findings from the studies, particularly as they related to Cambridgeshire, and made recommended amendments to the 'banked' policies for submission to East of England Regional Assembly (EERA), under the requirements of S 4(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. A recommended response was provided for submission to (EERA) as set out in Annexe A (attached to the signed copy of the minutes). The response included the feedback received from the Strategic Planning SDG, following a presentation to which all Members of the Council had been invited to attend.

As a result of the conclusions from the audit and the other key studies, Cabinet has agreed a response that:

- Does not support any amendment to the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- Provides supporting text to identify the need for detailed studies to be undertaken after the approval of RSS 14 to identify options for development beyond 20021, including a new town proposal.
- Does not support increasing the regions housing allocation in banked RSS 14 to include the Government's target of an additional 18,000 dwellings in the LSCP Corridor.

The Government had failed to convince the County Council that 18,000 additional homes would be any more than providing houses for commuters travelling to jobs outside the region. It was considered that there was now a concerted need for a campaign to oppose any rationale for building additional new homes without providing local sustainable jobs. The risk of being allocated more housing was that it would turn the County into a suburb of London. There was also the issue that for many local people, there were now no affordable homes in the County.

Cabinet supported that if the region was required to take the additional dwellings, the share allocated to Cambridgeshire should be no greater than 3000 dwellings and that if this was accepted, an alternative distribution to that proposed in the studies was required, based on discussions with District partners. Key conditions that would have to be met before additional development was accepted, included the necessary provision of infrastructure to deliver the growth already required in the banked RSS 14.

It was resolved:

To approve the response to be submitted to the East of England Regional Assembly as set out in Annexe A to the officers' report.

550. PRIMARY EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IN CAMBOURNE

Cabinet received a report concerning the need to secure additional primary educational provision to serve Cambourne, South Cambridgeshire. The requirement would be for increased provision to be available by September 2005, although due to the tight timescale, the new school would need to operate initially, in part, from temporary accommodation.

In April 1994, outline planning permission was granted for the new settlement of Cambourne for around 3300 dwellings. Agreement with housing developers was reached to provide sites for two 420-place primary schools to serve the new community. The first primary school in Great Cambourne, opened in September 1999. The annual rate of housing completion in Cambourne has increased to such an extent that developers reached the figure of 1400 completions by the late summer the trigger point under the S106 Agreement, for the release of the land to build the second primary school.

It was noted that in addition to the need for additional primary education provision, there was considerable unmet demand for childcare, both pre-school and out-of-school. The current plans would help address this shortfall, through the provision of a dedicated, purpose-built community space at Monkfield Park Primary School, together with a similar space at the proposed new school.

An ecumenical voluntary aided school was the favoured option of the Administration and appeared to be reasonable when there were three schools proposed in an area. The final proposals reflected the clear majority of views expressed at the local consultation meeting. Cabinet noted that the Liberal Democrat Members on the School Organisation Service Development Group preferred the option for a community school. Cabinet supported the proposals including welcoming the high standards that church schools provided in other parts of the County.

Cabinet noted that the promoters had not yet secured funding and that should they fail to obtain this, the Council would need to consider alternative options, including that of establishing a community school. Finance was currently provided in the County Council's Medium Term Service Plan for the establishment of a Community Funded school with a 106 contribution of £1.7 m and the balance of to 3.7m to be met from the County Council's capital resources.

A question was raised regarding installing a water sprinkler system for fire avoidance. It was pointed out that such systems add 2% to the capital cost and as such, are not cost effective in terms of the subsequent reduced insurance premium. The current Council policy was only to install them in new construction or major refurbishment where there was a sleeping risk. The cost of installing them in all schools was estimated at £25 million and was unfortunately unaffordable.

It was resolved to:

- i) Note the intention of the Church of England and the Methodist Church to jointly publish a Public Notice proposing the establishment of a new ecumenical Voluntary Aided Primary School in Upper Cambourne providing 120 places from September 2005, and 210 places from September 2006;
- ii) Note that funding had yet to be secured by the Promoters to establish the proposed new school; and
- iii) Agree that should funding not have been secured by the time the Public Notice expires, the matter be referred to Cabinet for further consideration and decision.

551. SECOND LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT (LPSA) PROGRESS REPORT AND REWARD

Cabinet received a report on the progress with the preparation of Cambridgeshire's Second Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA).

The mechanisms for distribution of reward grant had been agreed after consultation with partner agencies on two options:

- the reward monies to be divided between partners/partnership groupings according to an agreed formula or
- the re-investment of the performance reward grant into public service development with the 5 LSP receiving an equal share of the reward money.

The clear preference from partners had been for the second option based on the re-investment of the performance reward grant into public service development, with the 5 Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) receiving an equal share of 50% of the total reward money. The remaining 50% was to be allocated to LSP Boards in accordance with local contribution towards the achievement of the reward, assessed against the local delivery of annual project proposals and the statements of partner inputs towards the seven agreed topics. The LSPs would recommend to Cabinet the priorities for such investment as detailed in the officers' report.

