

## **CABINET: MINUTES**

**Date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2007

**Time:** 10.00 a.m. – 10.50 a.m.

**Present:** S Johnstone (Chairman)

Councillors, D Harty, V H Lucas, L W McGuire, A Melton, D R Pegram (vice chairman), J E Reynolds J M Tuck and F H Yeulett.

### Also in Attendance

Councillors: M Ballard, P Downes, D Jenkins and J West

**Apologies:** Councillors: M Curtis

## **364. MINUTES 17<sup>th</sup> APRIL**

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

## **365. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Johnstone declared a personal interest in agenda item 4a i) titled “Street Lighting” as her husband was an astronomer.

Councillor Harty declared a personal interest in agenda item 4b i) titled “Structure Plan” having been involved in the original scrutiny sub group which had prepared the report.

Councillor Reynolds declared a prejudicial interest in item 4b i) titled “Structure Plan” as an appointed director on the Cambridgeshire Horizons Board and a personal interest as the Chairman of Renewables East and left the meeting during the discussion of this item.

Councillor Melton declared a prejudicial interest in item a b i) titled “Structure Plan” as an appointed director representing Fenland District Council on the Cambridgeshire Horizons Board and left the meeting during the discussion of this item.

Councillor McGuire declared a personal interest in item 7 having previously been a member and chairman of the Grafham Water Centre Management Committee.

## **366. PETITIONS**

### **a) Petition from parents of pupils who had attended the Cambridge Steiner School Project**

This petition, with over 70 signatures was introduced by Emma Wakefield one of the interest parents, and supported both the Windmill School being run for educational use and for the hydrotherapy pool within the building being retained for community use. The petitioners believed the joint bid submitted by the Cambridge Steiner Project/Cambridge MENCAP for the former Windmill School site, Fulbourn would ensure the safeguarding of a very valuable service for parents with disabled children.

### **b) Second separate petition from Cambridgeshire residents supporting the bid of the Cambridge Steiner Schools/Cambridge Mencap for the Windmill School site**

A second separate petition with over 370 signatures introduced by Sally Abbott from Cambridgeshire Disabled Kids Swimming Club also supported the bid of the Cambridge Steiner Schools/Cambridge Mencap for the former Windmill School site. The petitioners had expressed serious concerns about the disposal of the site, particularly in relation to the future of the hydrotherapy pool, as they considered that current access to such pools in Cambridgeshire was already inadequate.

The petition supported re-opening the hydrotherapy pool and re-establishing its use as a specialist facility for people with disabilities. They were concerned that the facility would be lost to the community if a different developer won the contract. Tabled at the meeting for Cabinet Member's attention were photographs with stories of individual children who had benefited from the type of water facilities provided by a hydrotherapy pool. One of the key benefits highlighted was that a hydrotherapy facility provided higher water temperatures than public swimming pools, the latter having water temperatures too cold for many disabled children, who due to their disabilities were unable to move about to keep warm. It was explained that the higher water temperature helped aid blood circulation, which helped increase the mobility of some severely disabled children.

They highlighted that their understanding was that if a bid supported measures that improved the social well being of members of the community the County Council were not obliged to accept the highest offer received. It was also highlighted that with increased housing build in Cambridgeshire, more, not less facilities were required for disabled people in the community.

## **CHANGE IN THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA**

With the agreement of Cabinet Members agenda item 5 "Former Windmill School, Fulbourn" was taken as the next item of business.

### **367. FORMER WINDMILL SCHOOL, FULBOURN**

Cabinet received a report to consider the offers made in respect of the former Windmill School Fulbourn. In order for Cabinet Members to have all the necessary knowledge to make a considered decision, the details of bids received, including commercially sensitive information had been circulated separately to Cabinet Members as it was not in the public interest for such details to be divulged at a public meeting.

