# CABINET: MINUTES

Date:	20 <sup>th</sup> December 2005		
Time:	10.00 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.		
Present:	Councillor J K Walters (Chairman)		
	Councillors: S F Johnstone, V H Lucas, L.W McGuire, L J Oliver, D R Pegram, J A Powley, J E Reynolds, J M Tuck. and F H Yeulett.		
	Also in Attendance		
	Councillors: N Harrison*, J Huppert*, A C Kent and S J E King.		
	* for part of the meeting only		
Apologies:	None		

# MINUTE SILENCE FOR THE LATE JOHN HORRELL

All present observed a minutes silence for John Horrell an honorary alderman of the County and previously a long standing member of the County Council who had sadly died the previous Saturday. He had currently been serving as the Mayor of Peterborough City Council.

# 91. MINUTES $6^{TH}$ DECEMBER 2005

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2005 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

# 92. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

## 93. REPORT FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEMBER LED REVIEW INTO ENERGY MANAGEMENT AND CABINET RESPONSE

Councillor Nichola Harrison the Chairman of the Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee introduced the findings of the scrutiny committee's member led review that had looked at potential benefits of an energy unit. This review had built on work carried out previously undertaken by the Environment and Transport Scrutiny Committee in 2003/04. The policy context of the wide-ranging review had taken account of Government policy, County Council energy policy and the steep increase in energy prices. It also highlighted that successful energy management could make a significant contribution to the Gershon requirement for efficiency savings.

The report detailed the proposed implementation plan, the development functions and coverage and set out a business case and the financial savings that could accrue. The report set out a number of funding options, recognising that further detailed preparatory work would be required.

The recommendations from the scrutiny committee was to ask Cabinet to develop a long term energy strategy and establish an energy management unit following the specification outlined in Appendix D, following an incremental long term plan as outlined in appendix E, both attached to the officers' report. The proposal was for an "Invest to Save bid" repayable from income generation. Attention was drawn to quick savings that could be achieved through invoice validation and energy efficiency savings through such measures as ensuring that lights were not left on unnecessarily in all Council owned properties.

Cabinet was persuaded by the evidence based proposal and business case put forward by the scrutiny committee that a specialist delivery vehicle in the form of an Energy Management Unit would be able to secure, in the longer term, substantial cost savings in respect of the Council's total energy bill.

#### It was resolved to:

- i) Welcome the report from the Member-Led Review and thank all those involved in the Review;
- ii) Agree to develop a long-term energy strategy during 2006/07; and
- iii) Agree to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and the Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Services) exploring the potential for the creation of an Energy Management Unit within the Corporate Services cash limit as set by Cabinet elsewhere on this agenda.

# 94. DISCLOSURES POLICY

This report had come forward as there was a need for clarity regarding what level of Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks should apply for Members and how the process of applying a check would be managed. Cabinet received a report seeking its support for an interim policy for disclosure checks for elected Members and which also recommended a policy that standard checks should be mandatory for all elected Members following the next full Council election. In addition, it proposed that that all Members who has contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults should be the subject of enhanced checks.

As Members undertook a wide range of roles, particularly in relation to community leadership, the public had the right to expect that Members could demonstrate high standards of integrity. This needed to be balanced carefully against the individual Member's right to privacy. As the Children's Services Authority, the County Council was responsible for ensuring that everyone who had contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults in the course of their duties, had undergone pre-employment or pre-appointment checks. It was highlighted in the officers' report that Council Members could fail in their role as Corporate Parents (as defined in the Children Act 1989) if the proposed policy was not implemented.

In discussion Cabinet hoped that new members who had been elected at the last election would be encouraged to undertake CRB checks as this was an advantage to the Council as whole.

As a change to the Council's constitution the proposed policy would require approval by the Council. Cabinet fully supported the recommendations but agreed a change to the wording in recommendation iii) adding the words "the requirement for".

