

## **CABINET: MINUTES**

**Date:** Tuesday, 23 July 2002

**Time:** 10.00 – 12.05

**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  
J E Reynolds and R Wilkinson

### **174. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18 June 2002 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **175. REFERRALS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

There were no direct referrals from Scrutiny Committees to report. However, Members were advised that, in view of the tight timescale for submission of the Council's 'Annex E' bid for funding to Government, the report on the Rapid Transit Proposals (agenda item no. 14) had been considered by the Environment and Transport Scrutiny Committee prior to this meeting. Comments made by the Committee would be reported under the relevant agenda item - Minute No. 187 below refers.

### **176. FAIRER CHARGING**

The Cabinet considered a paper which sought approval to undertake public consultations on the proposed arrangements for the first phase of the Fairer Charging implementation and proposed increases in existing fees / charges to compensate for the lost income incurred as a result of this arrangement. Attention was drawn to an error contained within the paragraph 3.14 of the report and related amendments to the summary of options for increasing charges (attached at Appendix 1 to the report).

The Council was required to meet Fairer Charging guidelines, which had been introduced by Government as a new mandatory framework that set out a system of charging and financial assessment for non-residential users. Implementation would be in two phases:

Phase 1 – From 1 October 2002, change in charging policies for clients who receive more than 10 hours care per week.

Phase 2 – From 1 April 2003, full implementation of the guidelines.

No additional funding would be provided to implement Fairer Charging, as the Government expected the effects of the new framework to be cost neutral for local authorities. However, the estimated impact on income to the Council would be a loss of around £250k for the six months from 1 October 2002, and a full year loss of income of £500k for 2003 / 04. As a result, other charges would need to be increased and / or new charges levied if the Council was to cover some of the financial losses from implementation of the new guidelines. It was noted that a further report on the results of the consultation exercise would be presented to the Cabinet on 3 September 2002.

The Cabinet noted that it was anticipated that wider consultation on how proposed changes should be funded would be undertaken as part of the formal public budget consultations to be undertaken later in the year.

The Cabinet decided:

To approve consultation on the options for increasing charges and the implementation of the first phase of Fairer Charging.

#### **177. CAPITAL STRATEGY / CORPORATE ASSETT MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Cabinet considered the Corporate Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy for Cambridgeshire, which would need to be submitted to Go East by 31 July 2002.

It was noted that revised DTLR guidance issued in May and June 2002 had meant that the documents had to be effectively re-written. However, the main thrust of the documents and the Council's approach to asset management and capital planning remained unchanged. The introduction of PREMIS for data management and the use of Geographic Area Reviews to challenge asset utilisation were the key themes in the Council's submission.

The Plan and Strategy would be marked by central Government against a series of assessment criteria and the Council would receive a rating for the documents; either 'good', 'satisfactory' or 'poor'. The results were expected in December 2002 in advance of the award of funding for the 2003 / 04 financial year.

Attention was drawn to the specific issues that required Cabinet consideration. It was noted that the Resources Service Development Group had raised no adverse comments during consideration of the documents.

It was agreed:

To approve the Capital Strategy and Corporate Asset Management Plan for submission to the DTLR within the specified timescale.

## **178. CAMBRIDGE SUB-REGION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

The Cabinet received an up-date (for information purposes) on work being undertaken both locally and with central Government with regard to the Cambridge Sub-Region Implementation Plan.

The Cabinet noted that the Government had been invited to take an active role with the Council by using the Cambridge Sub-Region as an 'Active Case Study' to research the practical implications of implementing a strategy. Work was progressing in partnership with businesses and with District Councils to implement different strands of the strategy. A particularly pleasing aspect of the work to date had been the willingness of stakeholder groups to play an active part in the implementation strategy.

The Cabinet welcomed the progress being made and the intention to submit regular up-date reports to the Cabinet.

It was noted that the Leader and Chief Executive would be meeting with the Director of the Regional Government Office shortly, when it was hoped that more information regarding the implications of the Government's proposals for the planning system would be provided.

It was agreed:

To receive the report on the current situation regarding the Implementation Plan and to receive future reports as and when decisions are required.

## **179. TRADING STANDARDS PERFORMANCE PLAN**

The Cabinet was invited to review and endorse the Council's first Trading Standards Performance Plan in advance of it being submitted to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

Since April 2002, the Council had been required to develop a Trading Standards performance plan, but guidance from the DTI had not been issued in time for local authorities to submit their plans by 1 April 2002 and so a period of grace had been allowed. In future years, the Plan would need to be submitted in advance of the start of the financial year.

It was noted that the Plan was intended to cover all aspects of the Trading Standards Service that were not covered by the Divisional Service Plan and the Food Plan in accordance with the National Performance Framework developed by the DTI. It related to the main areas of enforcement responsibility for the Council and linked into the Divisional, Departmental and corporate Best Value Performance Plans and with the Council's Medium Term Service Priorities.

