

COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 15th February 2005

Time: 10.30 a.m. – 4.10 p.m.

Place: Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present: Councillor: R Driver (Chairman)

Councillors: C M Ballard, C C Barker, R S G Barnwell, I C Bates, B S Bhalla, A J Bowen, J Broadway, C Carter, J E Coston, P J Downes, J A P Eddy, M Farrar, H J Fitch, S A Giles, J L Gluza, P D Gooden, A Hansard, B Hardy, G F Harper, V A Hearne-Casapieri, G J Heathcock, W G M Hensley, J L Huppert, S F Johnstone, J D Jones, A C Kent, I C Kidman, S J E King, M L Leeke, V H Lucas, A R Mair, R B Martlew, L W McGuire, A S Milton, S B Normington, M K Ogden, L J Oliver, A G Orgee, D R Pegram, J A Powley, P A E Read, A A Reid, J E Reynolds, C E Shaw, P W Silby, R C Speechley, A B Stenner, P L Stroude, J M Tuck, J K Walters, D White, R Wilkinson, L J Wilson and F H Yeulett

Apologies: Councillors P D Bailey, T J Bear and A K Melton

255. MINUTES: 21st DECEMBER 2004

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21st December 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

256. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Departure of senior managers

The Chairman reported that as a result of the organisational reshaping, a number of senior managers would be leaving the Council at the end of March 2005:

- Hugh Gault, Head of Policy and Performance in Social Services
- Adrian Williams, Assistant Director, Planning and Development in Education, Libraries and Heritage
- David Elliott, Assistant Director, Audit (currently on secondment to the 4Ps)
- Chris Brown, Assistant Director, Environment
- John Lawrance, Head of Trading Standards.

The Chairman led members in thanking these officers for all of their work for the Council and wishing them well for the future.

Awards and achievements

The Chairman led members in congratulating:

- The Social Services and Resources Directorates on receiving Investors in People accreditation. All departments of the Council had now been

- accredited
- Staff involved in the nominations for the Local Government Chronicle Procurement and e-Government awards. The winners would be announced at an awards ceremony on 14th March 2005
- Officers on the County Council's invitation by the Department for Transport to bid to become a Centre of Excellence for transport, building on its success as a Beacon Council for passenger transport
- The Council's planners for the commendation from the Royal Town Planning Institute for their contribution to the re-development of the former Whitemoor railway marshalling yards in Fenland.

257. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared personal interests under Paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct in relation to item 1 on the Cabinet report of 25th January 2005 (County Council Budget 2005/06):

- Councillor D White as the Chairman of the Trustees of the Cambridge and County Folk Museum
- Councillor J Broadway as a Trustee of the Cambridge and County Folk Museum
- Councillor C M Ballard as an officer of the Friends of Kettles Yard.

Councillor S F Johnstone declared a prejudicial interest under Paragraph 10 of the Code of Conduct in relation to item 4 on the Cabinet report of 25th January 2005 (Addenbrooke's Access Road: Route Approval and Compulsory Purchase Order), as a Non-Executive Director at Addenbrooke's. She left the meeting whilst this item was discussed.

258. REPORT OF THE CABINET – 14th DECEMBER 2004 AND 7th JANUARY 2005

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, moved receipt of the report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 14th December 2004 and 7th January 2005.

Key decisions for information

1) Traffic Management Act Implications

Councillor J L Huppert commented on the need to clarify the role of the Traffic Manager and in particular the power of this post-holder to overrule members' decisions. He also expressed concern that, although the Government had stated that compliance with the requirements of the Act should be self-funding, this was unlikely to be the case.

2) Revenue Cash Limits for 2005/06

The Chairman advised that any discussion of this item would take place under the item on the Budget 2005/06 within the Cabinet report of the meeting on 25th January 2005.

Other decisions

- 3) Proposed Cycleway Network for the Cambridge Southern Fringe Development

The local member, Councillor A C Kent, expressed her support for the cycleway scheme now proposed and asked to be kept informed as the scheme was developed.

Other matters

- 4) Draft Corporate Plan
- 5) Quarter 2: Performance on Key Indicators for 2004/05

259. REPORT OF THE CABINET – 25th JANUARY 2005

Key decision for determination

- 1) County Council Budget 2005/06

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, drew attention to the following papers informing the budget debate:

- The report of the meeting of Cabinet on 25th January 2005
- The budget summary document
- The reports of the Council's four Scrutiny Committees on the budget proposals
- Revised budget recommendations, updated to reflect the final Revenue Support Grant (RSG) settlement and Tax Base, which were tabled at the meeting.