#### It was resolved to RECOMMEND to the County Council that it:

- (i) Adopts the Disclosures Policy for Members as attached to the officers' report.
- (ii) Agrees that the following were subject to enhanced checks:
  All Members of Cabinet.
  Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council.
  Opposition Spokespersons for Children and Young People's Services and for Environment and Community Services. (Whose remit includes vulnerable adults and older people)
  Members of the Adoption and Fostering Panels.
  Assigned visitors for children's homes.
  Members engaged in regular liaison with young people or vulnerable group representative bodies such as the Youth Parliament.
- (iii) Agrees that, in the interim, the requirement for standard checks will be restricted to the following:

Scrutiny Committees: Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee

SDGs: CYPS Inclusion SDG CYPS Planning and Development SDG ECS Community Learning and Development and Adult Social Care SDG

 (iv) Agrees that following the next election the system be expanded to include a standard check for all Members as well as the enhanced checks set out in recommendation (ii).

# 95. REVENUE BUDGET CASH LIMITS – 2006/07 TO 2008/09

Cabinet received a report setting the recommended level of revenue budgets for each Office in the light of the latest information on the provisional Revenue Support and Dedicated Schools Grant Settlements.

The main points arising from the Provisional Settlement were that:

- The settlement provided £94.0 million of grant funding for 2006/07 and an indicative grant of £96.2m for2007/08 (excluding schools) which meant that an additional £1.8m of resource in 2006-07 over the initial Medium Term Corporate Priorities (MTCP) estimate but provides £3.5m less than estimated for 2007-08.
- This was the first multi-year settlement with allocations for 2006-07 and 2007-08 being announced though the figures for 2007/08 may be subject to alteration.
- The grant distribution system had been changed with Formula Spending Shares (FSS) and associated control totals and Assumed National Council Tax (ANCT) no longer being used. The new system was called the 4-Block Model, consisting of; Relative Needs, Relative Resources, Central Allocation and Floor Damping.
- After adjusting for the changes to the formula and in roles and responsibilities Cambridgeshire's formula grant allocation for 2006-07 is £94m, an increase of £1.9m or 2.1% on the current year. This increase is just 0.1% above the floor for Education and Social Services Authorities.
- Indicative allocations for 2007-08 had also been announced, but would be subject to change next year. The grant allocation for 2007-08 was £96.2m an adjusted increase of £2.5m or 2.7% (the 2006-07 figure was adjusted for transfers of specific grant into

formula grant). This increase put Cambridgeshire on the floor for Education and Social Services Authorities.

- The grant increase of 2.1% for 2006-07 was less than the average increase for Shire Counties of 2.9%. The 2.7% increase in 2007-08 was also lower than the Shire County average of 3.7%.
- There had been significant changes in the allocation of special and specific grants, and although the overall position was neutral, in real terms this has resulted in a reduction in the resources available from these sources.
- The figures were provisional and were subject to a six-week consultation period.

This was a very difficult settlement for the County Council. The principal problem with the newly introduced Block Mechanism was that by focusing service provision on the most socially excluded, it put Cambridgeshire County Council at a significant disadvantage being now almost at the floor in terms of grant support while not taking into account the significant demographic growth and the demands for additional services that this would bring. Any cuts to services were likely to impact the greatest on the most vulnerable members of the local community.

It was reported that each Office had prepared indicative budgets in line with the cash limits published in the 2005-06 Budget Book with the planning assumptions being that there was no additional funding available for new pressures, and Offices had identified additional savings to cover those pressures and those arising through the loss of other specific grants. The savings total therefore comprised three elements: Original Medium Term Corporate Priorities (MTCP) savings; additional savings of £4m reflecting forecast changes in the grant formula and formula shares and further savings needed to cover new pressures and losses on specific grants.