Cabinet noted that officers and lead members had first considered the options in relation to a disposal of the above school in March 2006 when the decision was taken to market the site. After a marketing process, a bid was accepted but the buyer then subsequently withdrew from the purchase, necessitating a fresh marketing exercise. New offers had been received from Care Home providers, residential developers, a Registered Social Landlord and from a leisure user and an educational user, the latter two offering additional community benefits.

Cabinet noted that the majority of the offers were conditional upon the grant of either a residential or a care home planning consent. It was the officers' view that a residential planning consent was not likely to be forthcoming at the current time as the Windmill School site and the adjoining Ida Darwin Hospital site were located in the Green Belt and further residential development in Fulbourn was therefore currently restricted. It was also considered that a conditional sale to a care home operator could be problematic in planning terms, especially as it would involve new build and a separation of utility services from the Ida Darwin site.

It was reported that Steiner/Mencap one of the bidders had confirmed their willingness to enter into detailed discussions regarding a long leasehold acquisition so that the County could potentially share in any uplift in value if the school ever chose to relocate to another site. In making their bid, Steiner/Mencap had indicated that there was, in addition to their cash offer, a further £1m of other non-monetary benefits. These were primarily educational, including the preservation of some community funded resources such as the hydrotherapy pool and an item of play equipment. The Council estimated that the present net annual value of their offer with the additional benefits, was therefore significantly increased and that any reduction in value as a result of a less than best consideration sale might be offset by the potential for a future receipt if the school decided to sell the site and release the full residential value as a consequence of the anticipated redevelopment of the Ida Darwin site.

In answer to questions raised by Cabinet Members, it was confirmed that due to the substantial non-monetary educational/social benefits to the wider Cambridgeshire community, it was in order for Cabinet to accept a bid of less than best consideration and this was permissible within the County Council's Disposals Policy. This was seen by Cabinet as the best way to maximise the sale of the asset for the benefit of the whole, wider community.

**It was resolved:**

To approve a sale of the former Windmill School, Fulbourn on a long leasehold basis at less than best consideration, to the joint purchasers of Steiner/Mencap on detailed terms to be agreed by the Director of Finance, Property and Performance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services.

**368. ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

**A) REPORT FROM ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE STREET LIGHTING**

Cabinet received a report on the scrutiny member-led review of street lighting presented by the former Chairman of the Environment and Community Service Scrutiny Committee.

The scrutiny committee's recommendations asked Cabinet to consider the report and the recommendations brought forward as follows:

1. Having regard to the issues and options discussed in the report, the Council should develop a new policy for street lighting, clearly explaining the proposed aims for the service and balancing the benefits and costs associated with it.
2. To build further on the public consultation work carried out as part of the current review, a significant programme of public consultation should take place before any new policy was adopted.
3. The Council should continue to monitor the progress of other authorities currently conducting trials of new technologies and management policies, in order to capture ideas and experience from others working in the field.
4. Decisions regarding the proposed Private Finance Initiative (PFI) scheme should be made in the light of the findings of this report and the new policy to be developed, e.g. energy efficiency, Carbon footprint. The group felt that it was particularly important for the Council to review the 25% uplift in the number of street lights proposed in the PFI Outline Business Case.
5. Any contract for the replacement of existing street lighting and the procurement of new lighting should retain the flexibility to move to newer technologies as they become available.
6. The Council should work with Cambridgeshire Horizons and the district councils to ensure that decisions about the provision of street lighting in new developments accord with Council policy and are consistent with the intention to create vibrant and sustainable new communities.

Councillor Harrison highlighted that the Council should undertake to develop a comprehensive and rational street lighting policy taking into account the latest technologies and seeking outside expert technical support to be developed in conjunction with the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Cabinet was asked to consider making Cambourne an experimental test site for retrospectively fitting switch and control equipment in order to be able to gauge the effectiveness of being able to vary lighting levels at different times, weather conditions etc.

