

## **CABINET: MINUTES**

<b>Date:</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> September 2005
<b>Time:</b>	10.00 a.m. – 11.55 a.m.
<b>Present:</b>	Councillor J K Walters (Chairman)
<b>Councillors:</b>	S F Johnstone V H Lucas, M W McGuire, L J Oliver, D R Pegram, J A Powley J E Reynolds, J M Tuck and F H Yeulett
<b>Apologies:</b>	None
<b>Also in Attendance:</b>	Councillors I Bates, J Eddy, N Harrison D Harty and M Smith

### **51. MINUTES 6 SEPTEMBER 2005**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6th September 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **52. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Councillor S F Johnstone declared a prejudicial interest under paragraph 10 of the Code of Conduct in relation to agenda item 3 as a Non- Executive Director at Addenbrooke's Hospital and was not present during the discussion of the item.

## **DECISIONS FOR COUNCIL**

### **53. PAPWORTH HOSPITAL CONSULTATION**

Cabinet received a report detailing proposals by Papworth Hospital National Health Service (NHS) Trust to develop a brand new cardio-thoracic hospital, via either the redevelopment of its existing Papworth site or by the construction of a new hospital and research institute located on the Addenbrooke's Hospital site in Cambridge. Relocating to Addenbrooke's was the preferred option for the Papworth Trust Board, if housing and transport issues could be addressed and if beds and facilities were protected. The resultant significant clinical benefits, from improvements in, and access to, the clinical quality of services and training and research, were the reasons the Trust saw this as the preferred option.

The potential change had significant implications, with impacts on the accessibility of services, economic and transport issues, and impacts on patients across multiple local authority areas. While based in Cambridgeshire, the Trust provided specialist cardiology and cardiac services across the Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and mid and north

Bedfordshire areas. It also provided specialist thoracic cancer care and surgery for people in the West Anglia Cancer Network, covering the above areas, plus parts of Hertfordshire and Essex, as well as some patients taken from outside these areas.

It was noted that the Council would be responding in two capacities:

- As a whole Council, taking into account infrastructure issues such as transport and access, housing and economic development, in addition to implications for patient care and outcomes (corporate response);
- Through a joint health scrutiny committee.

The corporate response had first been shaped by discussion at the Community Learning, Development & Adult Social Care Service Development Group (SDG), which had been open to all Members. That meeting had generally supported the move to the Addenbrooke's site, but had required the relevant SDGs to consider sustainability and infrastructure contexts. Following on from this, the report was expanded to incorporate wider issues as requested (as set out in Appendix 1 to the report to Cabinet) and was considered by the Environment, Waste and Business SDG in July, attended by representatives from Addenbrooke's and County Council planners with local Members also invited to speak or provide written representations. This SDG had also supported the move to Addenbrooke's.

At Cabinet, Councillor Mandy Smith the local member for Papworth and Swavesey spoke in favour of the redevelopment being undertaken on the existing Papworth site. Her reasons for requesting Cabinet support for this option included the following:

- If the redevelopment did not take place at Papworth, there would be job losses that would need to be addressed.
- The Papworth Hospital redevelopment proposal had the support of local people and would help raise the standards at the hospital.
- The dual carriageway improvements being undertaken to the A428 and the improvements to the A14 would make Papworth Hospital more accessible than Addenbrooke's for which there were concerns regarding parking and road congestion issues.
- Cystic fibrosis patients considered it their second home as a result of the individual attention received and due to the pleasant surroundings of the hospital location.

In answer to questions raised by Cabinet Members, Councillor Smith believed that if there were staff accommodation shortages at Papworth resulting from the expansion, this would be the subject of additional provision.

A Cabinet Member who supported the move to Addenbrooke's, highlighted that at present there were between 4 to 8 blue light ambulances a week from Papworth to Addenbrooke's, resulting in patients lives being put at risk. In addition, the move of the facility to a Cambridge Teaching Hospital would provide the benefits of an improved care package for patients as a result of the greater medical/clinical expertise available on site.