Cash Limits	2006-07 £000	2007-08 £000	2008-09 £000
CYPS – Non-Schools	62,305	67,229	69,919
ECS	155,514	168,584	175,225
OCS	59,175	59,977	62,479
Other Bodies	390	390	406
Unallocated	1,800	-1,800	600
Total Spending (Excluding Schools)	279,184	294,380	308,629
Schools (Dedicated Schools Grant)	267,068	284,040	295,424

The cash limits proposed for 2006-07 and indicative for 2007-08 and 2008-09 were as set out below:

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Funding Sources	£m	£m	£m
Formula Grant	94.0	96.2	98.1
Council Tax	183.5	196.5	208.8
Dedicated Schools Grant			
(central services component)	1.3	1.3	1.3
Local Authority Business			
Growth Incentives	0.4	0.4	0.4
Total Funding	279.2	294.4	308.6

The funding of the proposed budget assumed a 5% increase in Council Tax with the funding as set out in the following table:

The report set out the significant risks and opportunities in respect of the settlement. The working assumption in the report was that that council tax levels would be set at a year on year increase of 5% throughout the planning period. It was noted that the Government were expecting the national average Council Tax increase for 2006-07 and 2007-08 should be below 5%. For 2005-06, the County's Band D Council Tax at this level would be £845.82 which if agreed, would be the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest of the Shire Counties. Details were provided of the funding gap and additional funds available from Council Tax rises of 4%, 5% and 6%. A Council Tax rise under 4% was not seen as possible in terms of providing statutory required services.

Cabinet in making their recommendations in January would need to take into account the much worse settlement in 07/08 when considering what to do with the £1.8m available as one off-funding in the forthcoming year. Cabinet's initial view was it did not wish to raise Council Tax that could attract Government capping which if imposed could cost the authority an additional £500,000. Cabinet requested details of the gearing effect in future reports.

Details were provided of the extensive public consultation to be undertaken as well as the separate consultation on the Schools budget. In addition to what was set out and bearing in mind the low turnout to some of the drop-in events, it was suggested that officers should look at providing publicity leaflets in doctors' surgeries to encourage increased attendance. Also, if practicable parish councils should be sent e-mail reminders as their next round of meetings were likely to be after the consultation event.

The public consultation would present the following three options for Council Tax increases for 2006-07 and the associated impact on service investments and disinvestments:

- Option 1: Increase Council Tax by 4%
- Option 2: Increase Council Tax by 5%
- Option 3: Increase Council Tax by 6%

Cabinet would take the views of the public and other interested parties into consideration on 24<sup>th</sup> January, before making final recommendations on the Council's budget.

# It was resolved:

- (i) To approve the provisional cash limits set out above as the basis for:
  - Public consultation on the Council's proposed budget strategy, Council Tax increase and associated service investments and disinvestments;
  - Public consultation to include exploring the possibility of leaflets being provided in doctors surgeries;
  - Deputy Chief Executives and Portfolio Holders to present detailed budget proposals and associated service impacts to Cabinet on 24<sup>th</sup> January;

(ii) Delegate to the Leader of the Council the authority to:

- Make any minor changes to cash limits that may be required as a result of any additional information that emerges during January and with the final settlement;
- Approve the consultation process and content of consultation materials (Section 5 of the report);
- Approve the content of the settlement consultation response to Central Government (Section 6 of the report)

# 96. DESIGNATION OF LOCAL NATURE RESERVES (LNRs)

This report sought Cabinet authorisation to the declaration of 3 new Local Nature Reserves in Cambridgeshire.

As part of the County Council's Environment Strategy & Action Plan (ESAP) the County Council had a commitment to establish new Local Nature Reserves. Two sites had been identified in the ESAP with the Melwood Conservation Group proposing a third site. Currently it was noted that there were 13 Local Nature Reserves in Cambridgeshire.

It was reported that English Nature recommended that LNRs should be provided at a minimum level of 1 hectare (HA) per thousand population. In Cambridgeshire there were currently 121 hectares of LNR, which equated to 0.22 hectares per 1000 population. The new reserves would add an additional 13.5 more hectares (33 acres).

