

## **CABINET: MINUTES**

**Date:** 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012

**Time:** 10.00 a.m. – 12.47 p.m.

**Present:** Chairman: Councillor N Clarke

Councillors I Bates, D Brown, S Count, S Criswell, M Curtis, D Harty,  
L W McGuire, T Orgee and M Shuter

**Apologies:** None

**Present by invitation:** Councillors J Batchelor, K Bourke, B Brooks-Gordon, R Butcher, P Downes, V Lucas, L Nethsingha, T Sadiq, C Shepherd, T Stone, S van de Ven and S Tierney

### **518. MINUTES: 17<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2012**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2012 were approved as a correct record.

### **519. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Councillors David Brown declared a personal interest under paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct in item 8 “Draft Consultation Response to East Cambridgeshire District Council’s Proposed Approach to Seeking Developer Contributions” as a member of East Cambridgeshire District Council

### **520. PETITIONS – NONE**

### **521. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

Scrutiny matters were dealt with as part of the consideration of the reports on the Subsidised Bus Service Changes: Consultation Results.

### **522. INTEGRATED RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR PERIOD ENDING 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2011**

Cabinet received the Integrated Resources and Performance Report for the period ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011. It was noted that:

- The forecast year-end underspend was £1.5 million, a decrease of £1.2m from the previous month, due to the increased pressures within Adult Social Care. The overall forecast position included the impact of firm and agreed action plans to address overspends.

- Of the 13 performance indicators 11 had available targets and of these six were on target with the detail and the actions being taken as set out in section 4 of the report.
- In respect of the Capital programme 123 out of the 170 projects were forecast to be on time and budget with those which were not, mainly as a result of slippage and schemes progressing quicker than anticipated with the detail and suggested actions as set out in section 5.2 of the report.
- In early January 2012 the Department of Health had announced a one off contribution to Social Care for winter pressures in the current financial year with an expected allocation to Cambridgeshire of £1.5m. As a result Cabinet was asked to approve the allocation of the funding in full to Community and Adults Services upon its receipt.

**It was resolved:**

- a) To note the resources and performance information and the remedial action currently being taken.
- b) To approve the additional allocation in full of £1.5m Social Care Funding for Winter Support to Community and Adult Services.

**LATE REPORTS**

The chairman agreed to take the following three reports under the discretion given to him under Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972:

**Integrated Plan 2012-13**

Reason for lateness: due to technical issues requiring to be finalised.

Reason for urgency: in order for decisions to take place at the Cabinet meeting and to be able to agree the recommendations going forward to the Full Council meeting in February.

Report from the Enterprise, Growth and Community Infrastructure Overview And Scrutiny Committee Regarding Subsidised Bus Service Changes: Consultation Results and the Cabinet response

Reason for lateness: The meeting of the overview and scrutiny committee only took place on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2012 and the report was only finalised after the original Cabinet despatch

Reason for urgency: in order for a discussion on the committee's views to be represented and discussed before consideration of the report "Review of Bus Subsidies"" at item 6c) included on the original agenda dispatch.

**523. REPORT FROM THE ENTERPRISE, GROWTH AND COMMUNITY  
INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - SUBSIDISED  
BUS SERVICE CHANGES : CONSULTATION RESULTS AND CABINET  
RESPONSE**

Councillor Butcher the chairman of the scrutiny committee introduced the committee report which set out the comments and recommendations resulting from the Committee's analysis of the results of the Bus Service consultation and future policy options.

He highlighted concerns regarding the lateness at being provided with the report which was only received by scrutiny members the day before their meeting. He however thanked the Cabinet portfolio holder Councillor Criswell and the officers who had attended to answer questions.

The comments from scrutiny were divided into three sections and Councillor Butcher highlighted key points brought out as follows (with more detailed points as set out in the written report provided as part of the Cabinet fourth despatch).

Consultation Process

The chairman of overview and scrutiny indicated that some Members of the committee had criticised the length and detail of the consultation, suggesting it was unfriendly and inaccessible. Members also felt that as the consultation results provided county-wide information, further consultation work and consideration would need to take place when making decisions about specific bus routes.

Service Change Implications

It was highlighted that:

- Over 80% of respondents did not support the Council's proposals to withdraw funding for subsidised bus services. The consultation had been conducted as part of the Equality Impact Assessment with the results demonstrating that the withdrawal of funding for subsidised bus services would have a disproportionate effect on the disabled, young people and the elderly, amongst others.
- 37% of respondents using subsidised bus services at the time of the consultation, stated that there were no other suitable alternatives in place.
- Some Members expressed concern about the impact of the changes in rural areas, particularly for those travelling to work without access to a car.

Alternative Service Provision

- The Committee discussed the potential of alternative methods of transport provision to mitigate the proposed withdrawal of bus subsidies with some Members hopeful that some withdrawn bus routes could be reintroduced by commercial operators. The chairman highlighted that in some areas alternative provision had already resulted in an improved service.

- Some Members noted that the Council had originally agreed that bus subsidies would be withdrawn over a four year period, and that the first year of this policy had already resulted in several route closures. They were concerned that the changes had been introduced without an alternative or replacement arrangement in place.
- It was agreed that there was considerable uncertainty and a lack of awareness amongst the public about which bus services were under threat of no longer being funded and that Cabinet should ensure that the changes were appropriately advertised to the public.
- It was further agreed that the Cabinet should be recommended to ensure that subsidies to bus services should not be withdrawn without mitigation measures being put in place.

In response Councillor Criswell thanked the overview and scrutiny committee for inviting him to attend their meeting as the full discussion had been very helpful.

It was agreed to consider the recommendations and response to the overview and scrutiny report at the same time as considering the main report on Bus Subsidies. As a result the final revised recommendations recorded below were only agreed following the full discussion and careful consideration of the report (at minute 524 below) and the consultation received as published and from the oral submissions heard at the meeting.