## **B) CABINET RESPONSE TO THE REPORT FROM ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE STREET LIGHTING**

Cabinet noted that any review of street lighting policy would require public consultation and would have to consider issues such as affordability, and the relevant codes of practice such as “Well Lit Highways”. The development of a new specification would also need to recognise the opportunities presented by new technology. It was highlighted that any new street lighting specifications should ensure that appropriate levels of lighting were delivered for the highway network ensuring that safety, affordability, sustainability and that the Council’s Environmental Strategy would need to be taken into account.

Cabinet noted that the housing growth in Cambridgeshire would result in cost increases, linked to the additional street lighting to be provided. It was recognised that this cost increase required management through appropriate policies and specifications. In addition, when procuring energy, the Council would need to ensure that it provided the best option in both financial and environmental terms. In order to identify the most appropriate specification, it was reported that the Council would trial different designs and technological options as the PFI contract was developed and also seek to protect the Council’s flexibility in street lighting service provision through the PFI contract, should the business case enable the project to proceed.

It was reported that Public Consultation was unlikely to be completed before the PFI project moved forward and therefore the project would need to allow flexibility to adopt any changes in policy or specification that were approved at a later date.

### **It was resolved:**

- i) To thank the Scrutiny Committee for the detailed work undertaken in preparing the review and for the production of such an excellent report.
- ii) To ask the Officers to start a process of reviewing street lighting policy and to report progress through the Transport and Highways PDG with a policy to come back to Cabinet in due course.

## **C) REPORT FROM ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE PLAN**

Cabinet received a report on the scrutiny member-led review of the “Delivery of the Structure Plan Housing Growth Strategy: Progress and Future Prospects’ presented by the former Chairman of the Environment and Community Service Scrutiny Committee. The report had assessed progress with delivery of large scale housing development and reviewed the supporting infrastructure in the Cambridge Sub-Region considering a range of factors, both positive and negative, which might affect future prospects for success in meeting the Government’s housing growth requirements.

The scrutiny committee recommended that Cabinet should accept the findings of the report as follows:

(a) The proposals in Section 6 regarding:

- The need to review roles and relationships amongst the delivery partners, and their performance
- The preparation of a new, more comprehensive Business Plan
- Improved risk management
- The approach to Section 106 developer contributions
- The identified gap in infrastructure funding

(b) The proposals in Section 7 concerning Cambridgeshire Horizons, namely:

- The development of governance and reporting arrangements which ensure that Horizons meets high standards of accountability and transparency.
- The need for a full performance review of Horizons.
- The development of a performance management framework, including
- mechanisms for annual reporting and review.

(c) The need to make progress with implementing these recommendations before the Government Plan was implemented

(d) That the County Council’s Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services respond to the recommendations as soon as possible.

## **D) CABINET RESPONSE TO THE REPORT FROM ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE PLAN**

The report in response prepared by the officers for Cabinet consideration set out the current progress and indicated where additional work was needed to address the challenging findings of Scrutiny Committee outlining how the issues would be addressed.

Cabinet noted that some progress has recently been made between the Councils and Horizons in terms of project management of the major development areas identified in the Structure Plan but that the lack of detailed programme information remained a significant concern and would be a priority to address, if the growth agenda was to be delivered effectively and efficiently. Whilst work was underway on improving project management processes, this was currently considered to be insufficiently robust and further work was required to prepare detailed programmes for the major development areas as well as section 106 strategies and to make an assessment of how the infrastructure funding gap would be bridged. The revised working arrangements resulting from the Government review of Horizons would go some way to addressing issues raised by the scrutiny committee but that further work would be needed on processes and necessary commitment from appropriate partners.

Cabinet noted that the preliminary response to recommendations relating to sections 7 and 8 of the Scrutiny Committee report. It was recognised that for both Horizons and the Councils to play their full part in the growth agenda to deliver the Structure plan targets, strengthened governance arrangements needed to be in place and the roles and responsibilities of all of the partners needed to be understood. It was reported that the Council was currently considering how this should be addressed, and working with Horizons and the district councils, would prepare proposals that could be considered at a future Cabinet meeting.