Members welcomed efforts made to increase the profile of the Trading Standards Service and paid tribute to the work being undertaken by the Service, particularly in educating young people.

The following points emerged from discussion by the Cabinet:

- The need to refer within the Plan to examples of innovative methods of service delivery, such as CEDRIC, being developed by the Trading Standards Service.
- The future funding implications for the Council, given the increasing number of regulations that the Service was required to enforce.

It was agreed:

To endorse the Trading Standards Plan for submission to the Department of Trade and Industry.

## **180. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY**

The Cabinet considered a report outlining the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Council's proposed policy on access to information arising from the Act.

The Freedom of Information Act provided a general right for the public to access all types of recorded information held by public authorities, from January 2005. In order to encourage pro-active provision of information, authorities would be required to produce a publication scheme, to be submitted (in draft form) to the Information Commissioner by the end of December 2002 and to be in place and approved by February 2003.

It was proposed that the Council adopt the following policy:

'The Council is fully committed to the principles laid down in the Act. It is committed to:

- (i) promoting a positive attitude to dealing with requests for information;
- (ii) maintaining information in a manner that effectively serves its own needs and those of the Government and its customers; and disposing of information which is no longer required;
- (iii) increasing awareness and understanding of the implications of the Act by:
  - (a) training and educating its members and employees; and
  - (b) appropriate publicity.'

It was noted that, although significant investment in terms of officer time would be needed to implement the requirements of the Act, no additional funding would be available from Government.

The Cabinet decided:

To agree the suggested policy on access to information.

## 181. REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY CONSULTATION

The Cabinet considered a report containing proposals for the Council's response to consultation on the Draft East of England Waste Management Strategy, which been prepared by the Regional Waste Technical Advisory Body (RTAB) for the East of England Local Government Conference. Responses to the consultation would need to be submitted by 31 July 2002.

It was proposed that the draft Strategy be broadly welcomed, subject to the points raised in the report. The Cabinet Lead Member for Environment and Transport tabled an amendment to point e) of the recommendation in order to clarify the allocation of priorities and responsibilities for District and County Councils.

It was noted that the Transport and Waste and Strategic Planning SDGs had indicated support for the proposed response. A supplementary paper detailing the views expressed by SDG Members was tabled, for information.

The Cabinet decided:

To broadly welcome the draft East of England Waste Management Strategy, subject to the comments set out in the report and summarised as follows:

- a) the inadequate statistical basis of the strategy as it relates to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and the need for revision;
- b) more specific guidance required in relation to hazardous waste;
- c) greater emphasis to be given to the reuse of waste materials and to recycling market development;
- d) an acknowledgement that there may be specified circumstances where non-household waste may be incinerated without energy recovery; and
- e) the allocation of priorities and responsibilities - particularly aspects which can best be delivered regionally - and the need to specify those aspects of the strategy which rely on delivery at County or District level. Cambridgeshire County Council seeks continued emphasis in the final draft on the principle that key decisions on
  - waste planning policy
  - waste site selection
  - municipal waste strategy

should continue to be taken at County level. This is where the main legal responsibilities, resources and organisational

capacity are vested, and is where the best integration with the needs of local communities can be achieved.

## **182. SUPPORTING PEOPLE – STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Cabinet considered the latest version of the Supporting People Strategy, which had been revised following initial consideration of the Plan by the Cabinet in March 2002.

The Cabinet was asked to endorse the Strategy, and specifically the proposed capital and revenue priorities for the period 2003 – 2008, so that partners would be able to work these up into funded schemes where resources were available translate these into their capital and revenue budget programmes for 2003 / 04 and subsequent years. The priorities were identified as:

- for capital schemes – care leavers in Fenland, teenage parents and homeless people in Huntingdonshire, extra sheltered housing for older people in South Cambridgeshire, and ex-offenders (particularly in the north of the county)
- for revenue schemes – vulnerable young people (especially 16/17 year olds), substance misuse, mental health and preventive schemes for older people and those with a physical disability.

It was recognised that the Plan continued to be developed and that more work would be needed in order to address any information gaps.

The Cabinet agreed:

To approve the Supporting People Strategic Plan and endorse it as a basis for further discussions with partner agencies.

## **183. OASIS CENTRE, WISBECH**

The Cabinet considered proposals to redevelop the Oasis Centre, Wisbech with a 55 place neighbourhood nursery, Family Learning Centre and community facilities.