It was moved by the Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, and seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor J E Reynolds, that the report of the Cabinet meeting on 25th January 2005 be received and the tabled budget recommendations adopted.

Councillors P J Downes, J L Gluza, L W McGuire and J M Tuck respectively moved the receipt of the reports of the Policy Scrutiny and Audit Committee, the Education, Libraries and Heritage Scrutiny Committee, the Environment and Transport Scrutiny Committee and the Social Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

The Lead Member for Lifelong Learning, Councillor V H Lucas, reported that a petition containing 44 signatures had been received from the St Neots Local History Society. The petition expressed concern about proposed cuts to the County Archive Service.

Councillor J K Walters opened the Budget debate on behalf of the Cabinet. Councillors J L Huppert and I C Kidman responded on behalf of the Liberal Democrat and Labour groups respectively.

In each of the three main service areas, Education, Libraries and Heritage, Environment and Transport and Social Services, a Cabinet

Member spoke in support of the Cabinet's budget proposals: Councillor F H Yeulett for Education, Libraries and Heritage, Councillor L J Oliver for Environment and Transport and Councillor D R Pegram for Social Services. The Chairman of the relevant Scrutiny Committee then introduced the report from the Scrutiny Committee, which was followed by a general debate on each service area. For each service, the lead Cabinet Member summed up the debate: Councillor R Wilkinson for Education, Libraries and Heritage, Councillor S F Johnstone for Environment and Transport and Councillor J A Powley for Social Services.

During the debate, members highlighted the following issues relating to specific service areas:

Education, Libraries and Heritage

- Welcomed the achievement of full passporting to schools. However, members recognised that schools would continue to be under pressure, particularly given the need to make 2.5% efficiency savings and to meet the requirements of workforce reform and other new initiatives. It was also noted that the ELH budget included a proposal to repay the £1.2 million advance of grant received from the DfES in 2004/05.
- Expressed concern at the impact that full passporting would have on non-schools budgets, which were having to bear a disproportionate share of cuts. It was suggested that these cuts should have been distributed more widely across other Council services.
- Noted that schools would be directly affected by cuts to some non-schools LEA budgets, such as the Cambridgeshire Advisory Service.
- Discussed in detail the impact of the proposed budget for Heritage. The £100,000 for transitional funding proposed in the Cabinet's revised Budget recommendation was welcomed. It was noted that this would be used through the organisational reshaping to carry out a comprehensive review of Heritage services. However, some members expressed continuing concern:
 - Cambridgeshire's spending on Heritage services continued to be low in comparison to its statistical neighbours'
 - There would still be reductions to Heritage grants, which could be important in helping organisations to attract other sources of funding
 - Heritage and Arts services provided important educational and therapeutic functions and activities in these areas would be limited.
- Expressed concern that even with the additional £150,000 proposed for the Youth Service, funding would continue to be at approximately £2 million below Formula Spending Share (FSS), or half the recommended level. The Youth Service was due to be re-inspected by OfSTED shortly and there was a risk that both the service and the full amount of FSS would be removed from the Council's control.

- Expressed concern at the ongoing deferral of investment in libraries, particularly the Book Fund. However, it was noted that some progress had been made, including the extension of some libraries' opening hours.
- Expressed concern that no additional funding had been allowed for work on the integration of children's services, at a time when senior management was being reduced.

Environment and Transport

- Expressed concern at the proposal to cut the bus subsidy budget by £50,000. The importance of monitoring subsidised services accurately was emphasised. It was suggested that the balance between subsidy of commercial services and funding for community services such as Dial-A-Ride should be reviewed.
- Discussed the Cabinet's recommendation to remove the minor traffic management budgets, which totalled £146,000. Members noted that it would not be administratively efficient to reduce this budget below its current amount. However, some concern was expressed that these budgets were important in enabling backbench members to be responsive to local concerns and so should not be cut, or should be a priority for reinstatement in future years.
- Noted a commitment from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport that the County Council would match the District Councils' contributions to the jointly funded minor improvements budgets.