The final recommendation from the Scrutiny Committee contained in section 8 of the report related to implementation of what was referred to as the *Government Plan*, which resulted from the submissions to Government following the review of Horizons. Cabinet was reminded that part of the proposals resulting from that process were reported to Full Council for approval on 15<sup>th</sup> May and that that further elements would be reported to Cabinet and Council in due course.

The former scrutiny chairman made the point that scrutiny committee would also wish to receive a more detailed response report against each of the detailed recommendations.

**It was resolved to:**

- i) Welcome the excellent report from the scrutiny committee.
- ii) Endorse the initial response to the Scrutiny Report; and
- iii) Note the additional work required to be undertaken as indicated within the report and to request further reports on those points highlighted.

### **369. SECONDARY EDUCATION PROVISION TO SERVE CAMBRIDGE**

Cabinet received a further report advising of the progress made to assess the proposals for secondary education provision for Cambridge, detailing the responses to the consultations received regarding the original options put forward during the consultation exercise and seeking Cabinet endorsement for the revised proposals for the future pattern of secondary school provision in Cambridge.

Tribute was paid to the work undertaken by The Director of Planning and Development and to the Head of Infrastructure (OCYPS) and their team in the preparation of the current report. It was recognised that there were still some uncertainties due to timings on some of the developments.

In answer to question raised it was confirmed that:

- The integrity of Impington College's catchment area remained as currently drawn up
- Councils were still awaiting Government confirmation/announcements regarding the building standards they were expecting for the construction of new schools.

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

- i) That new secondary schools be provided in the North West Fringe and the Southern Fringe development areas as follows;
  - that the best option to serve the North West Fringe developments remains that of establishing a new school in the North West Fringe and Cabinet supported that a new secondary school of four forms of entry (4FE) (600 place) should be established to serve these developments and that to provide flexibility to respond to potential future changes, a 6ha site would be required.
  - The preference was for a site in the Histon Road/Huntingdon Road development area (the NIAB site) and Cabinet therefore have approved that officers pursue further discussions with City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils on a formal proposal with a view to securing agreement to a school site having regard to factors as detailed in the officer's report.
  - A new 5FE school should be established in the Southern Fringe on the site identified close to Fawcett Primary School.
  - The new school site requirement should be confirmed as 6FE to provide sufficient space for dual-use facilities and some flexibility to respond to future changes in need.
  - Fawcett Primary School should become a partner primary school for the new secondary school.
  - Morley Memorial School should remain one of Coleridge Community College's partner primary schools.

- ii) That further work should be undertaken to determine the exact specification of secondary provision to serve Cambridge East in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services as detailed below:
- Plans for Cambridge East should progress on the basis of the need to provide 14FE on the Airport site in order to accommodate demand from North of Newmarket Road, the main Airport site and the Abbey Ward. The exact nature of the provision to be determined following further detailed consideration and discussion of options.
  - Consultation should be undertaken initially with the headteacher and governors of Abbey Meadows Primary School and the Parkside Federation on a proposal that the school should be included within the Cambridge East secondary catchment area together with North of Newmarket Road.
  - Netherhall School should be named as the catchment school for the North of Cherry Hinton development.
  - In addition, given the degree of uncertainty over the timing of the Airport development, officers will explore with Bottisham Village College the potential for this school to provide an interim solution to a potential temporary shortage of secondary school places to serve the Cambridge East development. This proposal takes account of established trends in parental preference for this school and the ease of access from the Abbey Ward.
- iii) That officers should conclude negotiations with developers and City and South Cambridgeshire planners to secure sites in the North West Fringe, Southern Fringe and Cambridge East at the earliest possible opportunity for the required secondary schools; and
- iv) That plans to increase the size of Manor Community College to 8FE should be progressed as detailed in paragraph 5.5 of the officer's report.

