

CABINET: MINUTES

Date: 5th December 2006

Time: 10.00 a.m. – 11.22 a.m.

Present: Councillor J K Walters (Chairman)

Councillors: S F Johnstone, V H Lucas, L W McGuire, L J Oliver, D R Pegram, J A Powley, J E Reynolds, J M Tuck and F H Yeulett.

Also in Attendance

Councillors: *N. Harrison, A Kent, *M Smith, *T Stone and J West.

* for part of the meeting only

Apologies: None

260. MINUTES 31st OCTOBER 2006

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 31st October 2006 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

261. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

262. PETITIONS - BROOKLANDS AVENUE AREA RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION (BAARA) AND BENTLEY ROAD AND NEWTON ROAD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Cabinet received details of a petition organised by Brooklands Avenue Area Residents Association (BAARA) and Bentley Road and Newton Road Residents Association regarding support for the need to widen the very narrow section (1.2-1.3 metres wide) of the footpath and designated cycle way on the South Side of Brooklands Avenue along the English Heritage frontage which ran to approximately 66 metres. The section highlighted was so narrow that it was impossible for cyclists to pass each other without dismounting or encountering a pram/pushchair. As a result, a substantial number of cyclists used the road instead of the footpath. In addition, the heavy traffic along Brooklands Avenue, and especially the bow wave wind caused by heavy vehicles moving at speed, made the section of the path a dangerous passage, especially for children.

The petition had been signed/completed electronically by over 340 Cambridgeshire residents urging the Council to use its powers of

compulsory purchase to resolve the matter and include widening of the footpath/cycleway in an appropriate programme over the next few years.

Michael Chisholm the secretary to BAARA presented the case for the petitioners. In addition to 346 local signatories, the petition had also received the support of St Faith's and the Perse Girls Schools, Cambridge University Press, the Cambridge Cycling Campaign as well as the local member for Trumpington. The problems referred to in the petition would be compounded by the expected increase of approximately 1,000 new inhabitants resulting from 380 new dwellings as part of the Accordia Development. With this influx, the secretary believed that the need to take measures on safety grounds was becoming vital, especially in view of the County Council/City Council emphasis on cycling and walking.

A member enquired about the accident rate on Brooklands Avenue along the section in question. It was indicated that while there had not been any accidents recorded on or adjacent to the pavement, it was considered to be an accident waiting to happen and for the reasons already outlined, was even more likely as the local population increased.

As there was no report on this issue on the Cabinet agenda,

It was resolved:

That the officers be asked to take away the details of the petition and respond directly to the lead petitioner.

263. ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES – REPORT FROM ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES (OECS) RECOVERY PLAN

Cabinet received a report from the above scrutiny committee drawing attention to the concerns of the scrutiny committee in relation to issues that had arisen when discussing the OECS Budget Recovery Plan at their meeting on 22nd November.

The Scrutiny Committee raised questions and concerns about a number of individual items within the Recovery Plan as set out in section 2 of the report and had queried whether they were achievable. The Committee also identified more general concerns connected with the overall handling of the mid-year budget adjustment in respect of the following:

Virements

The Council's Constitution allowed officers to make virements

(transfers) of revenue funds between budget headings up to a maximum £150k value per transaction. The Scrutiny Committee highlighted that there appeared to be no limit on the number of transactions that could be effected below that limit and, as a result, significant mid-year budget variations could be implemented without political authorisation. Although the Scrutiny Committee appreciated the need to stay within overall cash-limits, in their view, decisions which shifted resources between diverse service areas, and which impacted significantly on the provision of some services should be seen as policy decisions, and as such, should not be implemented without the formal consent of Cabinet. The Committee believed that an early review was needed of the virement powers of officers.

Open Government and Scrutiny

Scrutiny had identified that for several weeks after the 26 September Cabinet meeting, there was a lack of clarity as to what, if any, process would be used to bring full information about the budget problem and Recovery Plan into the public domain. In the committee's view, the process by which the Council had opened itself to public scrutiny over the current budget situation had been less than clear or satisfactory.

Presentation of Information

The Committee was concerned that information presented in the Budget Monitoring Report to the Cabinet meeting on 26 September was inaccurate and consequently misleading as it was not consistent with other information available at the time to other members in different forums.