Social Services

- Expressed concern at the rapid increase in expenditure on independent fostering agencies. Children often remained in placements made through these agencies for a number of years, resulting in ongoing costs to the Council. The number of children with very high levels of need in out-of-County placements was also increasing. The Invest to Save bids to the Good Housekeeping Fund to address these issues were welcomed. However, members expressed concern that the rapidly growing costs of providing these services, together with demographic pressures in adults' and older people's services, led to the risk of destabilising the Social Services budget and the wider Council budget in future years.
- Highlighted the Government's reductions to funding for Supporting People and Disabled Facility Grants. Concern was expressed that these would undermine the Government's and the Council's agenda to help vulnerable people to live at home.
- Expressed concern that the Primary Care Trusts' financial difficulties could place pooled budgets for integrated services at risk.
- Expressed concern that the Council's high eligibility criteria for older people's services made it difficult to develop preventative services. However, it was noted that a reduction to the eligibility criteria was not

affordable at present.

- Drew attention to the forthcoming report from the Commission for Social Care Inspection on physical disability services, which was likely to be critical. Concern was expressed that no financial provision had been made to act on the report's recommendations.
- Welcomed additional funding in mental health to develop new models of care and increase purchasing from the independent sector, but suggested that this was insufficient to address historic under-investment.

Overall budget proposals

The Deputy Leader of Council, Councillor J E Reynolds, spoke in support of the Cabinet's proposals on the overall budget proposals, including the consultation process, and the specific budget proposals relating to the Chief Executive's Department and Resources Directorate. Councillor P J Downes spoke to the report of the Policy Scrutiny and Audit Committee on these matters.

Three amendments were proposed:

Liberal Democrat Group amendment

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor J L Huppert and seconded by Councillor J Broadway:

Revenue Budget

(1)	To approve the Service Directorate cash limits set out in Table 1 of the Budget book, subject to the following amendments:	£
	Capitalisation of IT expenditure	-300,000
	Reduce expenditure on IT resilience	-20,000
	Phase growth in Corporate Project Office	-100,000
		-420,000
	Restore minor road improvements	146,000
	Increase Prudential Borrowing requirements	28,000
	5% increase in grants to voluntary organisations	50,000
	Introduce public question time	3,000
	Support for Heritage grant funding	40,000
	Addition of two youth worker posts	68,000
	Restore Book Fund	35,000
	Restore bus subsidy	50,000
		420,000
(2)	To approve a County Budget requirement in respect of general expenses applicable to the whole County area:	510,769,516

- (3) To approve a recommended County Precept for Council Tax from District Councils: 172,609,871

(to be received in ten equal instalments in accordance with the 'fall-back' provisions of the Local Authorities (Funds) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 1995);

- (4) To approve 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 Council (204,074):

Band	Council Tax	Band	Council Tax
A	£563.88	E	£1,033.78
B	£657.86	F	£1,221.74
C	£751.84	G	£1,409.70
D	£845.82	H	£1,691.64

- (5) To approve the Prudential Indicators as set out on page 20 of the Budget book;
- (6) To approve the Council's Treasury Management Strategy as set out on page 21 of the Budget book;
- (7) To note the report on the levels of reserves and robustness of the estimates as set out on pages 22 to 24 of the Budget book.

Capital Budget

- (8) To approve Capital Payments in 2005/06 up to £95.2 million arising from:

- Commitments from schemes already approved; and
- The consequences of new starts (for the three years 2005/06 to 2007/08) listed in the Service Directors' reports contained in the Budget summary document,

subject to the receipt of appropriate capital resources, or when the Head of Finance is satisfied that sufficient funds have been secured.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was defeated. [Voting pattern: Liberal Democrats in favour, Conservatives against, Labour Group abstained. A recorded vote was requested, the details of which are attached at Appendix A.]

Labour Group amendment

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor I C Kidman and seconded by Councillor C M Ballard:

To delete recommendation (ii);

To re-number recommendation (iii):

To identify additional funding of £500,000 by:

- (1) Reducing the proposed increase for Highways Maintenance from £400,000 to £200,000;
- (2) Capitalisation of IT services to the sum of £300,000;

To apply the additional £500,000 as follows:

	£
Restoration of the Libraries Book Fund	38,000
Heritage Services	200,000
Youth Service	150,000
School clothing vouchers	45,000
Racial Equality and Diversity Service	40,000
Revenue consequences of capitalisation of IT services	27,000

On being put to the vote, the amendment was defeated. [Voting pattern: Labour Group in favour, Conservatives and Liberal Democrats against, two abstentions.]

Medium Term Service Priorities (MTSP) process amendment

It was proposed by Councillor C M Ballard and seconded by Councillor J L Huppert

That the following be added to the Budget resolution as Paragraph 11:

11. The Council views with concern the projections for expenditure in 2006/07 and 2007/08 set out in the Budget booklet and the consequential impact on Council Tax and services and asks that the Cabinet refers the MTSP for these years back to officers for radical review.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was defeated. [Voting pattern: Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups in favour, Conservatives against.]