**It was resolved:**

- a) To thank Overview and Scrutiny for producing a valuable report.
- b) To approve the response to the recommendations from the Enterprise, Growth and Community Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in section 2 of the report as amended at the meeting so that they read:

**Original Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation 1:** Consider the Committee's comments when determining their policy response to the public consultation

**Agreed Response** Cabinet agrees with this recommendation and believes that the proposed policy response reflects the Committee's comments.

**Original Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation 2:** Ensure that changes to subsidised bus services are appropriately advertised to the public.

**Agreed Response** Cabinet agrees with this recommendation and agrees that any changes to subsidised bus services will be appropriately advertised to the public before they take place. We will review the current methods of distribution and list of recipients to ensure that the public are informed of any changes in provision.

The point was made in deleting the word “fully” before the word informed above from the original proposed response that there could never be a guarantee that all the public were fully informed as someone would always say they were unaware of the consultation however thorough it was.

**Original Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation 3:** Not withdraw subsidies to bus services without mitigation measures being put in place.

**Agreed Response** - Cabinet disagrees with this recommendation (as there was a need to clarify what was meant by mitigation and in which circumstances was it appropriate). Following an analysis of the survey results from the bus subsidy consultation, members of the Cabinet were being asked to consider phasing reductions in bus subsidies over the next three years. It was therefore agreed that before subsidy withdrawals were made, a thorough assessment of local needs would be made, working with local communities, and alternative local transport measures implemented wherever possible and appropriate.

## **524. REVIEW OF BUS SUBSIDIES**

In introducing the report the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure explained the context of why the Council had, had to review the existing policy, reminding Members of the Cabinet of the need for the County Council to make total savings of £540m over the current and next four years, which included £50m in the current year and an additional £35m in the forthcoming financial year. It was against this backdrop, that the decision was made as part of the last Integrated Plan to phase out the £2.7m spent on bus subsidies over 4 years. He indicated that the decision had not been taken lightly, but due to the enormity of the savings required, was perhaps in retrospect taken in haste.

He explained that following an application for Judicial Review, Cabinet decided to pause and review the decision and gave the opportunity to undertake a strategic single countywide Community Impact Assessment, rather than by annual increments, as originally intended. A widespread 12 week consultation process had been conducted, the extent of which was as outlined in paragraph 2.1 of the report. The survey questionnaire and responses details were set out in appendix one to the report.

The Cabinet Member explained that he had received considerable comment on the survey form with some saying it was far too long and complex, while others that it was too short and did not give any detail of replacement services. He clarified that the purpose of the survey was to inform a Community Impact Assessment in order to ensure the County Council fulfilled its duties in relation to the Equality Act. He explained that it was a legal requirement that this should be its primary function and therefore consultations on alternatives would have to be at a later stage. However, this should not detract from understanding the potential impact to residents, particularly in rural communities. He also highlighted that Overview and Scrutiny members had been involved in the formation of the questionnaire.

Turning to the detail in the responses, which were considered highly valuable, he highlighted the following 2 points that he considered to be of most importance:

- That while 82% of respondents did not support the withdrawal of bus subsidies, further analysis of the comments from those who had responded (provided as a separate electronic document due to its size, but with Cabinet Members additionally having received and read hard copies of the document in advance of the meeting) made it clear that it was not the actual subsidy that was supported, but the means by which people could travel. Many had passed comment on buses running empty, not going where they were needed, and many were keen to receive details of alternatives.
- That it was very evident from the Assessment document at Appendix 2 that those most affected would be the old, the young, women, the disabled and for some, it could have a negative impact on family life. This would be particularly felt in areas of deprivation and where there was risk of rural isolation.

Of the subsidies removed in April 2011 although they had led to a reduction in services, they had been specifically chosen as those that would inconvenience the least number of passengers. Consultation responses for the routes were summarised in section 3 and showed that some negative impact had resulted, particularly to shopping trips, but the bulk of the services were at evenings or weekends and were not well used or had alternatives.

Also highlighted was the importance of effective passenger transport links to the administration's 3 key priorities namely;

- To develop the economy for the benefit of all.
- To help people live independent and healthy lives.
- To support and protect vulnerable people.

Cabinet in its considerations did not intend to leave whole communities isolated and The Cabinet Member for community Infrastructure emphasised that this had never been Cabinet's intention, highlighting, his predecessor, Cllr McGuire's work with partners to develop the initiative "Cambridgeshire Future Transport" which had the aim of planning how the £30m of public money currently spent on various forms of passenger transport by the Council and its partners could be more effectively used, and how different delivery models could provide community transport. The project was now being taken forward by Councillor Bates, the Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning.

Members attention was drawn to the recommendations to the report which asked Cabinet to consider the way it wished to proceed and in terms of funding proposals for the Integrated Plan 2012/13. Two options were available:

- To continue subsidising services as was the current case. This would mean no improvement to services and Commercial operators being paid to drive large buses round rural Cambridgeshire, often with few passengers on board, giving poor value for the taxpayer. Routes were currently based on convenience for the operator, not the passenger. This approach would result in no savings being made and as a direct result requiring additional budget reductions needing to be made in other services.

- Or the County Council continued developing the Cambridgeshire Future Transport (CfT) initiative with a rolling programme of consultation and service design ahead of subsidy withdrawal over the next 3 years. This would aim to mitigate many of the negative impacts of subsidy withdrawal and introduce a more flexible, demand-led service. Now that the Community Impact Assessment (CIA) was complete, subject to the decision being taken, it was appropriate to identify resources for the CfT initiative and subject to agreement, a budget of £650K had been earmarked for the forthcoming year in the Integrated Plan (IP), rising to £1.5m over 3 years which still represented a saving of £1m.

It was highlighted that current negotiations with bus operators had confirmed that some subsidised services were relatively well used and it was considered that with adjustments to frequency and routing, these could become commercially viable. It was noted that a proposed report to Cabinet in March would allow changes and savings to be made from May and allow Cabinet to consider a phased programme for local consultation, new transport opportunities and subsidy withdrawal from September of the current year. Also and where possible, new initiatives would seek to assist residents affected by the reductions made in April 2011.