As a result, the scrutiny committee requested that Cabinet should receive a report back to a future meeting reviewing the adequacy of the current virement procedures, the future reporting of budgetary overspends, and a review of the mechanism for releasing information about overspends and recovery plans into the public domain.

In response, Cabinet welcomed the report from the Scrutiny Committee and the issues that had been raised. Cabinet intended that officers should take away the highlighted issues to see what lessons could be learnt for the future in respect of improving the budget control reporting systems.

The point was made that when Offices were given their budget allocations at the beginning of the year, there was an implicit requirement to ensure that the cash limits should not be exceeded. As a result of demand led pressures on Adult Social Care Services, there

had been a need to rapidly develop action plans to address the identified projected overspends. Negotiations with the Health Service had also been complicated by the substantial reorganisation to the Strategic Health Authority and the Primary Care Trust structures. However Cabinet recognised that an earlier report and decision should have been taken on the virement of £156,000 from the Highways and Access budget, as this had exceeded the officer delegation limit and thanked the scrutiny committee for helping to bring it to Cabinet's attention.

It was resolved that:

Officers should be requested to respond to all the points made in the recommendation from the scrutiny committee and provide a report back to Cabinet within the next two months including undertaking a review of the adequacy of the County Council Virement Procedures.

264. EARLY TERMINATION DISCRETIONARY COMPENSATION

Cabinet received a report recommending changes to the application of the Local Government Pension Scheme by Cambridgeshire County Council in respect of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006. (Statutory Instrument 2914).

Cabinet noted that the County Council currently operated a policy in accordance with the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2000 ("the 2000 regulations") which enabled the County to consider compensation payments to employees whose employment has been terminated early by reason of redundancy, or in the interests of efficiency of the service (PRIEEAF), or, in the case of a joint appointment, because the other holder of the appointment has left it.

The above regulations had now been replaced by the 2006 regulations, which came into force on 29th November 2006 and have retrospective effect from 1st October 2006. As a consequence of these regulatory changes and the Age Equality Legislation, which came into force on 1st October 2006, Cambridgeshire County Council's current policy was no longer compliant and therefore needed amendment. Failure to amend the discretionary compensation policies as an employing authority would leave the County Council open to statutory challenge and enforcement activity.

The 2006 discretionary compensation regulations contained transitional protection arrangements to the end of the current 2006/07 financial year, whereby an employer could choose to apply either the 2000 regulations, enabling the use of Compensatory Added Years (CAY), or

the 2006 regulations for an individual whose employment commenced before 1st October 2006 and whose termination date was on or after 1st October 2006 and before 1st April 2007.

The report received by Cabinet sets out the issues and fundamental policy principles to be considered to ensure that the County Council met its statutory requirements, whilst importantly in addition, maintaining flexibility as an employer and preventing the creation of any additional financial pressures as a consequence of adopting a new policy. The report to Cabinet detailed the current County Council policy approach for the application of discretionary compensation, based firstly in relation to redundancy payable in accordance with the statutory Local Government Pension Scheme from the appropriate Pension Fund; and the secondly in respect of premature retirement in the interests of efficiency, providing details and eligibility and payments available.

Cabinet agreed with the contention that when developing a revised approach to the discretionary elements of the compensation regulations, Cambridgeshire County Council, as an employing authority, should seek to apply a series of clear policy principles.

As making changes to the County Council's Pensions Scheme was reserved to the full Council:

It was resolved to recommend to the Council meeting on 12th December:

That the Council approves the following policy revisions and Recommendations:

General Policy Recommendations

- i) That the revised discretions policy approach should not adversely reduce terms and conditions of employment for County Council employees.
- ii) That the County Council should continue not to seek to use the LGPS augmentation regulation provisions due to the costs and complexities this entails.
- iii) That these revised policy arrangements be reviewed after 6 months of operation to manage any identified risks and emerging issues arising from the age equality regulations.