In answer to a question raised, it was noted that the Council had been given to understand that the core clinical staff would still be employed at Papworth Hospital if the facility was built at Addenbrooke's, and that those staff directly involved would be prepared to transfer across.

Following consideration of all views Cabinet was persuaded of the clinical benefits of the institute being located at Addenbrooke's. The report to Cabinet and oral responses provided by officers has given assurances regarding most of the concerns raised at earlier SDG meetings. However, as part of the suggested response, it was agreed that there was a need for environmental impact and social impact studies to be undertaken and a requirement for the proposed development to promote sustainability.

**It was resolved:**

- i) To note the contents of this report.
- ii) To agree to recommend to Council the content of the proposed corporate response from the Leader of the County Council to generally support the proposed move of Papworth Hospital to the Addenbrooke's site for a new cardio-thoracic hospital as detailed in Section 6 of the officers' report.

**54. ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES – THE FUTURE OF THE COUNCIL'S HERITAGE SERVICES – REFERENCE FROM ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

At its meeting on 13 July 2005, in the light of Kentwood Associates' Issues Report on the Council's 'Heritage' services, the Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee decided that it wished to contribute to the Council's thinking about the delivery and funding of these services. The consultants had reported the views of stakeholders about these matters, but it was felt that it would be useful to communicate directly and in more detail with partner organisations and the public organisations. To this end, a sub-group of the committee had been organised for 12 September to take evidence from representatives of ten key partner/stakeholder organisations.

The scrutiny committee comments on the key issues included:

The Council's Priorities

The committee considered the Heritage services to be important, customer-focused services which made a significant contribution to the well-being of Cambridgeshire's communities. It was felt that the budget history of the services, especially the cuts imposed for 2005/6 and 2006/7, indicated that they had been accorded a lower priority than they deserved in the allocation of the council's resources.

### Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)

The committee was convinced from evidence heard that forthcoming changes to the CPA culture bloc would in the medium term, put the County Council's "Excellent" status at risk.

### Comparisons with other Councils

The committee noted that the comparative information about the spending of councils on heritage services based on years prior to the 2005/6 and 2006/7 cuts showed that Cambridgeshire's ranking would be lower in each of the relevant tables under the current budget scenario.

### The loss of external income

The committee noted that external funding (excluding traded income) had increased the budget of the services by 35% and that staff reductions - which would reduce capacity to lever funds - would lead to a significant proportion being lost. It also seemed possible that traded income could be adversely affected by implementation of the planned cut in 2006/7

### The Gershon Efficiency Programme

The committee believed that the loss of external income to those services would be counterproductive to the Council's drive to improve its overall value for money and efficiency. They were concerned that the Council might be obliged to identify these losses within its calculations for the Gershon efficiency programme.

### Council budget procedures

The committee considered that a strategy should have been in place before budget decisions were made to ensure that the cuts could achieve acceptable outcomes for the Council.

### The council as employer

Comments were made that a lack of advance planning caused uncertainty for staff and was bound to affect morale. The commitment and dedication of Heritage Services staff was acknowledged.

Councillor Nichola Harrison the Chairman of the Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee was invited to speak on the proposals set out in the scrutiny committee's report. She stressed that the final report had all party support and had been unanimously approved by the scrutiny committee. It was hoped that the report would be a valuable constructive contribution to the debate and was evidence based following consideration of the evidence received from stakeholders. She stated that the committee would be glad to undertake further work if Cabinet considered this to be helpful.

Councillor Harrison orally reported that she had received two further representations from partners, firstly from the County Museums Partnership Executive (which Cabinet had also received) and secondly from the Huntingdonshire Historical Society expressing their belief in the importance of the Cromwell Museum and the Huntingdon Record Office.