During the debate on the general budget and the three amendments, the following issues were discussed:

- The response to the public consultation on the proposed Council Tax increase and whether an increase of slightly over 4% would have been acceptable to residents.
- Welcome for the removal of the ceiling from the Council's RSG. The ceiling had held back £9 million and £11 million in the two previous years. However, the retention of floors to the RSG meant that Cambridgeshire was still receiving £2.2 million less than it had been assessed as needing.
- Concern at the Council's likely financial settlements in 2006/07 and 2007/08, the possibility of capping of the Council Tax, the extent of savings that might have to be made in these years and the impact of these on services.
- The likely impact of the forthcoming revaluation of Council Tax bands.

- Alternative methods of raising revenue, such as local income tax, and the effect that these would have on residents and the Council's budget.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, then summed up on behalf of the Cabinet. Council voted on the motion and it was resolved:

- (i) To note the outcome of the final settlement and the technical revisions to the budget, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the tabled paper;
- (ii) To approve the provision of £100,000 transitional relief to allow Heritage services to reorganise at a measured pace;
- (iii) To approve the revised revenue and capital budget recommendations set out below.

Revenue Budget

- (1) To approve the Service Directorate cash limits set out in Table 1 of Appendix 2 of the tabled paper;
- (2) To approve a County Budget requirement in respect of general expenses applicable to the whole County area:

	£
	510,769,516
- (3) To approve a recommended County Precept for Council Tax from District Councils:

	172,609,871
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(to be received in ten equal instalments in accordance with the 'fall-back' provisions of the Local Authorities (Funds) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 1995);

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- (5) To approve the Prudential Indicators as set out on page 20 of the Budget book;
- (6) To approve the Council's Treasury Management Strategy as set out on page 21 of the Budget book;
- (7) To note the report on the levels of reserves and robustness of the estimates as set out on pages 22 to 24 of the Budget book.

Capital Budget

- (8) To approve Capital Payments in 2005/06 up to £94.9 million arising from:

- Commitments from schemes already approved; and
- The consequences of new starts (for the three years 2005/06 to 2007/08) listed in the Service Directors' reports contained in the Budget summary document,

subject to the receipt of appropriate capital resources, or when the Head of Finance is satisfied that sufficient funds have been secured.

[Voting pattern: Conservative Group in favour, Liberal Democrat and Labour Groups against.]

Key decisions for information

2) Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste Development Scheme

Councillor J Broadway welcomed the progress now being made on the Minerals and Waste Development Scheme. The Lead Member for Strategic Planning, Councillor J E Reynolds, noted that the delay in bringing the Scheme to Cabinet had been due to extra preparatory work being done before this stage had been reached. However, this additional work on the Plan would now allow progress to be brought back on schedule.

3) Proposed New Highway Services Contract from September 2006

4) Addenbrooke's Access Road: Route Approval and Compulsory Purchase Order

The local member, Councillor A C Kent, expressed her concern at the way in which proposals for the access road had been evaluated and consulted upon and the final route chosen. She noted that information about costs and traffic impact had varied at different stages of the process. She emphasised the importance of ensuring that future proposals were properly evaluated and consulted upon.

Councillor J L Gluza drew attention to the comments from the Environment and Transport Scrutiny Committee, following their call-in of this decision, about the importance of ensuring that all necessary information was available to inform the Cabinet's decision-making processes.

Councillor S J E King noted that the public consultation had identified route C as the preferred option, even when it had not been the cheapest. Subsequent design alterations meant that route C had now become the cheapest option; this change was unlikely to affect public preference.

Councillor M Farrar, the Chairman of the Cambridge Southern Fringe Member Reference Group, noted that the Group had not expressed a preference for any of the options until its most recent meeting, when the Group had voted in favour of route A by one vote, although not all members of the Group were present at the time.

5) Update to Cambridgeshire Section 48 Scheme and Proposed Minimum Funding Guarantee Exemptions

6) Future Youth Provision in St Neots

Councillor S A Giles thanked the Cabinet for the £100,000 agreed as a contribution towards the capital cost of a new community centre in the Eaton area of St Neots.

7) Kimbolton Youth Centre

Councillor P W Silby welcomed the Cabinet's endorsement of the sale of Kimbolton Youth Centre and the investment of the proceeds in new youth centre facilities.

Councillor P J Downes asked whether any surplus from the sale of the Youth Centre would be available for other youth projects or would be used corporately. The Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor J K Walters, stated that the Council's usual policy of putting income from the sale of assets in the single capital pot would be applied to any surplus.