Transitional Protection Recommendation

- iv) Recommend that the County Council accepts the provisions of the transitional protection

arrangements, enabling the use of existing discretions to award compensatory added years for any protected employees made redundant by the authority before 1st April 2007;

Redundancy Policy Recommendations

- v) Recommend to the County Council that the Redundancy policy will remain calculated on actual week's pay, rather than statutory redundancy provisions;
- vi) That the revised Redundancy Policy for employees not covered by the transitional protection arrangements be to award an overall lump sum of 1 ½ times the initial redundancy payment to all employees with 2 or more years' continuous employment with Cambridgeshire County Council, regardless of their membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme with effect from 29th November 2006;
- vii) That the revised Redundancy Policy for all employees be to award an overall lump sum of 1 ½ times the redundancy payment to employees with 2 or more years' continuous employment with Cambridgeshire County Council, regardless of their membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme, with effect from 1st April 2007;

PRIEEAF Policy Recommendations

- viii) Recommend to the County Council that the revised PRIEEAF policy for the County Council should remove the discretion to award CAY with effect from 1st April 2007 and replace this with a flexible approach to award a lump sum of up to 104 weeks' pay.

265. HILLS ROAD BUS LINK SCHEME APPROVAL AND ALSO APPROVAL FOR COMPULSORY PURCHASE

Cabinet received a report indicating that in February the County Council had been awarded £600,000 of Growth Area Funding (GAF) from the Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF) to construct a link road for public transport and cycles from the south of Cambridge railway station to the junction of Hills Road and Brooklands Avenue, in Cambridge.

As funding awarded under the GAF programme was required to be spent between April 2006 and March 2008 to facilitate this tight timetable, Cabinet was being asked to delegate detailed scheme approval for the Hills Road Bus Link Scheme to the Cambridge Traffic Management Area Joint Committee (AJC). It was confirmed that in the event that the AJC is unable to determine the scheme, officers would report back to Cabinet for a final decision.

Cabinet noted that land acquisition was required to deliver the scheme and to deliver an effective junction design. Officers were negotiating with the landowners to achieve this but given the tight timescale involved, authorisation to commence the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) process was also sought to ensure that the scheme could be delivered. It was hoped that there would be no need to resort to the full CPO process and that a negotiated settlement could be agreed.

It was resolved to:

- i) note the programme.
- ii) Delegate detailed scheme approval to the Cambridge Traffic Management Area Joint Committee.
- iii) Approve, if required for officers to use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers for the necessary land acquisition

266. HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING STRATEGY

Cabinet received a report detailing the contents of the draft of a County Wide Strategy to meet statutory obligations for Household Waste Recycling Centres. The draft strategy reflected previous key decisions made by Cabinet in relation to locating and pursuing land for Household Waste Recycling Centres.

In order to meet statutory duties and objectives for waste management, the County Council was required to continue to deliver recycling centres for the public to use. For the next five to ten years, as planning permissions ran out and new communities were developed in Cambridgeshire, the location and design of such sites would have to have regard to both population demand and the geographical coverage of the existing recycling site infrastructure.

There were ten sites in the current network of Household Waste Recycling Centres serving Cambridgeshire as listed in an appendix to the report. The draft strategy provided for the first time the method for delivering the services whilst also recognising the legislative, financial, planning and operational challenges the County Council was facing.

The strategy and delivery plan sets out the work underway and the work still to do in terms of:

- Identifying where sites were needed
- Securing new and replacement sites
- Funding Household Waste Recycling Centre infrastructure
- Building new Recycling Centres
- Maintaining the network
- Reviewing the Operations on site
- Education and Communication

It was resolved:

To approve the draft of a County-Wide Strategy as attached as an appendix to the officer's report to meet statutory obligations for Household Waste Recycling Centres.

267. OVERARCHING ENFORCEMENT POLICY AND AGE RESTRICTED GOODS

Cabinet noted that earlier in the year the Government had published the draft "Regulators' Compliance Code" and that following the introduction of the national "Better Regulation" agenda, it was seen as timely to review the Authority's published Enforcement Policy.

The new likely Government requirements had been reflected in a new overarching enforcement policy, for which approval was sought along with an enforcement policy specifically to cover Age Restricted Goods. The latter policy continued the County Council's aims of protecting the young, and society in general, from the dangers associated with age restricted goods such as alcohol and tobacco. Whilst the new code has yet to be finally published, officers did not believe there would be any impact beyond changing references to the Enforcement Concordat (a document which enshrined good enforcement practice, and to which this Authority had signed up to).