Cabinet was also asked to agree to withdraw the sub topic for "improved recording and tracking" under topic 14 "reducing anti-social behaviour" "This would enable concentration on the two sub topics "Restorative justice based on anti social behaviour interventions" and "Purchase of age restricted products (alcohol)".

Cabinet noted that negotiations were still continuing with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to agree performance indicators that were reliable and reflected service outcomes. Cabinet stressed that the County Council must not be forced to accept unrealistic targets. Delays in signing the agreement beyond the planned start date of October 2004 would delay the release of pump priming monies and therefore Cabinet was asked to agree short term funding via a loan in order to allow topic work to commence on schedule.

It was resolved to:

- i) withdraw the sub topic for 'improved recording and tracking' from topic 14, 'Reducing anti-social behaviour';
- ii) approve the reward grant mechanism under which reward monies would be allocated as follows:
 - the 5 local strategic partnerships (LSPs) to receive an equal share of 50% of the total;
 - 50% of the total to be allocated to LSP Boards according to local contributions towards the achievement of reward, the contributions to be continually assessed against local delivery of annual project proposals and statements of

partner inputs towards seven topics: lifelong learning, affordable housing, waste minimisation, independent living, quality of life, young people's access to services and reducing anti social behaviour.

- iii) The LSPs to recommend to Cabinet priorities for the re-investment of the reward monies into public service development using the following sequential approach:
 - a) Reinvestment in successful LPSA topic areas where a strong business case can be put forward (for some topics, the partners will wish to make business cases for county wide investment).
 - b) Reinvestment in other LPSA topic areas where a business case can be made.
 - c) Invest in new topic areas proposed for the next LPSA.
 - d) Invest in community strategy priorities that are not suitable as LPSA targets.
- iv) approve a short term loan to cover pump priming expenditure prior to the completion of the Agreement with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and the accompanying receipt of the pump priming grant.

552. PERFORMANCE ON THE COUNCIL'S TOP THIRTY KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR THE FIRST QUARTER 2004/05

For the first quarter of 2004/05 Cabinet noted that performance on the Council's "Top 30 Key Performance Targets" compared to levels at the end of 2003/04. These had improved for nine, worsened for five, and stayed the same for three. At this stage, the Council was on track to exceed the target for five indicators, with four instances performance broadly expected to meet the target, and in eight cases the target was not expected to be reached.

Areas of progress reported included:

- Already beating the 2004/05 target of having 80% of our services available electronically.
- The Provisional results showing improvement on the previous year for Key Stage 2, Level 4, Maths and English.
- Performance for the proportion of 3-year-olds receiving a qualifying early years place being very good against the 85% target.
- The stability of placements for looked after children improving in the first quarter by 6.5 percentage points on the 2003/04 figure.
- Recycling. In the year to the end of June 2004 the proportion of household waste reused had risen to 31.9%, just 1.1% off the 2004/05 target of 33%. This result reflected a further increase in the percentage of waste composted, with the introduction last winter of more district kerbside collections of green and dry waste increasing the amount of green waste recycled.

The areas where further work is required included:

- Performance on the prompt payment of invoices which, while improving from 2003/04, was currently below target. Action was being taken to improve performance following system problems that caused poor performance in June.
- Visits to Libraries - following national trends, the number of visits was declining. Performance was expected to improve in the autumn. with additional opening hours planned for 3 of the hub libraries as part of the Strategy Review Investment programme, and the opening of the new Cambourne Library. This needed to be set alongside the increasing use of libraries being accessed “remotely” (e.g. by phone/online). Comments were also made that libraries needed to also be considered in the wider sense as learning centres and not just as lending establishments. The County Council was recognised as a model of good practice. Currently the performance indicators were still based on a 20th century model and failed to recognise the differences of a 21st Century service.
- Deaths and serious injuries on roads - The latest 12-month rolling total to the end of June showed 487 deaths and serious injuries occurring and it was unlikely that the target of 456 would be reached.
- Young First Time Offenders - It was noted that there has been a slight increase in the number of young first time offenders putting the County Council slightly over the number needed to achieve the 2004/05 target. This was attributable to a change in policy aimed at reducing the number of ‘no further action’ results for offences which had seen the number of reprimands and final warnings increase. This did not mean more offences were being committed but was rather a change in the recording procedure.

It was resolved:

To note the current performance on the Council’s “Top 30” Key Performance Indicators for the first quarter 2004/05.

553. CABINET AGENDA PLAN

It was resolved:

To note the agenda for the 12TH and 26TH October subject to the deletion of the report on the 26th October set out as item 11 titled “Member Led Review of the effects of Climate Change on County Council Functions “which was to be rescheduled for a future cycle.

Chairman