The redevelopment of the Centre was an important aspect of regenerating a socially deprived area of the County. A significant amount of partnership working had been undertaken with local agencies in order to develop the proposals. The Wisbech Community Development Trust had now taken over the management of the Centre and had secured revenue and capital funding from various sources towards the development of the new Centre. A feasibility study had shown that additional land and a new building required to accommodate the Family Learning Centre and community facilities would cost approximately £1.2m. The Cabinet was asked to support the Trust in the procurement of the new building and to transfer the site to the Trust to enable the scheme to progress.

The Cabinet agreed:

- (i) to approve a supplementary capital estimate of £50,000 to enable design work to be commissioned on behalf of the Trust to prepare a scheme for the submission of a planning application for the redevelopment of the Oasis Centre in Wisbech and residential development, the sale of the residential land being expected to generate approximately £50,000 for the County Council in due course; and
- (ii) to approve preparation of arrangements to give a grant to the Trust in the form of the value of the estimated site value of £100,000, subject to:
  - confirmation of the capital funding required for the scheme;
  - business plans demonstrating the viability of the proposed nursery, Family Learning Centre and community facilities; and
  - nomination rights for the County Council and other stakeholders to make appointments to the Trust's Board.

#### **184. HISTORICAL RESOURCE AND CULTURAL CENTRE – PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVE (PFI)**

The Cabinet received a report which outlined progress in relation to the submission of a PFI bid to Government and the identification of a suitable site for the proposed Historical Resource and Cultural Centre.

The Cabinet noted that possible locations had been narrowed down to two sites for the establishment of the Centre had been investigated, at a new development at Arbury, Cambridge or on the Imperial War Museum site at Duxford Airfield. Following consideration of the availability and cost of the sites, a new development at Arbury was considered to be the preferred option.

Officers confirmed that, since the report had been written, DCMS had given final approval for the PFI credits needed to establish the Centre. It was now important that the preferred site be secured as quickly as possible, as this would impact upon the attractiveness of the overall scheme to potential PFI partners. Furthermore, it was unlikely that similar land would be available elsewhere in Cambridge and the offer of PFI credits from Government was time-limited. The owner of the land was prepared to enter into a conditional contract that would allow for the purchase of the site for the Centre or other educational use; a non-returnable deposit of £5K would be payable at this stage.

It was noted that:

- as part of the conditional contract for the purchase of the preferred site, a means of reaching a fair valuation of the land (should it need to be repurchased by the current owner) would need to be agreed. It was envisaged that an independent property adviser would undertake the valuation. The Head of Property and Procurement would agree the detail of the contract in accordance with the Council's scheme of delegation.

- Officers would continue to report progress on the scheme to the relevant Spokes / SDG.

The Cabinet agreed:

To the purchase of a site on the Arbury Development, subject to the ability to sell the site back if the project is abandoned.

#### **185. MEDIUM TERM SERVICE PRIORITIES (MTSP) 2003 - 06**

The Cabinet gave initial consideration to some of the emerging issues arising from the Medium Term Service Priorities for the next 3-year period. Relevant Cabinet Members and Service Development Groups had considered the broad issues for each Service during June and July and in September the Cabinet would discuss the financing consequences of various options and the basis on which budget consultation should be undertaken.

Members commented on the difficulty of identifying new areas of saving or commenting on priorities at this stage, given the level of uncertainty surrounding the likely budget settlement for 2003 / 04.

The Cabinet decided:

To note emerging issues arising from MTSP proposals and priorities for budget consultation.

#### **186. FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2001 / 02**

The Cabinet considered a report summarising the draft financial results for revenue, capital and trading units during 2001/2002. The report also set out the position on balances, carry forwards, reserves and treasury management and reviewed the position on debt management and efficiency savings.

It was noted that an internal audit was being undertaken to ascertain why the correct level of overspend for Social Services had not been reported to Cabinet at its May 2002 meeting. Further information on this matter would be reported back to Cabinet in September, when action proposed to address all overspends on the 2001 / 02 budget would be outlined.

The Cabinet decided:

- (1) to note the revenue expenditure of Committees in 2001-02.
- (2) to approve the carry forwards and reserves.
- (3) to note the report on Treasury Management activities.
- (4) to note the report on Trading Units' performance.
- (5) to note the report on capital spending and financing in 2001-02.



- (6) to note the report on Debt Management.
- (7) to note the report on Efficiency Savings.
- (8) to authorise the Director of Resources formally to close the accounts in the best interests of the County Council.
- (9) to note that any action that needs to be taken for the current year, in response to the outturn figures, will be recommended to Cabinet in September, alongside consideration of the latest budgetary control report for 2002-03.

#### **187. RAPID TRANSIT – BID FOR FUNDING THROUGH THE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN**

The Cabinet received a report which outlined the findings of the assessment of the Rapid Transit proposals for the A14 corridor following the CHUMMS Study and sought approval from Cabinet to submit these findings in the Annex E bid for funding to Government.

The Cabinet noted that the Government had approved the package of proposals contained within the CHUMMS Study and had requested the Council to lead on the preparation of the public transport elements of the package, including preparation of an appraisal of the proposed Rapid Transit (guided bus) scheme for the A14 corridor. The Council was requested to complete the appraisal and make a submission (known as an Annex E report) to Government alongside the Local Transport Plan (LTP) Annual Performance Report at the end of July 2002.

Based on the specification for the scheme developed during the appraisal period, the Rapid Transit scheme would cost in the region of £73m to construct. The submission of an Annex E report to Government under the LTP major schemes programme would provide the quickest means of financing and delivering the scheme. This was an important issue given that the A14 improvements and the delivery of the proposed new settlement would be contingent on completion of the Rapid Transit scheme. Other key conclusions of the appraisal were:

- the scheme will provide a flexible transport system for the A14 corridor, utilising segregation where possible and bus priorities where not;
- the scheme is forecast to carry over 18,000 passengers per day in 2016;
- through modelling work, it has been identified that the scheme will be financially viable at an operating level;
- the scheme will bring about significant benefits to users and non users (principally car drivers on the A14) alike – the overall cost benefit ratio is 4.8:1, very good for schemes of this nature; and

- the scheme will result in significant accident savings on the A14.

The Annex E submission still required some fine tuning (i.e. sensitivity testing and formatting), which the Cabinet was asked to delegate to the Cabinet Lead Member for Environment and Transport.

It was anticipated that a decision on the Annex E bid would be made in December 2002. In the meantime, further work would be progressed on the details and method of implementation for the scheme, which would feed into the next key stage; the submission of a Transport and Works Act (TWA) application later in the year.

Members noted that, in view of the tight timescales for submission of the Bid to Government, the Environment and Transport Scrutiny Committee had considered the proposals prior to this meeting. The Scrutiny Committee had indicated no objection to the Council to seeking Government funding through the Annex E submission at this stage. It was, however, recognised that more detail would need to be provided as part of the TWA application and the Committee wished to explore the detailed aspects of the scheme in due course.

The following points emerged from discussion by the Cabinet:

- the limitations of the light and heavy rail option.
- the need for the Nuneaton to Felixstowe rail link to be up-graded in order to reduce freight movement on the A14.
- there would need to be easy access to the main guided bus route from outlying villages.
- it would be important to identify a route that could provide quick access into Cambridge.

The Cabinet decided:

- (1) To approve the Annex E bid for funding for the Rapid Transit scheme (as attached to the report).
- (2) To delegate responsibility for finalising the Annex E submission to the Cabinet Lead Member for Environment and Transport.

## **188. SCHOOL ORGANISATION ISSUES: PROGRESS REPORT**

The Director of Education, Libraries and Heritage reported that items on the proposed amalgamation / relocation of Milton Road Infants and Junior Schools, Cambridge and the proposed establishment of a new primary school in Ely, which had previously been programmed to be submitted to this meeting, would need to be referred to the School Organisation Committee for

Cambridgeshire for determination because objections had been received by the LEA to the proposals.

**189. SOCIAL SERVICES STAR RATINGS 2001 / 02**

The Cabinet noted that the Department of Health Social Services Inspectorate had published its performance (star) ratings for all Social Services authorities in the country for the first time in May 2002, and Cambridgeshire had received a 2 out of 3 star rating for performance in 2001 / 02. Cambridgeshire had been judged as serving most children well and serving some adults well. Prospects for improvement were judged as promising in both areas.

The Cabinet joined the Lead Member for Social Services in congratulating the Director of Social Services and her staff for their hard work. Reference was made to the significant achievement of moving from special measures in September 2001 to a two star rating in May 2002.

The Cabinet agreed:

To note the Council's Social Services performance rating for 2001 / 02.

**190. 2001 / 02 PERFORMANCE ON PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT (PSA) AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

The Cabinet considered a report which summarised the Council's performance on PSA and key performance indicators for 2001 / 2002.

It was noted that overall progress towards the targets had been good, although there were some specific areas where improvements would need to be made. This was not unexpected given the stretching targets set by Government.

The Cabinet agreed:

To note the Council's performance on PSA and Key Performance Indicators for 2001 / 2002.

**191. CABINET OUTLINE AGENDA**

The Cabinet agreed:

To note the outline agenda for the meeting scheduled to take place on 3 September 2002 and the following proposed amendments:

- E2B – Formation of company to deal with NGfL across Eastern Counties: deferred from 23 July meeting.
- Structure Plan – approval of issues to be discussed at EiP: deferred from 23 July meeting
- Annual Library Plan / Public Library Standards: to be added
- Fairer Charging – Fees and Charges: to be added