Both policies had been drafted to ensure adherence to the principles of:

- Transparency
- Adopting a graduated, but appropriate approach, to enforcement
- Ensuring appropriate protection of the public, particularly vulnerable members of our communities.

Both policies would require an annual review by the Head of Trading Standards. Recommendation ii) on the original report included an error

in the proposed delegation arrangements as there was no longer a Director of ECS and therefore the proposed delegation as part of the annual review should be to the Deputy Chief Executive.

In answer to questions raised, assurances were provided that whenever children were used for the purposes of test purchase exercises, the County Council enforcement officers followed a laid down code of practice which included receiving permission from the children's parents.

It was resolved to:

- i) Approve both the overarching Enforcement Policy and the Enforcement Policy specifically covering Age Restricted Goods.
- ii) To delegate responsibility for approving minor changes to both policies following the annual review to the Portfolio Holder, Environment and Community Services in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive of Environment and Community Services.

268. PRIMARY EDUCATION IN BRAMPTON

Cabinet on 26 September 2006 had approved the publication of a Public Notice proposing the closure of Brampton Infant and Junior Schools on 31 August 2007, and the establishment of a new 420-place, 4-11 Community Primary School with effect from 1 September 2007, to primarily serve residents of the village of Brampton.

Cabinet noted that a Public Notice had been issued on 4 October 2006 under the provisions of the Education (School Organisation Proposals) (England) Regulations 1999 (as amended), with a formal Representation Period of six weeks that had ended on 16 November 2006. It was reported that the Representation Period had received no objections to the proposed amalgamation of the which also had the support of the local member.

In answer to a question raised on whether the school would be open by September 2007, it was indicated that as the new school was on the site of the existing school no delays should be expected.

It was resolved:

To confirm the amalgamation of Brampton Infant School and Brampton Junior School with effect from 1 September 2007, to be achieved through the closure of

the schools on 31 August 2007, and the opening of a new 420-place primary school in their stead on 1 September 2007 on the existing schools' site.

269. CHILD EMPLOYMENT – IMPACT OF RECENT LEGISLATION CHANGES WITH REGARD TO CHILDREN WORKING IN LICENSING PREMISES

Cabinet received a report explaining that the Licensing Act 2003 appeared to have removed certain safeguards, existing under the Licensing Act 1964, which prohibited children from working in bars and selling alcohol in them.

Under the Licensing Act 2003 Section 153, a person under 18 would not be permitted to sell alcohol unless the sale had been approved by a responsible person. A person under 18 would not need permission from a responsible person to sell alcohol for consumption with a table meal. This change had now resulted in a situation in which children aged between 13 and 16 might legally still be able to work in a bar. Officers had sought clarification with regard to the changes, but it appeared that there was still uncertainty as to the full meaning and possible implications of the changes.

Cabinet supported the view that the County Council should take action to ensure that children in Cambridgeshire could not work in bars. Cabinet accordingly supported the County Council's current practice with regard to the issuing of work permits and endorsed an amendment to the County Council's current Child Employment Byelaws in order for the County Council to be better able to refute any potential challenge. The change would result in the County Council continuing with its current practice of refusing to issue work permits for children to work in a bar area while the bar was open.

The CCC byelaws currently state that: "No child of any age may be employed to sell or deliver alcohol, except in sealed containers." The proposal supported by Cabinet was to amend the byelaws to state that: "No child may be employed:

- to sell or deliver alcohol, except in sealed containers;
- in a bar area while the bar is open."

As under the County Council Constitution changes to the County Council's byelaws require final approval by the full Council,

Cabinet recommended

That the County Council agree to the County Council Child Employment Byelaws, which currently prohibit children from serving or delivering alcohol other than in

sealed containers, being amended and thereby strengthened through the inclusion of a subsection specifically prohibiting children aged between 13 and 16 from “working in a bar area while the bar is open.”