8) Review of Existing Policy on Fire Protection Measures

Councillors L W McGuire and H J Fitch welcomed the review of the Council's policy on fire protection measures and its outcomes, although Councillor Fitch commented that it would be important also to address older properties at which there was not a sleeping risk, as the design of these buildings meant that they could be harder to escape from. The Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor J K Walters, welcomed the extension of the policy to fit fire sprinklers in premises other than schools at which there was a sleeping risk.

Other decisions

9) Speed Limits at North End, Bassingbourn and Wimpole Road, Barton

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, noted that the South Cambridgeshire Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee's decision on this issue had been a majority and not a unanimous decision. She also expressed concern that the introduction of physical measures to support the changes to speed limits discussed at the meeting would cost £1.5 million to implement in South Cambridgeshire, a cost which would be replicated across the County.

Councillor L J Wilson welcomed the Cabinet's decision and emphasised the need for consistent application of policy across the County.

10) Waste Private Finance Initiative Procurement

Councillor J Broadway and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, welcomed the Council's recent award of £35 million of PFI credits for its waste initiative. They thanked all officers who had worked on the bid, particularly the Assistant Director (Environment). Councillor Broadway noted that a Procurement Board was being established and asked for the Board proceedings to be reported regularly to the relevant Service Development Group.

11) Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Councillor J L Huppert commented on the importance of ensuring that benefits promised by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of becoming an 'excellent' authority were realised.

12) First Principles – Cambridgeshire County Council Early Years Policy

Councillor P J Downes welcomed the Government's investment in early years services. He emphasised the importance of developing support for parents through the integration of children's services, as parents played a key role in their children's early development.

The Lead Member for Lifelong Learning, Councillor V H Lucas, paid tribute to all members of the Care and Education Partnership for their contributions to the Early Years policy.

13) Annual Audit Management Letter 2003/04

14) Monitoring of Recommendations of Joint Review of Social Services

15) Adult Learning: Post-Inspection Report

16) Draft Corporate Plan: Consultation Responses

17) Integrated Community Equipment Service

Councillor C M Ballard noted that the Cambridgeshire Care Partnership had been very concerned about the performance of the Integrated Community Equipment Service. He welcomed the improvement in performance now taking place, but expressed concern that issues of effective management and stock control still needed to be addressed.

Councillor S J E King and the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, noted that the Service had recognised members' concerns and were working hard to improve performance. However, Councillor Powley noted that although monthly performance targets were now being achieved, performance had not improved sufficiently for the annual target to be met.

260. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Four written questions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 9:

- Councillor C M Ballard had asked the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, about the provision of financial assessments and welfare benefits advice for service users. The response set out figures for assessments and also the levels of welfare benefit generated as a result of advice given under 'Fairer Charging'.
- Councillor C M Carter had asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, about a report from Anne Campbell MP on bus services in Cambridge City. The response contained the reply from the Head of Passenger Transport to Anne Campbell's report and noted that

the Council kept bus services under ongoing review.

- Councillor J L Huppert had asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, about subsidised bus services and support for community transport. The response explained how bus subsidies were allocated and set out the County Council's funding for community transport services.
- Councillor I C Kidman had asked the Cabinet Members for Education, Libraries and Heritage and for Social Services, Councillors R Wilkinson and J A Powley, about numbers of children in out-of-County placements and the costs of these placements. The response set out this information and compared Cambridgeshire's situation with those of other local authorities.

Copies of the questions and responses are available from Democratic Services.

261. ORAL QUESTIONS

One oral question was asked under Council Procedure Rule 9:

- Councillor J L Huppert asked the Chairman of the Council, Councillor R Driver, about attendance by members of the public at Council meetings and steps taken to encourage this. The Chairman commented on attendance at meetings, referring to the responsibility of all members to encourage interest and attendance.

262. MOTIONS

Members noted that no motions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10.

263. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The following changes to Committee memberships and appointments to outside bodies were proposed by the Chairman, Councillor R Driver, seconded by Councillor P W Silby, and agreed unanimously:

- Councillor H J Fitch to replace Councillor T J Bear on the Standards Committee
- Councillor S J E King to be appointed to the following outside organisations:
 - The Community Safety Partnership (Violence)
 - The Wisbech Community Development Trust
 - Resource, the Regional Employers' Organisation (East of England)
- Councillor R B Martlew to be appointed as a substitute on the South Cambridgeshire Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee.

Chairman: