

CABINET : MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 30 October 2001

Time: 10.00 – 11.30

Place: Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present: Councillor J K Walters (Chairman)

Councillors S F Johnstone, V Lucas, A K Melton, S B Normington,
L Oliver, D R Pegram, J A Powley and J E Reynolds

Also in attendance:

Councillors S V Brinton, J A P Eddy and M L Leeke

Apologies: Councillor R Wilkinson

53. CABINET MINUTES – 25 SEPTEMBER 2001

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 25 September 2001 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

54. CAMBRIDGE SUB-REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

The Chief Executive reported that earlier in the year consultants had been commissioned jointly by the County Council, the East of England Development Agency and the DTLR to examine a range of issues associated with the implementation of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan. The Implementation Study had concentrated on the Cambridge sub-region and would be issued on 31 October 2001.

Regional planning guidance had established a challenging development requirement for the sub-region, not just in terms of scale and cost of the infrastructure to be provided, but also the speed with which it would need to be delivered.

The local partners had discussed the consultant's recommendations and would publish a response to them at the same time as the study itself was published. There had been close liaison with the local Government Office (Go East) and it was expected that central government would have a part to play when the study was taken forward. The Cambridge sub-region was an ideal study for Government because of the innovative nature of the proposals, the national importance of the area and the willing participation of the local partners.

The Cabinet recognised the need for an appropriate organisational structure to be established to secure implementation of the Structure Plan within the very ambitious timescale required. The recommendation before the Cabinet reflected the need to authorise the Leader to take appropriate action on behalf of the Council within the principles already established.

The Cabinet decided:

To authorise the Leader of the Council to agree statements on behalf of the County Council with regard to the Implementation Study and the local partners' response and to represent the Council in subsequent discussions with Government Ministers.

55. CAMBRIDGE DIRECT CONTACT CENTRE PROCUREMENT

The Cabinet considered a report about the proposal to establish the 'Cambridgeshire Direct' Contact Centre in accordance with the Council's E-Government strategy. The Contact Centre would be established in December 2002 initially to deal with Social Services, Libraries and Trading Standards calls.

The Cabinet noted that the Contact Centre would form part of a number of initiatives to enable citizens to access the Council's services via the World Wide Web, by telephone, in One-Stop-Shops and in all of the Council's offices. A wide range of consultation with partner organisations was in hand, particularly with the Cambridgeshire Health Authority and District Councils. It was confirmed that callers to the Contact Centre would receive a personal response rather than an automated one.

The Cabinet decided:

To approve the establishment of a Contact Centre and the associated procurement process but emphasised that the cost must be contained within the MTSP funding provided, supplemented by resources transferred from within existing service budgets.

56. SINGLE STATUS – FINAL STAGE IMPLEMENTATION

The Council's People Strategy set out how the Council would work with its employees to improve performance and to provide more customer focussed, accessible and flexible services. The strategy explained the Council's approach to the recruitment, management, development, performance and reward of its employees.

The Cabinet considered a report about issues concerning pay determination, the main components of a reward strategy and various drivers for change. The pressure on the organisation to recruit and retain quality employees remained significant and it was therefore important that the Council should determine its revised approach and seek early implementation. The Trade Unions would continue to be involved in discussions about changes to the current pay arrangements.

The Cabinet decided:

To adopt the Hay job evaluation scheme and the policy and principles outlined in the report (set out in Appendix I to the signed copy of the Cabinet Minutes) to guide the negotiations with the Trade Unions on the job evaluation scheme, grading review and revisions to current pay arrangements. *Care would be taken to ensure that rewards matched to performance would not be divisive [added – Cabinet Meeting 20/11/01].*

57. AGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

It was reported that recent advice on the interpretation of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Modification of Enactments and Further Provisions) (England) Order 2001 was that the Council should review its existing agency arrangements covered by the provisions.

The Cabinet decided:

- (a) To confirm that all pre-existing agency arrangements which are otherwise affected by the Order be continued until their current expiry.
- (b) That Service Directors be authorised to liaise with Agent Authorities and Principle Authorities to ensure, as far as possible, that those arrangements continue.
- (c) That Service Directors be authorised to negotiate any new agency arrangements and to report to Cabinet for approval of those new arrangements or (in appropriate circumstances) for referral to full Council.

58. DRAFT REVISED BEST VALUE PROGRAMME – THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

The Cabinet considered the draft revised Best Value Programme for 2002/2007 and noted that this was an evolving working draft. The revised approach to Best Value would see fewer, better and more strategic reviews undertaken aimed at achieving a step change in performance. There would be more cross-cutting reviews. It was intended to publish the Best Value Programme in next year's Performance Plan.