### **370. DEVELOPMENT OF GRAFHAM WATER CENTRE**

Cabinet received a report setting out details on potential developments at Grafham Water Centre and to outline the business case for the proposed request for a loan in order to carry out phases two and three of the improvement programme.

The local Member for Brampton and Kimbolton spoke in support of the report highlighting some of the important activities undertaken by the centre in addition to being used as a resource by local schools for leisure activities. These included hosting local headteacher conferences, local youth orchestras, youth leadership training courses and for national and international sports and leisure events. It was also important for the well being of the surrounding villages that the centre it remained a vibrant well-used resource.

Cabinet noted that since the scheme had last received its approval, the building costs had risen. In addition, anticipated finance to part fund the proposals from a capital receipt from the sale of a plot of land were currently unable to progress. As a result, phases 2 and 3 of the development were now unaffordable within the original funding plan agreed by Cabinet. Having exhausted other finance routes as set out in the report, the proposal was to finance the further phases from a prudential loan with repayment over a 25-year period. This would enable the necessary upgrade of facilities in order to provide greater community benefits and ensure the future commercial viability of the centre.

In response to a question regarding how Cabinet could be reassured that the business plan (which was seen as a conservative plan in terms of increased profitability in the early years) would be achieved and the appropriate repayments made, it was explained that the plan would be included as part of the regular trading unit financial monitoring regime. If problems arose, this would be reported via the Budget Control Reports with an option for Cabinet to request additional information.

**It was resolved:**

To approve the loan of £1m to fund important development phases at Grafham Water Centre to ensure future sustainability.

### **371. CHANGES TO MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE DELIVERY POLICY**

Cabinet was reminded that the County Council meeting in February when confirming the reduced cash limit for the Office of Environment and Community Services and the resulting package of measures required to achieve the limit, had taken a decision to reduce the mobile library fleet from 8 to 6. The current report set out the results of the exercise undertaken to streamline and increase the operation efficiency of the mobile fleet a report, proposing alterations to the policy criteria determining the provision of mobile library stops. The proposals had received all party support at the relevant Service Development Group.

The amended policy criteria for mobile library delivery aimed to ensure that:

- services such as Static, Mobile, Doorstep and Postal Tape Service (POTS) did not overlap or duplicate;
- provision was based on individual rather than family use
- communities that made similar use of the service received comparable levels of service – i.e. the amount of stop time
- there was a process for stops that no longer met the criteria to be encouraged to increase usage, and also a process for individual customers to move to the Doorstep service, where use had dwindled significantly
- Mobile stops were available to all and not restricted to certain users
- Establishing more consistent County-wide levels of provision for sheltered housing and for residential homes

In replay to a question on what would happen to the two mobile library vehicles taken out of service, it was reported that one would become a good quality spare and replace an older poorer condition model, while the other would be sold.

Assurances were provided that there would be an adequate supply of additional recruits to provide the increased Doorstep service proposed by the time the current consultation exercise was completed and that parish councils would be enlisted to help publicise the new proposals.

**It was resolved:**

To adopt revised criteria for the provision of mobile library stops, which represented a change in service delivery policy, as set out in the appendix to the Officer's report.

**372. DELEGATIONS FROM CABINET TO CABINET MEMBERS/OFFICERS**

Cabinet received a report detailing the progress on delegations.

**It was resolved:**

- i) To note the progress on delegations to individual Cabinet Members and/or to officers previously authorised by Cabinet to make decisions/take actions on its behalf as updated orally at the meeting.
- ii) That future reports should be updated to reflect the new Cabinet/portfolio holder and officer responsibilities.

**373. CABINET DRAFT AGENDA PLAN 11<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2007**

The Cabinet agenda Plan was noted with the following changes:

- Agenda Item 7 Principles for New Schools - moved to July
- Agenda Item 16 a Budget Monitoring to be combined with item 5 Financial Outturn Report.

Chairman  
11<sup>th</sup> June 2007