#### It was resolved to:

Endorse approval to the declaration of three new Local Nature Reserves at:

- Kingston and Bourn Old Railway, near Cambourne
- Rings End Pocket Park, near March
- Melwood, in Meldreth

## 97. ACCIDENT REMEDIES AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME – MEDIUM SIZED SAFETY SCHEMES

Cabinet received a report and noted the progress on schemes within the medium sized traffic and safety programme for 2005/06. Cabinet were also asked to determine the relative priority of schemes for the 2006/2007 programme and review the prioritisation methodology.

The priorities for the medium sized traffic management and safety schemes, which were funded from the Local Transport Plan, (LTP) required setting for the following financial year. £460,000 had been allocated for new schemes in the traffic and safety medium sized schemes programme. As some of the schemes required considerable preparation and might not be fully implemented in one year, the proposal was to move forward planning the following five schemes and approve commencement of the design and consultation work:

- B1050 London Road / West Park Street, Chatteris Traffic calming measures
- A1101, Leverington to Tydd Gote Route Safety Scheme
- Murrow Bank, Murrow Traffic calming measures.
- Walton Road, Wisbech. Traffic calming measures.
- Sawtry Village Roads Speed reducing measures.

It was expected that the five schemes agreed could be developed and implemented entirely within 2006/07.

In order to better inform assessment of scheme proposals in future years, it was reported that it would be necessary to carry out indicative designs and develop draft cost estimates of the other potential schemes on the list. However, as there was insufficient resource to carry out this work in one tranche it was recommended that a rolling programme of assessment should be used examining up to 5 proposed schemes each year using the current priority order of unapproved schemes. New entries to the programme would be required to provide indicative designs and cost estimates at the time of proposal. It was expected that in future years, only schemes which had had indicative designs completed and cost estimates made, would be assessed for inclusion in the following year's programme. Councillor Mac McGuire, the lead member for Transport and Delivery highlighted issues in respect of the Gilbert Road scheme, which had slipped from 05/06 to 2006/07 to be the first call on the budget. He reported that although previously a large number of local residents had been opposed to particular aspects of the scheme, recently a member of the community had organised meetings, which had indicated that there were a large number of residents in favour of the scheme. As a result, there appeared to be an even spread of opinion and therefore what was suggested was that the officers should speak further to the two groups to try to reconcile and agree a revised scheme.

#### It was resolved to:

- i) Note the progress on programme delivery.
- ii) Approve the priority order of medium sized schemes as set out in Appendix A.
- iii) Approve the commencement of design and consultation on schemes 1 to 5 in Appendix A.
- iv) Approve the proposal to amend the assessment and prioritisation process by carrying out indicative designs and cost estimates.
- v) Ask officers in respect of the development work on the Gilbert Road scheme (which had been deferred until 2006/07), to contact those groups in favour and opposed to the scheme to seek an acceptable solution within the allocated budget and which also met the stated objectives. If this was not possible, another scheme from the list should be brought forward.

# 98. AMENDMENT OF THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE MINERALS AND WASTE DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Cabinet received a report requesting approval to a revision to the Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste Development Scheme

The decision was required as a result of a predicted delay to the Preferred Options Plan consultation which would impact of the Minerals And Waste Development Plan (M&WDP). As the M&WDP was a jointly prepared plan, changes to the timetable required approval by both the County Council and Peterborough City Council.

Cabinet comments included:

 Concerns that there was still no national or regional hazardous waste strategy. In response it was reported that a regional strategy was being prepared and that the County Council would be one of the required consultees. • One member queried whether the slippage set out in section 3 of the report should have been identified as a risk to the overall timetable, bearing in mind that it was already drawn very tight. In response it was confirmed that it had been assessed within the overall risk strategy but was considered a low risk in view of the commitment of both authorities to the delivery the plan within the overall agreed timetable.

# It was resolved:

- To agree that an amendment to the Development Scheme timetable be made so that the preferred options stage for the Minerals and Waste Development Plan (M&WDP) could be delayed from March/April 2006 for a period of around two months.
- ii) To delegate to the portfolio holder for Environment and Community Services, in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive (Environment and Community Services), the authority to approve the amendments required.