The committee was unable to endorse the consultants view that unless the Council was prepared to invest more resources, that it would be better to abandon some services and concentrate resources into those that remained. She drew attention to a correction needed to paragraph 4.10 of the report which as currently written stated the service lost would almost inevitably be the Arts Service rather than museums, because of the great difficulty in withdrawing from the Cromwell museum in the short term. As an update to the paragraph she indicated that these comments applied equally to the museums service, as although the Cromwell Museum was not likely to be a target for the planned £100,000 budget cut in 2006/7, there was a further £85,000 in the museums budget, spent on projects and grants, which could be a target for this cut.

It was the scrutiny committee's view that the damage arising from the loss of the arts function would be so serious in terms of service to the County's communities, and so harmful to the reputation of the Council in its wider partnerships and other relationships, that they did not believe that this course of action was worthy of further consideration. Instead, they believed the Council needed to concentrate on finding ways to provide high quality and sustainable services across all four service areas.

The following recommendations were made to Cabinet:

#### Recommendation 1

- 1(a) The Council should devise a strategy which reassessed the priority given to the heritage services within the Council's corporate priorities, and which would create high quality and sustainable services across all four service areas. The strategy should deal with short term issues, but should also plan for the longer term enhancement of the services. No part of the planned 2006/7 budget cut of £100,000 should be implemented unless this could be done without prejudice to the strategy. Consideration should be given to how additional resources could be brought into the services. In preparing the strategy, the issues and pressures set out in 1(d) below should be taken into consideration.
- 1(b) Cabinet should identify interim funding to allow the post County Museums Officer to be filled as soon as possible within the current financial year. This funding might be found from an under-spend in staffing budgets within the Office of Environment and Community Services.
- 1(c) The County Museums Officer post should be re-instated into the Council's core budget in 2006/7.

1(d) The strategy should seek to resolve the following issues and pressures:

General

- maintaining and developing capacity to work with partners and to secure the maximum flow of external income of various kinds to both the council and its partners
- the need to reduce reliance on staff working beyond their contracts

Historical Resource and Cultural Centre

- the importance of meeting in full the true revenue implications of the HRCC project. Issues include providing appropriate leadership and project management for this flagship project; workload prior to the move; staffing levels to ensure quality customer service and management; and hours of operation.

Archaeology

- increasing workload due to development pressures
- new 21 day response limit for planning proposals consultations
- possible new requirements for the Historical Environmental Record
- the need to provide countryside archaeological advice beyond 2006

Arts

- developing with partners the important and developing role of the arts in the creation of vibrant, prosperous, healthy and inclusive communities
- the importance of embedding cultural identity and activity within the county's new and expanding communities
- ensuring that Cambridgeshire's communities benefit from the full range of available arts funding now coming through national and regional sources, especially to growth areas such as our own

Archives

- dealing with the backlog in listing records
- developing technological solutions to improve access to records
- the future relationship of the two county record offices

Museums

- the importance of the council's role in providing a strategic museums function
- exploration of possible future management options for the Cromwell museum

Recommendation 2

The Council should consider whether it might be obliged to set the loss of external income against the gains allocated to heritage services within the 2005 Gershon programme Annual Efficiency Statement.

A question was raised whether the scrutiny committee had considered any other innovative funding solutions to the problems faced by the heritage services, including working in partnership with other services. In response to the question Councillor Harrison indicated that it had not been possible to undertake a feasibility study as a result of time constraints. The scrutiny committee had sought to verify issues/concerns set out in the report with

outside partners. It was considered that the services were so under-resourced that they had no capacity to look for such solutions and would recommend a full feasibility study should be undertaken.

The Chairman indicated his personal disappointment with the report, emphasising that there was no decision to be made on the £100k cut, as this had already been agreed as part of the current year's budget and that what had been given, was more time to see if a more coherent way could be found to carry out the budget reductions required, in order to have the least impact on services.

In response to a question raised, clarification was given by Councillor Harrison that they were not suggesting that the Museums Service should be discontinued.

Other members highlighted the very challenging financial settlement that the County Council was anticipating and the difficulties likely to be faced to avoid capping penalties.