The Cabinet discussed the draft programme and suggested several possible changes to the phasing, in particular, whether:

- the review of availability/access to and delivery of services should be moved from 2003/04
- the land use and transport planning review should be brought forward from 2006/07
- the emergency planning and recruitment and retention of staff reviews should be brought forward from 2003/04 and the Traveller review deferred from 2002/03

The Cabinet Member responsible for Best Value, Councillor R Pegram, welcomed the report and explained that he had asked for regular monthly reports from Members on the progress of individual reviews.

Some of the reviews would impact on the Council's work with partner agencies and in those circumstances it would be essential to acknowledge that the Council's priorities might not always be those of its partner agencies.

The Cabinet decided:

To endorse the proposed Best Value programme as a "working draft", subject to further refinement prior to publication in next year's Best Value Performance Plan, and that the final programme for year 1 be sent for information to Members of the Cabinet.

59. SUPPORTING PEOPLE: STRATEGIC PLAN CONSULTATION

The Cabinet considered a report about the requirements of “Supporting People”, the Government programme aimed at supported housing and housing support to vulnerable people in their own homes. The programme provided an opportunity to make housing-related support services and social care services more coordinated and coherent in order to promote the independence of vulnerable people. The nature of the cash-limited budget for “Supporting People” for Cambridgeshire from 1 April 2003 onwards and the proposed programme of consultation about the strategy were noted.

The Cabinet decided:

To endorse the proposed approach and content of the draft strategy as a suitable basis for consultation, subject to simplification of some of the text.

60. THE COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES INITIATIVE IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

The Cabinet considered a report about the Community Legal Services initiative and the key implications of membership of the Local Partnership for the County Council’s arrangements for funding local legal advice suppliers.

The Cabinet decided:

To endorse County Council involvement in the Cambridgeshire Community Legal Services Partnership and to appoint the Cabinet Lead Member for Community and Economic Development to be the Council’s nominated representative on the Partnership Steering Group.

61. COST RECOVERY FOR ADDITIONAL SAFETY CAMERAS

In July the Cabinet supported a proposal to submit an operational case to Government to use revenue generated from speeding fines to fund additional safety cameras in Cambridgeshire. Since then a multi-agency partnership had submitted an operational case and this had been accepted onto the Government scheme.

The Cabinet welcomed the successful outcome and re-emphasised the importance of an effective public relations campaign to make clear that the scheme was intended not as a means of revenue generation but rather to achieve a real reduction in the level of casualties from road accidents.

The potential level of financial risk arising from the scheme was discussed and it was noted that, in the unlikely event that expenditure associated with camera activity exceeded the netted off receipts, the deficit would be apportioned between the partners on a geographical basis provided for in the agreement.

The Cabinet decided:

To give approval to enable the Cambridgeshire Safety Camera Partnership to proceed.

62. BUDGET MONITORING 2001/02

The Cabinet considered a report summarising the financial results for revenue, capital and trading units for the first half of 2001/02, including the forecast outturn results for the current year. In relation to the performance of Trading Units, the Director of Resources explained that the estimated deficit of the school catering service would be recovered in future years.

The Cabinet decided:

To note the trends in spending to date in 2001/02.

63. PROCESS FOR STRUCTURE PLAN REVIEW

The Cabinet considered a report reviewing progress on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Deposit Draft Structure Plan.

The Cabinet decided:

To note the progress with the review of the Structure Plan.

64. OPTIONS FOR SECURING THE FUTURE OF ETHELDRED HOUSE

The Cabinet considered a report proposing the development of additional care beds on the Etheldred House site in order to meet the pressing needs to increase the number of care beds in the south of the county.

The Cabinet decided:

To endorse the proposed development at Etheldred House, Histon.

65. SSI SPRING POSITION STATEMENT

The Cabinet considered a report setting out the Social Services Department's performance in relation to the Performance Assessment Framework which informed the Social Services Inspectorate Spring Position Statement. Overall there had been excellent performance on Children's Services and good performance on Adult's Services given the low level of resources available in Cambridgeshire.

The Social Services Department was congratulated on achieving such a good and improving level of performance, although it was acknowledged that there was still some way to go in relation to a small number of targets. The overall set of performance indicators was being used to enable more local targets to be set on a team basis.

The Cabinet decided:

To note the performance of the Social Services Department in relation to the Performance Assessment Framework.

66. CABINET OUTLINE AGENDA – 20 NOVEMBER 2001

The Cabinet:

Noted the outline agenda and the intention to consider the options analysis for MTSP priorities at the December meeting of the Cabinet rather than the next meeting.

Chairman