270. CORPORATE ASSESSMENT AND DIRECTION OF TRAVEL INSPECTION

Cabinet had previously agreed the County Council’s Corporate Self-Assessment and the scores against each of the themes, as well as noting the preparations for the Corporate Assessment.

Cabinet noted that the Direction of Travel statement was submitted by the deadline to the Audit Commission on 23rd October, and that the inspector had been on- site between 15th -16th November and had taken a specific interest in Adults Social Care, partnerships, organisational development as well as a variety of other topics. The inspector had interviewed the Leader and Deputy Leader, Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive for Environment and Community Services, key directors as well as a focus group of middle managers. The results of the Direction of Travel Assessment would be published on 22nd February 2007.

The Corporate self-assessment attached to the Cabinet report included full details on the supporting evidence for the scores against the following themes:

Theme		Score
1	Ambition for the community	3
2	Prioritisation	4
3	Capacity	4
4	Performance management	4
5	Achievement	3

Cabinet noted details of the full inspection period (for both Corporate Assessment (CA) and the Joint Area Review (JAR)) to take place for two weeks commencing from 22nd January 2007. Cabinet noted the Audit Commission key dates and reporting schedule as set out in the report.

The comment was made that paragraph 3.4 was still using the phrase “comprised of” and the request was made that this should be removed from the final version of the document. Officers agreed to check that it had been removed as the version on the printed Cabinet agenda had already been revised since the agenda had been sent out.

It was resolved to agree:

- i) The Corporate Self-Assessment and the scores against each of the themes.
- ii) To note the preparations for the Corporate Assessment.

271. PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Cabinet received and noted the findings of the above survey which would be of assistance as the Medium Term Corporate Plan and budget setting process developed.

Following the postal questionnaire exercise undertaken in the previous year, a different methodology had been used for the current consultation via a “priority search” methodology based on a list of 14 different services. The questionnaire had been distributed to 6,000 households within Cambridgeshire, randomly selected from the electoral register. A total of 1,464 residents had completed and returned the questionnaires, a response rate of 24%. The response provided an accuracy level of +/- 3%.

The survey results illustrated that respondents had selected six services as those with significant positive priorities. The top four of these were concerned with education and support for older people and those with disabilities. The six selected were:

- Support for older people - especially to enable them to remain in their own home.
- Primary schools.
- Secondary schools.
- Supporting adults with disabilities and those with mental health problems.
- Maintenance of roads, bus lanes, cycle and footways.
- Waste disposal and recycling schemes.

Cabinet also noted that respondents within each area selected had picked very similar services as their main priorities with little variation dictated by geography. The report also detailed the differences by Demographic Groups.

In addition to the survey, a focus group was held with people from black and ethnic minority communities (BME). The main priority identified as important for people from BME communities was education. What BME communities wished to see in schools helped explain what made education such a priority and the details of the focus group response and their priorities was set out in the officer's report. A Cabinet member highlighted that the issues highlighted required to be taken on board by the relevant officers.

Other comments made by Cabinet members included:

- concerns that youth work was not seen as a high priority and this could be due to the way the questions had been phrased. It was pointed out that if questions had been asked regarding whether there was support for measures to prevent anti-social behaviour, this might have elicited far greater support for the work carried out by the Youth Service. In response, officers confirmed the questions were prescriptive and were given to the Council and that careful consideration had been given to their wording.
- Added as a further comment to the above by above another member was the point that other surveys often showed crime and the fear of crime as the major concern to members of the public and yet this was not reflected in the current survey. The point was made that both preventing youth offending and also supporting families and the County Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities in relation to Children Looked After would continue to be major priority areas for the County Council and would not be affected by public survey results.
- Another member made the point that while the survey results were helpful in gauging public opinion to specific set questions, the County Council's responsibilities included looking at the longer term picture and sometimes making decisions that were unpopular.

It was resolved:

To note the findings of the public consultation survey and take account of them as the Medium Term Corporate Plan and budget setting process developed.

272. CONSULTATION RESPONSE ON CLAY FARM/SHOWGROUND PLANNING APPLICATION

Cabinet received a report providing details of the outline planning application submitted to Cambridge City Council on the 17th October 2006 by Countryside Properties Plc and the Pemberton Trustees for the development of land at Clay Farm and Showground to the east and south east of Trumpington, Cambridge.

