

CABINET: MINUTES

Date: 26th October 2004

Time: 9.00 am – 9.47 am

Present: Councillor J K Walters (Chairman)

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

Also in Attendance

Councillor J Gluza

Apologies for Absence: Councillor R Wilkinson

557. MINUTES

It was resolved:

To agree the minutes of the meetings held on 26th September and 12th October 2004 as correct records signed by the Chairman.

558. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Melton declared a personal interest in agenda Item 5 “Cambridgeshire Horizons Limited – Infrastructure partnership Company Delivery Vehicle” having been appointed to this company by Fenland District Council.

559. ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES – REFERENCE FROM EDUCATION LIBRARIES AND HERITAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – PRIMARY EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IN CAMBOURNE

The Cabinet decisions at the meeting on 28th September regarding Primary Education Provision in Cambourne had been called in for scrutiny by the Education, Libraries and Heritage Scrutiny Committee and considered further at their meeting on 28th September.

At the invitation of the Chairman of Cabinet, the Scrutiny Chairman Councillor Gluza introduced the report. He explained that while the scrutiny committee had decided that they did not wish Cabinet to reconsider their decision, they have asked Cabinet to note the views expressed at their meeting and asked Cabinet to consider the recommendations made.

The recommendations had been brought forward as a result of detailed consideration and for further action to:

- Clarify the County Council's role when promoting schools, as in the highlighted case it would have been possible for the promoters of the ecumenical school to have conducted their own consultation exercise.
- Recognise that the practice of the School Organisation SDG to consult on a single preferred option might not allow consideration of other options.
- Address the situation where some Members felt constrained in their contributions to the consultation meeting.

Cabinet supported the scrutiny committee recommendations, noting that it was standard practice that the Cambridgeshire School Organisation Committee should receive the detailed notes of consultation meetings.

It was resolved:

To approve the following recommendations suggested by the Education Libraries and Heritage Scrutiny Committee for changes to the Council's practices on consultation arrangements for new schools:

1. that there should be clarity about the respective roles of promoters of schools and the Council during the consultation process.
2. that the School Organisation Service Development Group (SDG) should determine in respect of each proposal being considered whether a consultation on more than one option ought to feature, rather than consulting on a single preferred option.
3. that arrangements for the conduct of consultation meetings be reviewed by the SDG and that a written protocol on the conduct of meetings be developed and agreed.
4. that the Cambridgeshire School Organisation Committee should receive the detailed notes of the consultation meeting and other relevant information on the second primary school in Cambourne, including this report from the Scrutiny Committee, so that it can come to an informed decision on this matter.

560. SUPPORTING PEOPLE STRATEGY

This report asked Cabinet to agree the objectives, principles and priorities for change on the updated Supporting People Strategy to cover the period 2005 - 2010.

The officers' report set out the elements of the strategy that had previously been updated in July 2003 and highlighted the detail of the key developments. The report explained that the intention was to adhere to the original timetable of November 2004 for this next Supporting People Strategy so that the partnership could concentrate initially on agreeing its principles and priorities over the period 2005-2010 without the strategic discussion becoming confused with the 2005/06 resource position. This would allow the implications for the priorities to be addressed separately, once the 2005/06 – 2007/08 Supporting People budget allocation for Cambridgeshire had been announced.

Foremost among these issues of principle and priorities were tackling the key challenges that both the previous strategies contained. These included:

- the scope for pooling budgets across health, housing, social care and Supporting People to optimise impact.
- the cash-limited nature of the budget, £13.5m in Cambridgeshire, but with efficiency savings imposed by The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) of 2.5% in both 2003/04 and 2004/05 and much larger savings likely to be required for 2005/06.
- population growth in the county, with possibly another 75,000 people by 2016.

A revised list of challenges was set out in section 3.2 of the attached Strategy.

The key developments within the strategy were:

- **a new vision statement**
 - *To improve quality of life and well-being by ensuring housing and housing support is available that reduces risk and enables vulnerable people to live as full a life as possible.*

This will require all partners to work together, and with communities, to develop preventive services, anticipate and avert crises, and support people to maintain or regain their independence in those ways that best meet needs.

- **Provider efficiency savings for 2005/06**

Following on from the agreement on 2004/05 retrenchment that was tackled by the County Council and other major providers who had received a “windfall gain” in 2003/04, it had been agreed that all providers should be asked to consider the scope for recurrent 2% efficiency savings from 2005/06. All providers were notified by 1st October so that the option to implement them from 1st April 2005 could be exercised, given the six-month notice clause.
- **implementation of reviews**

The report detailed the five reviews undertaken in 2003/04 in respect of Home Improvement Agencies, BVR of sheltered housing, offenders teenage parents and young people at risk.
- **priority client-groups**

There are four of these (older people, offenders, young people at risk and mental health).
- **user and carer involvement**

This was raised as a prominent issue at the time of the pilot inspection. While there is already widespread consultation with users and carers in Cambridgeshire and a range of innovative approaches in place to consult and listen to views it is apparent that there is a need for additional consultation mechanisms for provider organisations.

Cabinet was greatly concerned to note that there was a potential requirement to make efficiency savings of 7.5% locally, which was in effect, cuts in services. This resulted from an initial indication by the ODPM that the national Supporting People Budget would reduce from £1.8 billion (bn) in the current year to £1.72bn. Lord Rooker anticipated that “in 2005/06 no authority would be required to find more than 7.5% efficiency savings”. In addition, ODPM consultation on the proposed distribution formula indicated that population density would be treated as a key needs-driver.

As Cambridgeshire was classed as a rural area, there was a fear that Cambridgeshire would be one of the authorities that would suffer from a poor resource allocation settlement in 2005/06 and this would inevitably have a serious impact on the ability to deliver the government’s programme.

It was resolved to:

- i) Note that the Supporting People resource allocation for Cambridgeshire for 2005/06 has yet to be announced (as set out in sections 1.4 and 2.3 of the Strategy attached to the officers’ report), and that this could mean imposed service cuts of 7.5% locally in the next financial year.
- ii) Note the centrality of Supporting People to housing, health and social care agendas as set out in section 1.5 of the Strategy and note the wide range of client-groups affected. (section 1.2)
- iii) Endorse the revised vision for Supporting People in Cambridgeshire as set out in section 3.1.
- iv) Endorse the key strategic principles underlying this vision (as set out in sections 3.1 and Appendix 4 Strategy).
- v) Endorse the four priority client-groups in section 4 – older people, offenders, young people at risk and adult mental health.
- vi) Endorse the priorities for change in section 9, including the priorities for housing support over the first three years of the Strategy (2005/06 to 2007/08) to enable further discussions to take place with partner agencies about implementation and to enable agreed proposals to be submitted to the Regional Housing Board/Housing Corporation for capital schemes and to identify the additional revenue required to enable schemes to proceed.
- vii) Agree to receive a further report when the Government’s decision on the resource allocation for funding Supporting People was announced and the position for the County Council known.

561. CAMBRIDGESHIRE HORIZONS LIMITED – INFRASTRUCTURE PARTNERSHIP COMPANY VEHICLE

This report asked Cabinet to approve the Council's membership of the new "Cambridgeshire Horizons Limited", a limited liability partnership. The new body would continue the work of the previous infrastructure partnership arrangements by means of a company limited by guarantee. This type of company was considered to be the appropriate delivery vehicle to ensure that infrastructure (£2bn) was provided at the necessary time, to ensure implementation of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan, including provision of 47,500 additional houses between the present time and 2016.

The County Council and each of the District Councils in Cambridgeshire would become full members of the company. In addition, English Partnerships and the East of England Development Agency would become full members once the necessary consents from Government had been obtained. Full Members would also have the right to appoint certain of the directors.

Councillor Reynolds was already the Council representative on the Infrastructure Partnership and it was therefore considered appropriate, given his acknowledged expertise in strategic planning matters, to recommend that he should be the Council's nomination to the new company.

In terms of agreeing the minor amendments to the Members' Agreement and the Company formation documents, it was considered more appropriate that this should be via a delegation to the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive rather than what had been proposed in the original officers' report.

It was resolved to:

- i) Approve the Council becoming a Member of Cambridgeshire Horizons Limited;
- ii) Approve the terms of the proposed Members' Agreement;
- iii) To recommend to Group Leaders that Councillor Reynolds should be the Board Member appointed by the County Council on Cambridgeshire Horizons Limited; and
- iv) To delegate to the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Chief Executive, authority to agree minor amendments to the Members' Agreement and the Company formation documents.

562. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN FOR CONSULTATION

This report sought Cabinet's views and endorsement to the draft Corporate Plan which was due to be the subject of public consultation in November.

In making suggested amendments, Members of Cabinet:

- drew attention to the fact that special needs go beyond disabilities or children who were underachieving and this should be reflected in amended text in the document.
- wished to see some positive wording added in the Learning for Life section, as currently the section described some policies in a negative way.

It was resolved:

To approve the draft, subject to the inclusion of:

- a reference to gifted and talented children within the context of support for children with special educational needs.
- To provide some additional positive wording to the Learning for Life section.

563. PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH CAMBRIDGE NORTHERN FRINGE EAST

This report asked the Cabinet to approve the proposals for infrastructure improvements to the A14/A10 slip roads and circulatory at the Milton interchange and the Milton Road / Cowley Road junction. The proposals were part of the provision of appropriate infrastructure to support the future development in the Cambridge Northern Fringe East. The solutions were designed to improve capacity and to enhance road safety.

The views of Councillor Coston, who as a local member had been invited to attend and speak, were brought to the Cabinet's attention, as she was unable to attend.

It was noted that she was in agreement in principle with the road layout plans for the area, as with the development of Northern Fringe, new junctions in the area of the Science Park would have to be built to give access. She asked that any suggestions received from the public consultation should be given appropriate consideration and hoped that in the future, as the Northern Fringe expanded, a new access to the site could be developed directly off the A14. In respect of cyclists / walkers she was particularly concerned that cyclists and walkers should have the safest and most unimpeded route possible.