In summing up the Cabinet Member stressed that CfT would seek to mitigate the negative impact of withdrawing subsidies and provide alternatives where appropriate but would not seek to replicate existing, poorly used services.

Six non-Cabinet members spoke on this item with a summary of some of their views as follows:

- Councillor van de Ven, the Liberal Democrat Transport Spokesman, suggested that it was the application for judicial review that was the reason that Cabinet had paused and why it was being discussed again in the current year. She also highlighted that as a result of how the consultation data had been collected using existing subsidised routes and as a result many people in the County had been missed out from the consultation. She also suggested that health providers had not been involved in the consultations and asking why the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) was not referenced in the exercise in relation to accessing transport to key areas. She felt that 37% not having access to alternative transport was a telling figure. She also referenced the current Duxford pilot which had poor engagement as people were concerned regarding losing their current route should the pilot be a success.
- The local member for Duxford also considered there to be discrepancies in relation to the facts being presented in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.4 and 1.5 of the report and the role of the judicial review in the further consultation undertaken. He highlighted discrepancies in relation to the consultation undertaken and the need as pointed out in the scrutiny report for proper consultations with bus service users for which currently he had seen no evidence of this taking place. He also made reference to the Duxford - Whittlesford pilot which he considered to have been a disaster and agreed that Cabinet needed to give a clear signal of where bus subsidy reductions would be made to allow focussed community engagement and the development of viable alternatives. He also highlighted that where a proper survey of users was carried out (reference was made to the 101 bus) this could have positive results, citing that two thirds of users who had responded this

showed an example of effective engagement, but that this would take time and should not be rushed.

- The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group made reference to a letter he had received from a 92 year old nun lobbying for retaining bus services 33 and 46 highlighting the effects withdrawal of the services would have on the elderly and disadvantaged. He believed the previous decision and present proposals to cut bus subsidies ignored the County Council's own consultation results and that while there was an accepted need for social bus provision, the administration still intended to undertake a 100% cut to subsidies services without seeking out transport users needs. He called for a root and branch review of all services before agreeing to any further reductions. In response the Leader wished to place on record the fact that the County Council did not run or withdraw bus services or routes, but was making decisions on the future provision of bus subsidies which was included as part of the 2012-13 Integrated Plan . The final decision on withdrawing routes was for the operator.
- The Leader of the Labour Group highlighted that the clear signal from the consultation exercise was that people wished to keep bus subsidies (82%) He made reference to the case of elderly people having to give up jobs as a direct impact of routes such as the 31 ceasing and the fact that young teenagers relied on buses as they could not afford their own transport. He proposed that the whole policy of withdrawing subsidies should be torn up as the pilots could not be relied on where it was a case that people were not engaging, due to the fear of losing an existing route and that the Cambridgeshire Future Transport concept was currently unclear and unproven. He believed that all routes where there was threat of the subsidy being removed should be looked at on an individual basis rather than making decisions in response to an arbitrary target for cuts which suggested the Council cared more about saving 0.3 % of its budget then for the people of the County. His view was that the savings did not justify the cuts to services.
- The local Member for Castle making reference to the number 199 bus service made the point that losing the service would mean that some people would have to walk a quarter of a mile to access an alternative service, which was a long way and was often not possible for many elderly people or those with disabilities, as for them the service was a lifeline. She also made reference to the loss of the City Centre shuttle and that the Council had refused to change its decision, even after an interested investor had been identified. She called for the Council to undertake a strategic review and cease the cuts to subsidies at the present time.
- The local member for Linton highlighted the negative effects of withdrawing bus service (including the number 19) in relation to villages on both sides of the A1307 in his electoral division including Linton, West Wickham, Castle and Shudy Camps. While there were not large numbers of users on some routes, he highlighted that Cabinet had to give weight to social value and ensuring that rural communities were not isolated. He also made reference to the chart on page 23 of the report which showed consultation results clearly stating that the service area with the largest response regarding where savings should be made was in growth and infrastructure, rather than highways and road maintenance and adult social services.



Cabinet also received comments in advance of the meeting from Councillor Jenkins one of the local members for Cottenham, Histon and Impington in relation to the 110 Freedom bus and the 106 bus. He indicated he looked forward to working with the Cabinet Member to find constructive options for both services going forward.

In discussing the report Cabinet members made the following points:

- They recognised that it was a complex area but that due to the level of cuts being imposed by the coalition central government, the County Council could not carry on using public money paid to subsidise private operators to drive buses around the county, often with few passengers.
- Lessons would be learnt from the current pilots being carried out on what worked and what did not work, which was their purpose.
- Reference was made to the fact that some routes had a subsidy cost equivalent to as much as £12 per passenger at the high level end and the County Council had to consider whether this was value for money at a time of scarce and continually decreasing public resources, when in some cases, buses were being run with as few as two passengers on them.
- Bus subsidies was seen as a blunt instrument and there was a need to make better use of public money and which it was accepted would take time.
- Removal of bus subsidies was fourth on the list of people's cuts priorities during the revenue budget consultation exercise.
- One member made reference to the consultation comments paper and quoted from people who were fed up seeing empty buses giving off toxic fumes where the only person on board was the bus driver.
- There was the opportunity for some services which only carried a small subsidy to be tweaked to make them commercially viable, through means such as reducing their frequency of provision during the day or in the evening.
- Having empty buses travelling around the county was a luxury that could no longer be afforded.
- There was confusion with many people regarding the difference between who was responsible for running a bus service, who provided a bus subsidy and issues around concessionary fares, the latter of which was a completely separate issue.
- While the County Council had a desire to look after its residents, it was clear that bus operators were not always using bus subsidies provided in the best way. Reference was made to one route costing a £275k a year - 5k a week, for which Cabinet members agreed that there needed to be a better way going forward.
- Attention was also drawn to paragraph 3.3 of the report highlighting the impact on people who had used the withdrawn services showing that a high percentage said the change had no, or very little impact for visiting community centres, studying or

for work purposes, with larger impacts being recorded for visiting friends, relatives and for shopping and health visits.