The County Council as a statutory consultee on planning applications had been invited to make representations. For the reasons set out in Appendix A to the officer's report it was proposed that the County Council should object to the planning application.

The local member for Trumpington was invited to comment on the report and expressed support for the objections regarding that no secondary school provision or a site for a secondary school site had

currently been identified. She asked if officers would consider strengthening the response in respect of the timing sequence for primary school implementation/provision of community facilities. She wished to ensure that the Fawcett School expansion was implemented first. She also asked that officers should give further consideration to the best location for the second primary school, as currently with the pattern of development expected, the proposed location might be too close to the existing Fawcett Primary School site. This was a particular concern for the governors at the primary school. The local member also supported the need to identify the location for the statutorily required provision of a children's centre.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services undertook to consider the comments from the local councillor in agreeing the final response. In terms of future school location the comment was made that there was certainly a need to avoid having to bus children in from other parts of the city.

It was resolved to:

- i) Approve the County Council's consultation response to the Clay Farm/Showground Planning Application as set out in appendix A of the officer's report.
- ii) For officers to give further consideration in the final response to the comments made at the meeting by the local Member for Trumpington.
- iii) Delegate to the Lead Member, Environment and Community Services in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive, Environment and Community Services the authority to make any minor textual changes to the consultation response prior to submission.

273. BUDGET MONITORING 2006/07

Cabinet noted the budget monitoring report to the end of September, including the forecast outturn for the end of the 2006-07 financial year of £1.2m and the actions proposed and in hand to deliver financial balance.

Cabinet approved the recovery plans for the Offices of Environment and Community Services (ECS) and Children's and Young People's Services (CYPS) as set out in appendices 4 and 5 of the Cabinet report. The ECS plan included a virement that required specific Cabinet approval as it exceeded the £150k delegation limit to officers. It was noted that even if all aspects of the recovery plan were achieved, the forecast overspend in ECS would still be £400,000 and further proposals would be needed.

Cabinet noted that there was considerable pressure on demand-led service budgets, e.g. agency placements and home to school transport within CYPS and adult support services within ECS.

A number of the savings within the recovery plans were non-recurrent, and the underlying pressures would need to be addressed within the Medium Term Corporate Plan (MTCP).

Key risks to achieving year-end balance were further demographic pressures on demand led services and the continuing negotiations with Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) on contributions to pooled budgets.

The financial results and predicted outturn of the trading units were noted, as shown in Appendix 3 to the Cabinet report.

In terms of capital spending and financing, Cabinet noted that the ECS budget and outturn forecast for the year now both included £116.6m relating to the Guided Busway project. The overall outturn forecast showed a capital financing shortfall of £0.7m. This funding gap was likely to be closed by further slippage in the programme, however if it was not, then prudential borrowing proposals would be presented to Cabinet with the next quarterly update due in February.

Cabinet also noted details of the performance for payment of invoices and the position regarding the total amount of debt outstanding as detailed in the report.

Cabinet asked for greater standardisation in future reports on how the Offices set out their forecast budget position. The CYPS explanation in the current report was cited as the preferred model.

It was resolved to:

- i) Note the forecast outturn for the end of the year 2006-07 and the actions proposed and in hand to deliver financial balance.
- ii) Approve the recovery plans attached as appendices 4 and 5 to the officer's report, which represented proposed virements of budgets within each of the offices concerned.
- iii) To request that officers standardise future Budget reports in respect of how Offices described their forecast budget position.

274. GROWTH AREA PROGRESS

With the agreement of the Chairman, a very brief update report, which had been listed on the agenda as an item to follow, was tabled.

It was reported that following a review of Cambridgeshire Horizons initiated by the Government, there was now an identified need to increase joint working between the County Council, the City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council in bringing forward the major growth planned for the area. As a response to this, the Chief Executive and senior Members were working with Cambridgeshire Horizons and the other Councils to develop proposals.

This work would focus on establishing joint decision making arrangements for the major Structure Plan development sites and for developing joint working arrangements to improve efficiency. It was proposed that the Councils and Horizons will use these revised working arrangements to seek to secure additional funding from the Government to support the pressures of growth.