# 97. EFFICIENCY STRATEGY

Cabinet received a report seeking approval of an Efficiency Strategy. Local authorities were in the first full year of the current Government three year plan to deliver agreed efficiency gains year on year to agreed targets. Cambridgeshire had submitted its first round of annual efficiency statements and was actively managing a programme to ensure delivery of gains and to develop the underpinning thinking and approach to becoming a more efficient organisation.

An Efficiency Programme Board has been established with an agreed mandate and vision. To provide a strong foundation for the programme over the next 2 years and beyond required an agreed corporate strategy.

The following issues were raised:

- A member asked how piloting zero based budgeting would benefit the strategy generally. In response it was indicated that moving away from cash limits would encourage budget holders to look beyond balancing the budget to thinking more strategically about what resources were needed and to consider wider efficiencies that could be achieved.
- In section 3.2 in respect of learning new techniques in managing resources and achieving efficiency currently this did not include

energy resource use within departments – in response it was acknowledged that this should be included.

- Issues were raised about why there were no costings in the plan. It was explained that once the Strategy was approved, the Efficiency Programme Board would allocate costings and any additional funding requirements would be accessed via bids to the Spend to Save Fund and from initiatives with the private sector.
- Members were concerned to ensure that partners had been involved in drafting the Plan, as they needed to take ownership. In reply it was reported that PCTS representatives sat on the board and that district Councils and neighbouring County Councils would be consulted on the plan early in the New Year. There would be flexibility to amend the strategy as a result of feedback received from partners.

## It was resolved:

To approve the Efficiency Strategy as attached to the officers' report.

## 98. THE CORPORATE DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995 (DDA) (AS AMENDED BY THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY ACT 2001) COMPLIANCE STRATEGY 2004-2009

This report updated Cabinet on progress in implementing the Corporate Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) Compliance Strategy and to provide feedback on issues raised through consultation on DDA issues within Cambridgeshire County Council. Regulations to cover new duties were expected in December regarding the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Act that would require necessary updating and further dissemination of the Strategy in advance of the December 2006 implementation date.

In terms the duties imposed upon Local Education Authorities by the Act, a member made reference to whether the four-year plan to upgrade all school buildings to a basic standard of accessibility could be achieved within present resources. Whilst the intention had been to meet the 2008 timescale, it had proved necessary to prioritise adaptations to accommodate individual pupils and individual employees needs, the Strategy identified that this could impact on the target date and the sufficiency of the available resources. As a result, in April 2005 Cabinet had reviewed the policy on investment in adaptations to schools to meet parental preferences, and agreed that the County Council would only meet parental preferences when this was consistent with the efficient use of resources. In terms of compliance with Government requirements, the Act only entitled a pupil to access a suitable curriculum not an accessible school building.

## It was resolved to:

Endorse the Corporate DDA Compliance Strategy and approve the updating of the Strategy and Action Plan.

# 99. CAMBRIDGE SOUTHERN FRINGE CYCLE ISSUES

Cabinet received a report seeking approval on the use of the remaining Growth Area Delivery Grant (GADG) cycleway funding in the Cambridge Southern Fringe.

The report included consideration of three projects from the original list approved by Cabinet that had so far not been undertaken and for which the money could be used - Sheep's Green Bridge, Hobson's Conduit path and Stone Bridge.

The Sheeps Green Bridge scheme was the one that local members considered would provide significant benefits to the majority of users. Officers therefore advised that the most appropriate and beneficial use of the remaining GADG funding would be on the Sheeps Green Bridge improvement project.

Cllr Kent a local Members spoke in support of the scheme while indicating that if funding for a new bridge was eventually secured, it should be properly designed, incorporating a pedestrian walkway and should be built to last for a substantial period. She also referred to the footpath along Hobson's Conduit commenting that the scheme presented in the current report was more substantial than required. The issue was for funding to be provided to improve the path to an acceptable standard.