She indicated that she would be pressing for cyclists to have a system that sensed their presence and changed the lights at the junctions similar to the system that presently in place near Parkers Piece. She also looked for assurances that the new cycle-ways would be lit and that they were a clear distance from the side of the road. She was pleased to note that officers were looking into the possibility of a cycle path running through the south of the site, towards the river to give access to that side of Cambridge.

On the A10 improvements she supported the proposed extra lanes and new dedicated slip lanes on the interchange and the list of other improvements and looked forward to the work on the interchange being carried out as soon as possible.

It was resolved:

- i) To note the proposed consultation programme.
- ii) To approve the implementation of improvements to the:
 - A14/A10 slip roads and circulatory at the Milton interchange and;
 - Milton Road / Cowley Road junction.

564. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS – CAMBRIDGESHIRE RESPONSE TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW

This report sought Cabinet's approval to endorse the report and County Council motion as the County Council response to the inter-departmental Ministerial review of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs).

The report built on the motion that had been unanimously agreed at full Council to formulate a response to oppose

- Government cash limiting of its contributions to District Council's Disabled facilities grants,
- setting a cap on individual grants of £25,000 and
- to express concerns about the Housing Corporation's decision to withdraw discrete funding for aids and adaptations from Registered Social Landlords from April 2004.

It was noted that in addition to the detrimental impact on individual people, the government measures would have a damaging effect on the policy objectives that Local Strategic Partnerships as well as District Councils, Primary Care Trusts and the County Council were seeking to deliver in response to local needs and central government requirements.

Representations were to be made to the Ministerial Committee reviewing the Government's changes. Additionally support was being sought for a joint response from Cambridgeshire's five District Councils Housing portfolio holders and the Chief Executives of the five primary care trusts and other social care agencies to be agreed through the Cambridgeshire Care Partnership meeting on 7th December.

It was resolved to:

- (i) agree the report and the motion submitted and agreed at full Council as the County Council response to the Government review of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFGs), and;
- (ii) seek to develop with partner agencies a further joint response from the housing, health and social care system in Cambridgeshire.

565. MONITORING OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF JOINT REVIEW OF SOCIAL SERVICES

This report provided Cabinet with the fourth quarterly exception report on progress in delivering the recommendations of the Joint Review as agreed in the Joint Review action plan and asked for comments on the progress being made to implement the recommendations of the Joint Review.

Due to the concerns that had been expressed in various forums regarding the performance of the Integrated Community Equipment Service, a report would be taken at a Cabinet meeting in December about the future provision of the service.

It was resolved:

- i) to note the progress being made to implement the recommendations of the Joint Review; and
- ii) that in respect of the performance of the Integrated Community Equipment Service Stores there was to be a report to a December Cabinet meeting about the future provision of the service.

566. NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK AND FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICE DELIVERY PLANS FOR TRADING STANDARDS

This report provided Cabinet with an update on the progress on delivery of the National Performance Framework and Food Law Enforcement Service Delivery Plans for Trading Standards requested at Cabinet on 2nd March 2004

Tribute was paid to the work of the section, with particular mention made to the success of the multi-agency "Operation Baldrick" aimed against counterfeiters at Oakington Market as well as highlighting the Registered Trader Scheme initiative to enable elderly and the vulnerable to use audited tradesmen for property repairs and maintenance.

It was noted that Nikki Piper Project Manager had been nominated for the "Public Servant of the Year" National Guardian award for her exceptional work on the "Ask CEdRIC" project which was recognised as the foremost educational website in the Trading Standards field. Cabinet asked that all members should be notified of the voting process.

It was resolved:

- i) To note progress on the delivery of the National Performance Framework and Food Law Enforcement Service Delivery Plans for Trading Standards.
- ii) That the Head of Press and Public Relations notify all Members of the Council of the voting arrangements for the National Guardian's "Public Servant of the Year"

567. CORPORATE SELF ASSESSMENT

It was anticipated that The Council would be eligible for a proportionate corporate assessment inspection. The report Informed Cabinet of the progress being made in relation to preparations for a proportionate corporate assessment inspection, detailing the Council's progress since the last Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and invited Cabinet to comment on the draft corporate assessment, self-assessment.

Councils such as Cambridgeshire rated as good in terms of their CPA, would be able to move into the excellent category through a combination of improved core service scores and a proportionate assessment inspection.

It was resolved to:

- i) Note the progress being made in relation to preparations for a proportionate corporate assessment inspection.
- ii) Subject to the Council's eligibility for a proportionate corporate assessment inspection being confirmed, delegate to the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Chief Executive, the authority to approve the submission of the corporate assessment self-assessment and supporting information to the Audit Commission.

568. CABINET AGENDA PLAN

It was resolved:

To note the agenda plan for the 7th December.

Chairman
7th December