Cabinet noted that a significant amount of work was still required to develop these proposals. At the present time, it was envisaged that a report would become available for Cabinet consideration in January with the final decision by Full Council planned for February, although these dates might change depending on the progress that was made.

It was resolved

To note the update provided and the likely timetable for future reports.

275. 2007/08 GRANT SETTLEMENT KEY MESSAGES AND FINANCIAL IMPACT

As part of a second dispatch, Cabinet received an interim report following the initial announcement from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on the Government's grant settlement.

It was reported that there were no significant changes to assumed main and specific grants. A fuller report would follow to the 19th December Cabinet meeting, once full information had been released from DCLG and officers had had the opportunity to analyse the detail.

Cabinet noted the following key issues:

- The minister was looking for low and sustainable council tax rates that on average did not exceed 5% and indicated a willingness to cap if necessary.
- The overall settlement for 2007/08 including general and specific grants, schools grant and neighbourhood renewal funds would be £65.7 billion, an increase of £3.1 billion or 4.9%.
- General Grant would stand at £25.6 billion, an increase of 3.7%.

In terms of the DCLG headlines accompanying the settlement, Cabinet noted the following points:

- There had been no change for any authority in formula grant allocations, between the 2007/08 Settlement announced in January and the most recent announcement.
- There was no increase in the total amount of Formula Grant allocated.
- There was no change to relative block sizes.
- There was no change to damping mechanisms (including no reinstatement of capital adjustment).
- There were no further transfers into/out of the 2006/07 baseline.
- £668m additional monies had been added to specific grants.
- There was an average 3.8% increase in Formula Grant across England.
- Average increase in Formula Grant for counties was 4.1%.
- There was an increased proportion of Formula Grant funded from Non National Domestic Rates (NNDR)
- There had been no further Resource Equalisation.
- There was no change to block sizes relative to each other.

An initial view of the impact of the settlement announcement on the Medium Term Corporate Plan was noted as set out in the Cabinet report including:

- It was confirmed that for the main grant, there was no change to the indicative figure used in the 2006/07 Budget Book.
- Cambridgeshire County (CCC) was now off the floor and showing a 2.9% increase against floor of 2.7%.
- Regarding specific grants, there was a possible improvement in the supporting people grant for Cambridgeshire.
- There was no specific recognition in the grant settlement of the financial challenges of the Growth Agenda.

In discussion it was noted that settlements for other Councils included Rutland 9.2%, Norfolk 8.4%, Dorset 9.5% East Cambridgeshire 8.6%, Huntingdonshire 8.1% and 12.1% for the Isles of Scilly. The average increase for County Councils was 3.6%. Cabinet requested that for the next Cabinet meeting officers should provide an illustration to show the very small increase that had been given to the County Council compared to some other similar authorities, and especially, if

applicable to other County Councils in the Eastern Region. It was only through such examples, that both local residents and Members could fully understand the resourcing dilemma/ funding position faced by the County Council.

It was resolved:

- i) To note the report and that a more detailed report would follow to the 19th December Cabinet meeting.
- ii) To request that officers provide for the Cabinet Budget Report an analysis of how the grant settlement for Cambridgeshire equated to a monetary spending share figure per head of population, as well as providing appropriate comparisons with other County Councils.

276. DELEGATIONS FROM CABINET TO CABINET MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Cabinet received a report detailing the progress on delegations.

It was resolved:

To note the progress on delegations to individual Cabinet Members and/or to officers previously authorised by Cabinet to make decisions/take actions on its behalf.

277. DRAFT CABINET AGENDA PLAN 19th DECEMBER 2006

It was resolved:

To note the agenda plan as set out on the agenda and that there was likely to be a number of additional non key decision reports added to the agenda as follows:

- Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) – Review of School Syllabus
- Papworth Traffic Calming Speed Reductions - Referral from Area Joint Committee
- Addenbrooke's Hospital 20/20 application
- Huntingdonshire District Council Service Level Agreement

The report "Declaration of Croylands, Ely as surplus and reinvestment of proceeds in Larkfield, Ely" had been moved to the January Cabinet meeting.

Chairman
19th December 2006