**It was resolved:**

That no decision should be taken at the current time on the individual recommendations brought forward by the scrutiny committee, as the current scrutiny report and all the subsequent views expressed and presented to the meeting would be included in a further report to be brought back to cabinet as part of the Medium Term Corporate Priorities process.

## **55. HERITAGE SERVICES REVIEW – FINAL REPORT**

This report set out the details of the consultants Strategy Review report on the four Heritage Services – Archaeology, Archives, Arts, Museums carried out with the aim of enabling Members and officers to formulate a new policy, management and operational framework. This would be used as the basis for specifying the delivery of an agreed scope and level of service consistent with the future financial resources available for the group of services. External consultants had been used to ensure that the analysis of the services' present position and the options for change took full account of innovation, best practice, national policy and local priorities for service delivery and for funding. There had been extensive consultation with partners and interest groups across all four service areas.

Given the potential impact on the four services, a range of options had been identified. The report also set out the consideration that had been given by the Community Learning and Development & Adult Social Care Service Development Group (SDG), by the scrutiny committee (as already reported) and by the Cambridgeshire Museum Advisory Partnership Executive meeting who met on 22nd September and whose response had been e-mailed to Cabinet Members the day before Cabinet, with copies being available at the Cabinet meeting.

It was acknowledged that the ability to draw down future funding would need further consideration, as would other implications including maintaining the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) rating and whether the County Council would be better to concentrate on providing funding for fewer services.

Councillor Bates, as a concerned local member, had requested to speak on this report. His view was that it was essential that a research/archives function remained in Huntingdon and drew attention to the paragraph on page 27 of the report indicating that there was strong support for maintaining the Huntingdon Record Office. He also believed that there would still be a need for a dedicated Huntingdonshire archivist.

In respect of the Cromwell Museum, he made the point that the museum received not only national, but international interest, and therefore welcomed the suggestions made for a curator's post. He believed that the post required to be properly funded and managed and should remain on its present site due to the strong links with the local archives office. A suggested way forward would be to investigate creating some form of museum trust to help co-ordinate all possible funding sources and to safeguard the museum's future.

A Cabinet member highlighted the enormous unpaid contribution made by local people to archive activities which could be lost if local facilities were no longer available.

The report was welcomed with the Cabinet agreeing to the officers' suggested approach that the various deliberations should feed into the Medium Term Service Priorities (MTCP) process, with a substantive report on the appropriate Cabinet agenda alongside other MTCP reports.

**It was resolved to:**

- i) Note the findings in the Heritage Services Review: Final Report.
- ii) As already agreed, to only note at the current time the views put forward by the ECS Scrutiny Committee, the local Member for Hemingford and Fenstanton and the comments received from the Cambridgeshire Museums Advisory Partnership Executive, as decisions on all the recommendations would only be taken after consideration of a further report to Cabinet.

**56. HUNTINGDONSHIRE PARKING POLICIES**

Following the decision of the Area Joint Committee to support new proposed parking policies for Huntingdonshire, the County Council, having responsibility for off-street parking Huntingdonshire was being asked through Cabinet to approve the parking policies as detailed in the officers' report.



One of the local members for Huntingdon, Councillor Sir Peter Brown had provided comments for Cabinet's consideration and these were orally reported. He believed that the new arrangements were broadly right and whilst there had been a jump in prices for some people, it had to be seen in the context that the charges had been raised from a very low base to begin with when compared to other parts of the County. To illustrate this one Cabinet member commented that one of the price rises involved an increase from 25p to 30p, which in any terms, was still very much a bargain price.

**It was resolved:**

To approve the parking policies detailed in Appendix A of the officers' report.

**57. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT (LLA) FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

Cabinet received a report on the progress made on the development of Cambridgeshire's Local Area Agreement highlighting the main opportunities and challenges identified so far.