#### It was resolved:

To approve construction of improved ramps to the Sheep's Green Bridge, Cambridge.

# 100. PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Cabinet received a report on the results of the public consultation exercise on council priorities for spending to help inform the MTCP process. The survey had obtained views of a representative sample of the Cambridgeshire population who consistently gave the greatest priority to spending on the broad themes of:

- Supporting older people
- Improving standards in schools
- Improving traffic flow/roads/public transport.

In contrast, the Library Service was consistently at or near the bottom of the list of public priorities. Archives, arts and museums, trading standards, countryside access, and youth work was also a given lower priority.

In terms of key stakeholder consultation the key priority areas were improving roads and reducing congestion and improving standards in schools. Providing better libraries and better access to the countryside were given lowest priorities. The top priority for spending was for primary schools with secondary schools the second highest priority followed by support for older people and support for families. Archives, countryside services, libraries and trading standards all received little or no support.

# It was resolved:

- To note the findings of the public consultation exercise on council priorities for spending and to take account of them as the Medium Term Corporate Priorities (MTCP) programme and budget setting process developed.
- ii) To note the implications for the Corporate Plan spending.

## 101. RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT "THE FUTURE OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN CAMBRIDGE CITY AND SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE"

A report was received advising Cabinet of the proposed response by the Director of Adult Services to the consultation document 'The future of mental health services in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire'. The report also set out the implications of the proposals for the Council.

The City and South Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) had set out a series of proposals to identify savings totalling £3 million over the three years, beginning in 2004/5. £2 million was required to be saved within 2005/6 and this had generated additional emergency measures. The proposals had been the subject of public consultation, which was due to end on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2006.

#### It was resolved:

i) To approve the response appended to the officers' report to the consultation document "The future of mental health services in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire". ii) That the response should be in the name of the whole Cabinet and should be signed by the Portfolio holder.

# 102. DRAFT CABINET AGENDA PLAN 24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2006

It was orally reported that the following reports had been deleted

Item 8. ESPO New Constitution – now put back to October 07 Item 18. Consultation on Primary Care Trust reforms

Moved

Item 5. Cambridgeshire Statement of Community Involvement moved to 7<sup>th</sup> February.

Item 7. Secondary and Post 16 Provision to Northstowe – to determine Age Range for the proposed new school – moved to 28<sup>th</sup> February Item 10. Travellers Policy Statement moved to 28<sup>th</sup> February Item 12. Cambridge Sports Lake moved to 28<sup>th</sup> February Item 17. Cambridgeshire Guided Busway to 7<sup>th</sup> February

Due to the number of changes to the January meeting a further updated agenda plan was tabled and is attached to these minutes.

# 103. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

## It was resolved:

That under section 100 (a) 4 of the Local Government Act 1972 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 9 of schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the report referring to any terms proposed or to be proposed by or in the course of negotiations for a contract for the supply of goods and services.

# 104. EXTENSION OF FROZEN MEALS CONTRACT

Cabinet received a report requesting an extension of the current Frozen Meal contract (WRVS).

Following the integration of Older People's Services with Primary Care Trusts, it was considered that more time was required for integration to settle down and the market place to stabilise before the County Council began the process of re-tendering the "Choices" frozen meals service.

On that basis it had previously been agreed that it would be appropriate for service continuity for the Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) to continue to provide the service for an additional one-year. This one-year extension of the contract was now due to expire on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 2006. However due to current lack of capacity to manage the work, there was a need to create a temporary extension to the WRVS contract in order to manage the time pressures associated with going through a process of tendering for the whole service.

# It was resolved to:

- i) Note the current progress with the Frozen Meals retendering process.
- Agree to an extension of current contract for frozen meals service provide by Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) beyond the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 2006 up to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2006 in order to realistically accommodate reentering of the contract.

Chairman 24<sup>th</sup> January 2006