- Attention was drawn to paragraph 5.3 of the report that indicated that while there were strong concerns about the impact of any withdrawal of a service to them, more respondents felt that they were likely or quite likely to use alternative transport links if they were available in their local area.
- In response to the concerns identified in both the consultation and the CIA a more flexible approach to the provision of public transport services was being proposed where future provision could be provided through franchises, community transport providers.
- Some opposition members comments missed the point in relation to bus subsidy reductions automatically leading to the loss of transport as part of their consultation to be undertaken would involve consulting on what might be available as an alternative citing successful dial a ride and Fenland Association of Community Transport (FACT) schemes operating in Fenland. Some solutions would be small scale as there was no one size fits all solution.
- The point was made in response to one comment from an opposition member that the health authorities were engaged and aware of the proposals and would go forward as partners with seeking solutions once a decision was made.

The Leader in summing up the debate countered any suggestion that the Council was in favour of increasing rural isolation, as the measures being looked at were to reduce such potential affects through working with local communities and local councillors to find solutions. He emphasised that no one had ever suggested that the current bus services were wonderful and that bus subsidies were part of the old way of thinking. The choice presented was the opportunity to put something different in place by providing a better value transport service for Cambridgeshire residents, in place of the current failed system. The magnitude of the cuts required when agreeing the Integrated Plan for 2011/12 had meant that decisions were taken quickly by the previous Cabinet and he was not happy that cuts had been made without alternative provision. He reiterated that the present proposals which required engagement from communities was not a philosophy to remove transport, but to improve it.

It was explained that the proposal was for a phased programme of subsidy reductions with a further report to be prepared for the March Cabinet meeting. This would set down specific areas where subsidies would be withdrawn from September 2012, as well as a phased reduction for April 2013 and beyond, and would trigger focussed community engagement, including with town and parish councils. The intention would be to assess the impact on communities and development under CFT and to look to provide replacement services from September 2012.

Although the consultation showed that there had been impacts on residents; especially the elderly, disabled, women and the unemployed following the withdrawal of services, Cabinet had also very carefully considered the full range of consultation responses and whether the proposals in terms of their impact were acceptable having also fully taken into account its duties:

- Under section 63 of the Transport Act 1985 to secure provision of such public transport services as it thinks appropriate to meet public transport requirements within the County having regard to elderly and disabled members of the public and its duty to implement and keep under review policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe integrated, efficient and economic transport to and from their areas. (Detailed in section 4.1 of the report)
- regarding equality and diversity implications as set out under section 149 of the Equality Act to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations (Detailed wording included in section 4.3 and 4.4 of the report) having agreed that the financial stringency was a compelling reason and that there was no better way to cope with the financial stringency which would not have an undesirable effect. This was on the basis of the need to continue the removal of the previously agreed withdrawn subsidies, due to the severe pressure on the Council's budget and on the basis of the lower usage of the journeys compared to the remaining contracted services, and as the withdrawn journeys were at lesser times, such as evenings or Sundays, or where alternative provision was in place.
- That £1.5m of funding would be made available to work with communities on finding alternative transport solutions to help those most disadvantaged.

Cabinet therefore agreed with the proposals in the report to go forward as part of the 2012/13 Integrated Plan for Council approval and

It was **resolved**

- a) To confirm the decision to remove funding for services withdrawn in April 2011.
- b) To confirm the decision to phase out funding for all services over 3 years commencing 2012/13 as stated in the Integrated Plan; and
- c) To approve the proposed strategy of identifying areas where subsidies are to be withdrawn and then moving to develop alternative provision where appropriate, subject to full community engagement on the development of alternative service provision.

## **525. INTEGRATED PLAN 2012/13**

The covering report dispatched with the main agenda presented the overview of the Council's Integrated Plan. The Plan was included as a separate document Appendix 1 and been made available as a hard copy at a Members Seminar on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> January and electronically on the Council's website the same day. The Integrated Plan document covered the period 2012/13 in detail and 2013/14 through to 2016/17 in outline. The paper was designed to take Cabinet through the key issues within the Integrated Plan prior to formal recommendation by Cabinet for Council decision in February.

Attention was drawn to a list of changes since the publication of the draft Integrated Plan document (attached as appendix 1 to these minutes) as well as the additional

papers circulated electronically in advance of the meeting and as part of a fourth despatch in relation to:

- Treasury Management Strategy Statement
- Changes to Section 7: proposal 6 Cambridgeshire School Response to Demographic Pressures, proposal 8 Adult Social Care and proposal 14 Continued Commitment to Waste PFI Budget requiring new insertions to page 261, 275 and 323.
- Replacement pages 387-389 to Section 8 as a result of the insertion of an Additional Community Impact Assessment regarding the Restructure of Growth and Infrastructure Directorate (now Strategy and Development)

The changes represented by the above would be reflected in a revised document to be available before the full Council meeting.

Before discussing the Plan, the Leader asked and received confirmation that all Members of Cabinet had read and were fully aware and understood all the relevant documents, especially the community impact assessments at section 8 of the document.

Three non-Cabinet members spoke on this item:

- Councillor Bourke, the Liberal Democrat Group Leader, reported that his Group supported the decision to reverse the Council's five year Council tax freeze policy and capital programme proposals for investing in Chesterton Station and Highways maintenance. However he questioned the Council's ability to manage large scale capital projects. He also highlighted that Wisbech was badly served by the budget and that consideration should be given to reopening the Wisbech rail line with help from capital monies which could help solve problems of teacher recruitment. He also made reference to the Chisholm cycle trail, that if it was completed, would link Addenbrooke's Hospital, the science park and two stations. In response, the Leader of the Council highlighted that Wisbech would be a beneficiary of both the Superfast Broadband project and the proposal to increase Highways Maintenance spend. Other Cabinet members cited the considerable investment undertaken as part of the Building Schools for the Future Programme which was also an example of a very large, well managed Council project. Councillor Bourke expressed incredulosity that the Administration was setting aside £100k for additional Members allowances even before the membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel (which was to undertake a further review of the scheme), had been agreed. He questioned whether a 17.5% increase in basic allowances was appropriate at a time when council employees were subject to a wage freeze and when services were being cut. In response, the Leader of the Council explained that the £100k had been placed in the budget last year and was simply being carried forward. He made it clear that the final decision on agreeing increases to Members allowances would be for Full Council, following the receipt of a report following the independent review.
- Councillor Nethsingha the Liberal Democrat opposition spokesperson for Resources highlighted the missed opportunities and lack of funding in the Plan to reduce climate change, through cutting carbon emissions. She considered there had been a missed opportunity to take advantage of government grants to invest

in solar power to generate income, as well as helping support the local green technology industry. In response the Leader indicated that the Council continued to seek to reduce its own carbon emissions and that this was already embedded in most council activities. Other members pointed to the investment activities of the Community Energy Fund.

- Councillor Brook-Gordon whilst welcoming the budget provision for prevention of domestic violence, criticised the “scatter gun approach” adopted, when targeted intervention was the way to stop repeat incidents. She suggested consultation should be undertaken with experts in the field who could provide appropriate guidance. She also highlighted her belief that there was unnecessary budget / staff resources allocated on preventing trafficking and female genital mutilation, which she considered was not a large scale problem in Cambridgeshire, compared to say London.
- Councillor Downes the Liberal Democrat spokesperson for Education and Learning made reference to proposals in 2013-14 for a review to reduce the County Council’s involvement in Cromwell museum governance arrangements, expressing his added support to Councillor Lucas’s already expressed views of the importance of ensuring the continuation of a valuable asset, which was very important in terms of local Cambridgeshire history. In response to this, it was explained that the proposals would involve a full consultation exercise as the aim was to seek alternative governance arrangements, not close down the Museum. Councillor Downes also made reference to the substantial level of funding to be lost to the County Council in the forthcoming year (3.1m was quoted of which an £800k loss was attributable to CYPS) as a result of supporting Central Government’s School Academies programme. As 40 schools in the County had benefited from increased central government spend as part of the programme, he considered that it was only appropriate that there should be a net transfer of resources from the least vulnerable to the most vulnerable, and was seeking that the academies should invest a proportion of their windfall payments in their local communities.
- Councillor Shepherd the Liberal Democrat Health Spokesman highlighted the continued problems with the adult social care budget which had continued to overspend in the last 3-4 years and had only been balanced in the current year through the application of reserves. She questioned the strategic management approach of the service, in terms of the background of difficulties of top slicing health services and the major restructuring of health care services being undertaken. In response to this point, Councillor Curtis later highlighted that the service had in fact made savings through the re-ablement programme and current changes being proposed including the development of social networks which would make the service fit for purpose. Councillor Shepherd also highlighted that she saw no evidence to show that joined up thinking was taking place in terms of accessing community transport and addressing the huge inequalities still prevalent in some parts of the County. She considered, when referencing the previous report’s debate which made reference to £12 per head for community passenger transport, that this amount could be seen as a bargain if it kept people out of hospital beds. In response she was assured that a great deal of work was being undertaken with partners and the independent sector to ensure it was a budget

that the County Council could meet and to help ensure a better understanding of the pressures and the action that could be taken to address them.

- Councillor Tierney expressed his concerns that Cabinet having recently accepted interim proposals from overview and scrutiny to increase budget provision to combat domestic violence was, in the same Plan, now proposing a net cut of a children's play worker at a women's refuge and requested that the cut should be reversed. In response, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services indicated that the post was the subject of time limited funding and it had been made clear to the refuge in January 2011 that the funding needed to be looked at. Repeated requests from management for details of what the post involved had not received any response. An offer of an additional 3 months funding had been made to give time to search for alternative funding sources.

The Leader went through each section of the Integrated Plan and with Cabinet Members support highlighted the key issues, including those within their portfolio area. These included:

- That developing Cambridgeshire's economy, helping people live independent and healthy lives and supporting and protecting the vulnerable were at the heart of the County Council's spending plans for 2012/13.
- That the Cabinet had listened to the public and as a result of the consultation exercise and taking account into account the public's preferences, had produced proposals to increase spending in adult social care, provide more school places, increased investment for improving roads, transport and superfast broadband which would help boost business and encourage further house-building. In addition, no libraries were proposed for closure.
- £630 million of capital investment over the next five years to ensure Cambridgeshire was open for business and to support prosperity, jobs, education and economic growth

The capital budget proposals included:

- An increase on last year of £6.4 million for Adult Social Care to protect the most vulnerable in society taking it to a total spend of £188.5 million
- An extra £90 million over five years to improve the road network, increase safety and keep Cambridgeshire moving – resulting in a total of £33 million to be spent in the forthcoming Municipal year.
- £77 million in Children's services mainly to provide additional school places.
- £20 million investment in superfast broadband,
- £26 million for vital transport measures such as Chesterton Station (subject to the rail franchise) and £29 million for a new link road to solve the Ely level crossing problem.

Extra money would also be spent on:

- Securing library services and transforming them to provide a twenty first century service.
- Providing an additional £100,000 for support to carers and a further increase in funding for the voluntary and community organisations such as the Care Network, to support volunteering.
- Protecting school crossing patrols.
- Promoting cycle training in schools – so it would be free at the point of use.
- Continuing the U project to help year 11 pupils progress into education, employment or training.

Other Initiatives highlighted included:

- There would be improved joint working with district councils to achieve improved recycling rates for waste
- Housing stock would be better insulated to reduce carbon emissions in line with existing embedded green policies
- The partnership approach to reducing the numbers of children in local authority care through the Looked after Children Placement Strategy and saving £2m without having to change thresholds.
- £1m being put into a parenting programme to reduce significant costs that would otherwise arise later as a result of family breakdown.
- Commissioning a new school for helping support the needs of children diagnosed as being autistic
- Being one of the first authorities to move to the new Children Social Care Unit model as proposed by the Munro report.
- Increasing the preventative and early intervention work to help people remain independent longer, with the investment in re-ablement being central to this.

As already set out in the previous report the plans to reduce subsidised bus services would be phased over three years to be accompanied by a £1.5 million investment in targeted local transport schemes to make sure where possible, alternative options were available before subsidised services were reduced.

The Leader highlighted that the Council was already a very lean organisation in comparison with other councils and had achieved £50 million savings last year for which tribute was paid to all staff, especially to the LGSS Director of Finance, the Chief Executive and his management team. The savings achieved resulted from working smarter and through greater working with partners, such as sharing services with Northamptonshire County Council an example being the £9.5m saving expected to be made in sharing IT services over a number of years. Another example was the new proposals coming forward to share services with Norwich City Council which was included as a separate confidential report later on the agenda.

The Leader of the Council highlighted that residents had indicated in response to a public consultation that they would be prepared to pay more in council tax to preserve essential services. Cabinet had listened to the public and were proposing a Council Tax rise of 2.95 per cent which was a brave decision to ensure extra investment could be made in vital front line services. As a result, this meant having to reject the one off payment offered by Central Government to councils to freeze Council Tax for the forthcoming year. It was explained that taking this one-off payment would have led to the Council having to make further savings in the 2012/13 budget and would have resulted in an even greater increase in council tax in future years, as the one off payment was not added to the base budget. The so called "Pickles Promise" was a good offer designed for high spending councils but not for councils such as Cambridgeshire, who already had a history of low council tax rises. If the Council were to take the money on offer from Government, it would leave the authority with a multi-million hole in its budget that would grow larger, to around £30 million over the next five years.

He explained that there came a point where if low taxation was followed to its ultimate conclusion, the County Council could not provide the services the people of Cambridgeshire expected. The proposed rise would still mean that Cambridgeshire would have one of the lowest Council Tax rates in the country. It was therefore proposed to raise Council Tax by 2.95 per cent (equating to a Council Tax Band D household paying £30.87 a year more) to protect vital front line services as supported by residents and to avoid a multi-million funding gap in the future. (estimated at £30m)

The Council meeting was therefore being asked to back the £848 million budget and make £43 million savings following Central Government's cuts to the Council's revenue grant of almost 25 per cent over the last two years. The proposals also confirmed the planned reduction of up to 154 full time equivalent posts from the County Council as announced to employees in November.

**It was resolved to:**

- 1) Consider the Integrated Plan (Appendix 1 of the report), including supporting Budget, Community Impact Assessments, Consultation Responses and other material, in the light of all planning activities undertaken to date.
- 2) Identify any final amendments and changes Cabinet wishes to make to the Integrated Plan, prior to submission to Council as were provided orally at the meeting and set out in appendix 1 to these minutes.
- 3) Delegate responsibility for agreeing any further alterations to the Integrated Plan and Budget to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the LGSS Director of Finance.
- 4) Recommend to Council the following:
  - a. That approval is given to the Service/Directorate cash limits as set out in Section 3, Table 3.2, page 58 of the Integrated Plan.
  - b. That approval is given to a total County Budget Requirement in respect of general expenses applicable to the whole County area of



£848,201,000 as set out in Section 3, Table 4.1, page 62 of the Integrated Plan.

- c. That approval is given to a recommended County Precept for Council Tax from District Councils of £240,483,000 (to be received in ten equal instalments in accordance with the fall-back provisions of the Local Authorities (Funds) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 1995), as set out in Section 3, Table 4.1, page 62 of the Integrated Plan.
- d. That approval is given to a Council Tax for each Band of property, based on the number of “Band D” equivalent properties notified to the County Council by the District Councils (222,948), as set out in Section 3, Table 4.2, page 63 of the Integrated Plan:
  - A £719.10
  - B £838.95
  - C £958.80
  - D £1,078.65
  - E £1,318.35
  - F £1,558.05
  - G £1,797.75
  - H £2,157.30
- e. That approval is given to the Prudential Borrowing, Prudential Indicators as set out in Section 3, Table 7.3, page 71 of the Integrated Plan.
- f. That approval is given to the Treasury Management Strategy as set out in brief in Section 3, page 72 of the and Section 4 of the Integrated Plan.
- g. That approval is given to the report of the LGSS Director of Finance on the levels of reserves and robustness of the estimates as set out in Section 3, page 76 of the Integrated Plan.
- h. That approval be given to Capital Payments in 2012/13 up to £146.7m arising from:
  - i. Commitments from schemes already approved; and
  - ii. The consequences of new starts (for the five years 2011/12 to 2015/16) shown in summary in Section 3, Table 6.3, page 69 of the Integrated Plan.
  - iii. Approving the schedule of charges set out in Section 11.
- 5) Approving the priorities and aspirations set out in Section 1 and 2 of the Integrated Plan.
- 6) Authorising the LGSS Director of Finance, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make technical revisions to the Integrated Plan, including the foregoing recommendations 4a to 4h to the County Council, so as to take into account any changes deemed appropriate, including updated information on District Council Tax Base and Collection Funds, and specific

grants and any changes required to the formal recommendations to the Council meeting as a result of legislation changes.

**526. DRAFT CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S PROPOSED APPROACH TO SEEKING DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS**

Cabinet was informed that East Cambridgeshire District Council had published a Preliminary Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule document for public consultation with a closing date of 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012. County Council Members in East Cambridgeshire had been given the opportunity to comment on the document and the draft response set out in Appendix A to the officer's report reflected their comments.

Cabinet noted that East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) was proposing to levy CIL on most forms of development. Exemptions would apply to affordable housing (which would be secured through s106 agreements), development for charitable purposes and buildings which people did not normally go into. Table 1 in paragraph 2.1 of the report identified proposed charges of which amendments were tabled at the meeting, reflecting changes agreed by Huntingdonshire District Council who had lowered their Community Infrastructure Levy charging regime to reflect the current economic climate. The changes had only been agreed following the publication of the report and had the effect of making the following changes:

- Proposed charge for residential – Rest of district - changed from £100 as set out in the published report to a lower figure of £85
- Retail (A1 A2 A3 A4 and A5 - large scale more than 280m2 sales floor changed from £140 in the published report to a lower figure of £100
- Retail (A1 A2 A3 A4 and A5 - small scale+ - changed from £50 in the published report to a lower figure of £40.

It was highlighted that if development in East Cambridgeshire were to fully meet infrastructure costs, a charge of £61,661 per dwelling or £649 per m<sup>2</sup> would be required which was completely unviable. Based on the proposed residential CIL rates, the viability gap would be £167,827,884 (£193,786,634 (infrastructure costs) - £25,958,750 (income from CIL). The largest infrastructure costs would be transport and education, being £105M and £46M respectively. As a result if all required infrastructure was to be provided, these figures would need to be raised by alternative means, as the Government expected local authorities to address the viability gap through other sources of funding. ECDC currently predicted that £25,698,500 of income would be generated from Government funding and section106 agreements. However, there was no guarantee that these levels of funding would be secured and at present, the prospect of any significant other sources of funding was very uncertain and there would therefore be a need for the County to carefully prioritise what was considered to be the most essential infrastructure and that some might be delayed or never built. The report also explained that although ECDC was scaling back on the use of s106 agreements, they would continue to be used for:-

- development specific infrastructure on large scale major development sites (e.g. primary schools) defined as sites of more than 200 dwellings.

- site specific mitigation (e.g. archaeology or on-site open space);
- affordable housing.

The report set out the advantages to the County Council of this approach. It was highlighted that CIL applied to all new properties while in the past if single or very small numbers of dwellings were built, Section 106 contribution may not have been secured. A benefit of S106 agreements has been that funds come directly to the County Council.

It was noted that County Council officers had worked closely with ECDC in the formation of their CIL proposals particularly in terms of inputting key infrastructure requirements as well as having discussions with Huntingdonshire District Council. The next stage would be to undertake similar negotiations with Cambridge City Council, Fenland and South Cambridgeshire District Councils. This would include working with the Public Services Board, as it was recognised that it was vital that the districts ensured sufficient monies were available at the appropriate time to provide necessary school provision and that it was not in their interests that there was any gap in such vital provision.

Discussing the report, Cabinet members expressed particular concerns that no agreement had yet been reached between ECDC and the County Council on the proposed percentage of CIL that they intended to transfer to the County Council, as stated in the response to question 9 on page 8 of the report. As a postscript to this there was a request from the Leader of the Council for an update report in due course on the progress of the negotiations.

**It was resolved:**

- a) To endorse the draft consultation response as set out in Appendix A; and
- b) To delegate to the Lead Member for Growth and Planning in consultation with the Executive Director, Environment Services and Local Members, the authority to make any minor changes to the draft consultation response prior to its submission.
- c) To receive an appropriate update report in due course.

**527. OVER: LAND DISPOSAL**

Cabinet considered proposals for the disposal of two areas of land in the Council's ownership near to the junction of Willingham Road and Mill Road, Over.

It was noted that the land had been acquired in 1963 as part of a much larger County Farms acquisition and the original proposal was that it should be used for the development of a new primary school. However in the event, the receipt of section 106 monies had enabled Over Primary School to be extended on its existing site and the land was no longer required for that purpose.

Market testing had established that there was considerable developer interest in taking an Option in respect of Area 1 as set out in the plan included in the report. It was explained that one prospective developer had made proposals to bring forward

Areas 1 and 2 and was keen to promote the land through the emerging South Cambridgeshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and /or Local Plan or directly via an early planning application. For this reason authority was sought from Cabinet for the disposal of the combined area of 3.76ha.

It was **resolved**:

To delegate to the Local Government Shared Services Director of Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance the authority to agree terms for an Option agreement to a developer in order to facilitate one or more disposal transactions in respect of land in the Council's ownership near to the junction of Willingham Road and Mill Road, Over.

## **528. LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND AND BETTER BUS AREAS FUND**

Cabinet received a report:

- Outlining a proposed bid for funding from the second round of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF).
- Outlining the Government's Better Bus Areas Fund (BBAF) and setting out a proposal for a bid package to be submitted in partnership with local bus operators.

The County Council's bid to the first round of the LSTF was unsuccessful in achieving funding. However, the Council was invited to resubmit a bid in the second round. The deadline for second round bids is the 24th February 2011. It was highlighted that a maximum bid of £5m could be made and therefore the LSTF bid was to be focused on two economic corridors in Cambridgeshire:

- Alconbury - Huntingdon - St Ives - Northstowe - Science Park Cluster - Cambridge
- Ely - Waterbeach - Science Park Cluster - Cambridge

due to the high levels of congestion on key road routes in each corridor (A14, A10), the presence of a high quality public transport route in each corridor (the Busway and the railway line between Ely and Cambridge) and the high percentage of commuters (c.70%) to key employment sites in Cambridge and the fringe sites in South Cambridgeshire who travelled along the two corridors.

The bid package would focus on three key programme areas:

- Improving links to employment sites in the bid area
- Improving links to transport interchanges and corridors
- Targeted marketing initiatives

Appendix A to the report provided schemes in each of the three programme areas and an approximate breakdown of the spending in each area.

It was reported that In relation to the BBAF bid the timescales involved and detail required in the documentation precluded the development of a totally new package for a bid. The proposed bid was therefore based upon proposals presented in the past to the County, Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Joint Transport Forum which had not yet received approval and consequently, further work would be required on

them, prior to the bid submission on 24th February and following any successful bid announcement. The proposed package was contained in Appendix B of the report.

The proposal built upon the Cambridge Core Traffic Scheme and the package of measures in the wider city and fringes including measures within Cambridge City Centre to free up bus movement and satellite-park and ride provision in South Cambridgeshire to minimise the length of car journey that people needed to make and improve accessibility. Given the stage of development as there was a relatively high deliverability risk attached to the proposed package, if the bid was successful, further detailed consideration and stakeholder / public engagement would be required.

Councillor van de Ven speaking as the Liberal Democrat Transport spokesperson in highlighting that the LSTF bid only related to two corridors, sought clarification of the Council's future plans for the rest of the County. Making reference to the previous failed bid which had contained a very large community transport element she questioned whether the two recent Department of Transport funding pots received (both in the region of £258k) would now be used fund community transport, in that CFT was at such a critical stage. She also made the point that the County Council should consider a grand opening of the Guided Busway cycleway, along the lines of the recent successful St Neots bridge opening.

Written comments were also received by Cabinet in advance of the meeting from:

- Councillor Whitebread fully supporting the bid, which if successful, would help significantly improve the traffic related problems in the Market electoral division.
- Councillor Jenkins making reference to there currently being no public transport links to Waterbeach station, the poor integration of bus services at Cambridge station which required a display screen in the arrivals hall to provide real time bus information, and querying the 23% of the LSTF package (£1.4m) allocated for marketing which he considered to be excessive.

**It was resolved:**

- a) To approve the outline bid for the Local Sustainable Transport Fund as appended to this report;
- b) To delegate to the Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning in consultation with the Executive Director Environment Services the authority to approve a Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid for submission to the Department for Transport by 24th February 2012.
- c) To confirm that a bid should be made for funding from the Better Bus Areas Fund.
- d) To confirm that the package of measures set out in the report should form the basis of that bid.
- e) To delegate to the Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning in consultation with the Executive Director Environment Services the

authority to approve a Better Bus Areas Fund bid for submission to the Department for Transport by 24th February 2012.

**529. GREATER CAMBRIDGESHIRE GREATER PETERBOROUGH LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LEP) – INCORPORATION AS A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE**

Following the Greater Cambridge-Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) board's proposal that all 13 local authorities making up the LEP should be corporate members, Cabinet was asked to consider agreeing to the request. Corporate membership of the LEP would formally acknowledge the role of the LEP area local authorities, but did not bring additional financial commitments to the Council

It was **resolved**:

To the County Council becoming a corporate member of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

**530. DRAFT CABINET AGENDA – 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2012**

Members noted the draft agenda for the Cabinet meeting to be held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2012, including the following changes made since publication of the agenda for this meeting:

**Additions:**

**Key decision**

Determining Objections to Lowering the Speed Limit on the B1095 Pondersbridge to Peterborough as a report (*note since the meeting this has now moved to the April cabinet meeting*)

**Other Decisions** Superfast broadband

The following two reports might move to a later meeting and become one combined report.

New Section 75 Agreement Older People and Adult Mental Health Services - Costings and Consultation

Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of employment Regulations (TUPE) Transfer of Mental Health Social Care Staff to Cambs and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust

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

It was **resolved**:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following report on the grounds that it was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information under paragraph 3 of Part 1 Schedule 12

A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information)) and that it would not be in the public interest for this information to be disclosed.

**532. PROPOSED LOCAL GOVERNMENT SHARED SERVICES (LGSS) ARRANGEMENT WITH NORWICH CITY COUNCIL**

Cabinet received a business confidential report in order to consider an opportunity for the County Council and Northamptonshire County Council providing Information technology (IT) Services and Financial services to Norwich City Council on a “valued partner” basis. The proposal had been the subject of a report to the LGSS Joint Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> January who had endorsed the approach, subject to the satisfactory resolution of negotiations.

The confidential report highlighted the financial benefits associated with the proposal to on-board the services complimenting a number of LGSS strategic objectives and provided a positive message to potential partners /customers. The report also detailed the risks which were considered to be small.

Changes were orally proposed to the original recommendations set out on the published report to reflect the final recommendations of the LGSS Joint Committee. These were in relation to also including Revenues and Benefits in the provision of the services proposed to be provided (as set out in section 2.4 of the report) and to also include the chairman of the Joint Committee in the discussions delegation to be agreed.

It was clarified in answer to a question raised that Norwich City Council Cabinet and Council supported the proposals and that and that any community impact assessment would need to be prepared by them. One member expressed the need for extreme caution with regard to the benefit fraud element of the proposals as a result of the change in legislation on investigating fraud, as this could add costs. This had also been a concern at the Joint Committee meeting and would require further investigation.

In agreeing to move forward on the proposal, the Leader made clear that the final agreement and any changes to the LGSS agreement would be required to show a net financial benefit to both CCC and NCC and with no undue call on the time of directors or heads of service.

**It was resolved:**

- a) To approve, in principle, the proposed provision of the IT, Finance and Revenues and Benefits Services for Norwich City Council subject to satisfactory resolution of negotiations.
- b) To delegate to the Managing Director LGSS in discussion with the LGSS Director of Finance, the LGSS Director of Legal Services and the chairman of the LGSS Joint Committee the responsibility for reaching satisfactory terms and conditions with Norwich City Council.

**Appendix 1****INTEGRATED PLAN**

Since the production of the integrated plan the following amendments have been suggested. The adjustments in the first instance will only have an effect in the 2012/13 financial year and the implications for funding in future years will form part of the considerations supporting the 2013/14 Plan

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Impact £000</b>
CREDS savings proposal	Remove saving	118
Bikeability scheme	Increase spending	10
Extra support for voluntary sector	Increase spending	30
New carers support scheme	Increase spending	100
U project	Remove saving	55
<b>Total</b>		<b>313</b>
Reduce Pressures and Development Reserve balance		-313
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>

The necessary adjustments will be made to the full Integrated Plan documentation submitted to Council.