The initial draft vision document outlined the priority areas identified in the five Community Strategies and had been considered by Cabinet Members in early August, followed by wider consultation with external partners. The latter consultation had ended on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September, and Council policy officers were currently working on the analysis of comments received. The initial LAA framework was to be agreed with partner organisations and submitted to the Government Office for the East of England by October 14. It was orally reported that if agreed, a date of 7<sup>th</sup> October had been provisionally set for the meeting.

The report set out the opportunities that had been identified and the challenges still to be addressed. Comments were made that it was hoped that the sign off would not be as drawn out as previous experiences with the LPSA. There was a need to ensure that the principles agreed complemented existing partnership arrangements and did not undermine outcomes agreed with Local Strategic Partnerships.

In answer to a question raised, it was confirmed that the risk management implications would take into account the potential risks on agreed targets arising from the Government's budget capping on some district councils and the budget overspends incurred by the Primary Care Trusts.

**It was resolved:**

- i) To note the progress made to date on the development of Cambridgeshire's Local Area Agreement.

- ii) To note the opportunities and challenges presented by the Local Area Agreement and the potential benefits linked of linking LAA work to possible activities in the local area around the Olympic and Paralympic games.
- iii) To agree that a high level partnership meeting or event should take place in early October to agree the submission to Go-East.
- iv) That there should be a re-examination/review in due course of the whole range of partnership working in the light of the LAA in order to ensure all partnerships were still appropriate and were providing value for money.

## **58. CAMBRIDGESHIRE COMMUNITY NETWORK (CCN) BUSINESS CASE**

Cambridgeshire Community Network (CCN) was created in 1999-2000 in order to amalgamate various funding streams (National Grid for Learning (NGFL), People's Network, Corporate Network) into a single, efficient, modern network to meet future capacity. As the old network was becoming obsolete and as there was no refresh funding available, additional money had been sought from Government in the form of Private Finance Initiative Credits (PFI) Credits.

It was noted that the original business case had assumed that the overall DIT revenue budget (corporate cash limit) would remain constant and that £1.6m from that source would contribute to CCN. However, reductions in the corporate cash limit in the last three years had meant that it was no longer possible to finance the service at existing levels without eliminating essential functions. The original corporate network budget was around £1.1m. The basis on which Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) originally granted the PFI Credits was that, although the grant was for the CCN contract, which ended in 2012, the County Council continued to receive credits for many years beyond that date currently amounting to about £1.2m p.a.

It was noted that ODPM had offered to change the basis of the grant payment so that the County Council would receive all of the grant within the 8 full years of the contract, but this would have resulted in less income over the long term. The proposal was therefore to leave the PFI Grant arrangement, but pull forward the post-2012 grant using prudential borrowing. This would ensure that CCN received all of the funding due to it within its lifetime, and would help to deal with the pressures outlined in the officers' report.

### **It was resolved:**

- i) To agree the overall approach to the CCN Business Case and to approve the new cash flow management arrangements for the project requiring prudential borrowing against other planned capital items.

- ii) To note that the business and financial benefits of the CNN project will continue to be managed against the original business case, and
- i) To note that capital funding priority will need to be given to those capital items that the prudential borrowing will be set against.

## **59. LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE FORMULA GRANT CONSULTATION**

Cabinet noted that the Government had launched the Formula Grant Review Consultation, which comprised 39 questions detailing the options for formula change, and which could be introduced from the 2006/07 Local Government Finance settlement. The deadline for responses had been set at 10<sup>th</sup> October. The consultation was set in the context of the significant changes to local government funding including:

- Dedicated Schools Grant
- Three-year Settlements
- Council Tax Revaluation
- Lyons Review of Local Government Finance

The range of changes proposed in the consultation varied from minor technical adjustments to the current formulae to complete change of the grant distribution mechanism. Many of the options would result in Cambridgeshire losing grant, however the exemplifications provided showed the impact of individual changes only on 2005-06 settlement (or each change on the residual FSS after the transfer of Schools funding) and there was no information, nor was it possible to infer accurately, the compound effect of a number of changes.

In some cases a number of options have been proposed for each change, the worse case scenario of the most disadvantageous option being selected for each possible option could have the result of loss of grant of £10m (11 % of non-DSG grant for 2005-06), in effect negating the gains received through the removal of the ceiling in the 2005-06 settlement.

The appendix to the officer report included a summary of key information with the proposed responses. As well as answering the specific questions posed by the consultation, the submission would include a general response to the key finance issues relating to Cambridgeshire. This response would highlight the importance of recognising and funding the cost of growth.

### **It was resolved:**

To agree the Council's Response as set out in the appendix to the officers' report with the addition of text to indicate:

- i) That the County Council were concerned that it should not be penalised for spending above Formula Spending Share (FSS) for schools, as under the new financial system, schools funding was moved into the Dedicated Schools

Grant. There was concern that currently the Government had not indicated how they would finance the significant additional funding to schools, which if achieved by top slicing overall Council grant allocations, could have significant financial pressure of up to £2m for the County Council.

- ii) That the response should make quite clear that needs allocation should be based on forecasts of population and not on outdated census information, which penalised regions with growing populations.
- iii) That the budget consultation exercise should emphasise the vast differences between local authority inflation costs and those of the Retail Price Index.

#### **60. INCORPORATION OF GREATER CAMBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP (GCP) AS A LIMITED COMPANY**

The report to Cabinet set out the advantages and risk associated with the Greater Cambridge Partnership becoming a limited company.

One of the main drivers for the proposal was that with an increasing budget and developing programme management role, GCP members required to have greater personal protection against any liabilities that the GCP might incur. Also, as an independent accountable body, funding streams could be secured in advance and commercial contracts entered into to secure revenue funding to help cover operating costs.

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

Approve the creation of the Greater Cambridge Partnership as a company limited by guarantee and that the County Council becomes an initial founder member of the company.

#### **61. SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT – THE LOCATION AND DESIGN OF MAJOR WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES**

The County Council was required to prepare a Minerals and Waste Development Framework to guide future minerals and waste development in Cambridgeshire. One of the documents to be produced was a Supplementary Planning Document on the Location and Design of Major Waste management Facilities to address the new waste recovery and recycling facilities that would be required.

Cabinet received a covering report setting out the main points set out in the proposed document for which approval to go out to public consultation was now being sought. A full copy of the document was made available separately to Cabinet members and copies were also made available for the public at the meeting.

The purpose of the Supplementary Planning Document was to set out a series of development principles based on recognised good planning and design practice intending to:

- encourage a more co-operative approach by all those involved in the design and development of major waste management facilities;
- provide a Good Practice benchmark to guide development and designs and to speed the evaluation and approval of proposals; and
- achieve the highest standards of design, in relation to integration, layout, access, materials and the environment.

It was noted that the document had been fully supported at the Environment Waste and Business SDG and that their comments, as set out in the Cabinet report, were being taken into account when revising the final document before publication.

In answer to questions raised, it was confirmed that the document did not deal with landfill sites. In terms of hazardous waste it was reported that the technologies for recycling the majority of hazardous waste (asbestos and contaminated soils) was not yet available. Concerns were expressed about the current lack of hazardous waste facilities in the country as a whole.

**It was resolved:**

To approve the Draft SPD for public consultation, and to delegate authority to the portfolio holder for Environment and Community Services, in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive of Environment and Community Services to approve any amendments required after completion of the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal.

**62. DRAFT CONSULTATION RESPONSE ON NORTHSTOWE PLANNING APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED TO SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Following the receipt of planning applications for the development of Northstowe, South Cambridgeshire District Council had undertaken a consultation exercise on the application with a closing date of 17<sup>th</sup> October. The County Council had been invited to make a submission.

Cabinet were therefore asked to consider key issues arising from South Cambridgeshire District Council's consultation on the Northstowe planning applications and to agree the suggested response as set out in the appendix to the officers' report.

Councillor Johnstone stressed the need to ensure all relevant local members were invited to the appropriate SDG to provide input. She made the following comments orally:

**Page 1 Access**

The new dual carriageway should link to the bypass, as this would reduce the need for additional junctions.

**Page 4 Access - Catchment area of secondary schools**

It was essential that a secondary school should be in place from the very start of the development. Another member made the point that while being sympathetic to this proposal, it would need to be affordable and sustainable and as there were short-term revenue implications, it would be important to ensure that Section 106 monies were prioritised for education at an early stage.

That to meet the Government's requirements for parental choice in placing children in schools, the catchment area should not be limited to only serving Northstowe, but should be open to children of parents living in Longstanton.

**Post 16 Education provision**

This required to be provided, but should compliment and not compete with facilities provided at Long Road, Cambridge Reading College, Hills Road.

**Pre-School Education requirements**

This required to be provided in appropriate places, given the new Government initiatives.

**Page 5 Phasing of Northstowe**

Opposed to any suggestion that the town centre should not be built right at the start of the development.

**Page 6 Size of Large Food Store**

Opposed to any store being erected which would have over 50% of the available retail space and highlighted the good lessons learnt from market towns as opposed to failures in other areas in providing other essential community services, such as post offices, due to unfair competition from a large, single supermarket.

Another member requested that the response on page 9 on Library and Lifelong Learning Issues required considerable strengthening in terms of the new town providing the unique opportunity to establish a cultural centre that could be a major academic/cultural centre for the whole of the Cambridgeshire region.

In discussion the point was emphasised that it was important that large communities were served by facilities such as post offices and banks and that they should be appropriately prioritised. In addition, the Government needed to recognise that if they required substantial housing to be built, they needed to ensure appropriate levels of funding was made available to support the necessary infrastructure requirements.

**It was resolved:**

- i) To endorse the proposed consultation response to the

Northstowe Planning Application set out in the appendix to the officers' report, also taking into account the additional points raised by Cabinet members.

- ii) To delegate to the Lead Member for 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, taking into account as appropriate the comments made by Cabinet members.

### **63. COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT – DIRECTION OF TRAVEL**

Cabinet received a report providing details of the Audit Commission's revised framework for Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) for the period 2005 to 2008. The assessment would form part of the Audit Commission's categorisation reporting for single tier and county councils, taking place in December.

It was noted that evidence gathering, analysis and interviews would be undertaken between 1 September and mid November 2005 to collate evidence about improvement from relevant sources. The Council had been asked to submit a six page self assessment to help inform the judgement to be made by the Audit Commission which should provide evidence of:

- The local context being used to direct priorities and improvements;
- priority services and wider outcomes improving, staying the same and deteriorating;
- the robustness of improvement planning and the extent of improvements being delivered as planned.

As the self assessment was required to be submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> September, the draft was to be considered by the CPA Member Working Group. The Audit Commission's judgement on direction of travel was to be further informed by an on-site inspection lasting two or three days, which was likely to take place in Mid October.

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

To agree to delegate the responsibility for the approval of the Direction of Travel Assessment to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the cross-party CPA Member Working Group, to enable the Council to meet the deadline set by the Audit Commission.

### **64. IMPROVING FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT (IFM)**

Cabinet received a report providing information on the successful completion of, and lessons learned from, the Improving Financial Management (IFM) Programme, as part of the formal closure of the IFM Programme, with the recommendation that it should now be handed over into business as usual.

A Member drew attention to paragraph 6.3 of the officers' report referring to e-Business system data quality issues that had been identified, stating that some had been resolved, while others were still being actively managed. It was considered appropriate that Cabinet members should be provided with an update progress list in relation to all of data quality issues identified.

**It was resolved:**

- i) To note the progress made in the achievement of the original objectives of the IFM programme.
- ii) To approve the arrangements for the closure of the IFM programme and hand-over into business as usual, noting the on-going role of Finance and Performance in reviewing financial management.
- iii) That SMT/Cabinet be provided with a list of the data quality issues resolved/still to be resolved in respect of the e Business system.

**65. UPDATE ON PEGRAM REVIEW ACTION PLAN**

As a result of late swings in the Social Services Departments financial position at year-end in both 2001/02 and 2002/03 Cabinet in July 2003 had asked Councillor Pegram to undertake a financial review of Social Service's Budgetary control procedures. The resulting report made 17 recommendations for improvement.

It was reported that 3 of the recommendations had been addressed through the IFM project (Improving Financial Management) with the remainder dealt with through a Social Services Action Plan.

Cabinet noted that the actions taken had reduced the risk of inaccurate budgetary reporting and had lead to improved financial capacity and competency. The experience gained and benefits arising out of implementing the Social Services Action Plan would now be taken forward through a continuous improvement approach to ensure their reinforcement on an on-going basis.

While the actions taken had reduced the risks of inaccurate budgetary reporting and also improved general financial capacity and competency, it was highlighted that Social Care budgets for both adults and children's services were still volatile and under significant pressures. It would be a continued priority to monitor and manage the risks associated with these and retain a focus on tight financial management across the new reshaped organisation.

**It was resolved:**

- i) To note the achievement of the Social Services Action Plan arising out of Councillor Pegram's Review and alongside the IFM Project, the hand-over into business as usual.



- ii) That no further reports were required in relation to the Action Plan.

## **66. ANNUAL ADOPTION AND PERMANENCE REPORT 2004/05**

As a result of legislative requirements, the Council was required to produce an annual Adoption and Permanence report. This report to Cabinet fulfilled this requirement.

Cabinet received a covering report summarising the main points in the Annual Adoption and Permanence Report for 2004/5, providing an overview of the performance work of the Council in its function as an adoption agency and looking forward to the activities to be undertaken over the next 12 months. The full report had been circulated separately to Cabinet members with copies available for the public at the meeting.

Attention was drawn by a Member to paragraph 3.1 of the report stating that there had been a drop in the number of families approved for adoption (to 12), due to a shortage of personnel in the Permanence team, which had been operating at under 70% capacity for most of the year as a result of long term absences. If this continued, this would be a concern that would need to be reported to Cabinet members in a separate forum. The officer present was able to update the meeting with the encouraging news that during the first six months of the current year, 9 new families had been approved for adoption.

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

Approve the Adoption and Permanence report and note the service issues and objectives for 2005/6.

## **67. CABINET AGENDA PLAN - 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER**

It was reported that the following reports had been added since publication of the agenda:

Under references from scrutiny committees - CYPS Scrutiny –  
Recommendations regarding Youth Service Funding

Additions under “other reports”:

Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework - Statement of Community Involvement

Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme Operation

### **It was resolved**

To note the Cabinet Draft Agenda Plan for 31<sup>st</sup> October 2005.

**[PART 2 EXEMPT REPORTS]**

**68. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**It was resolved:**

To exclude the press and public from the meeting under Section 100 (A) 4 Of The Local Government Act 1972 during the consideration of the following reports on the grounds that it was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information under paragraph 7 of schedule 12a of the Local Government act 1972 by virtue of the report referring to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.

**69. SELECT TENDER LIST – HIGHWAY SERVICES CONTRACT (HSC)**

Cabinet received a report updating them on the development of the new Highway Services Contract (HSC) and to request approval of the proposed select tender list. The confidential report set out the results evaluation of the responses to the pre-qualification questionnaire sent to 9 organisations expressing an interest in bidding for the Single Combined Contract for up to £500,000.

In accordance with standing orders, the top four ranking companies were to be invited to the Invitation to Tender Stage of the Highways Services Contract.

**It was resolved:**

To approve the following 4 companies to be invited to proceed to the invitation to tender stage of the Highways Services Contract:

Atkins  
Accord  
Ringway/Babtie  
MacAlpine/Scott Wilson

Chairman  
31<sup>st</sup> October 2005