

COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 17th July 2007
Time: 10.30 a.m. – 4.20 p.m.
Place: Shire Hall, Cambridge
Present: Councillor A G Orgee (Chairman)

Councillors D Baldwin, C M Ballard, J Batchelor, I C Bates, N Bell, B Boddington, M Bradney, J Broadway, P Brown, T Butcher, C Carter, K Churchill, S Criswell, M Curtis, A Douglas, P J Downes, J Dutton, R Farrer, S A Giles, B Hardy, G F Harper, N Harrison, D Harty, G J Heathcock, W G M Hensley, S Higginson, P E Hughes, W Hunt, J L Huppert, C Hyams, J D Jenkins, S F Johnstone, E Kadić, G Kenney, A C Kent, S G M Kindersley, S J E King, V H Lucas, D McCraith, L W McGuire, A K Melton, R Moss-Eccardt, S B Normington, M K Ogden, L J Oliver, D R Pegram, J A Powley, P Read, A A Reid, J E Reynolds, K Reynolds, P Sales, M Shuter, L Sims, M Smith, T Stone, J M Tuck, R Turner, J K Walters, J West, H Williams, M Williamson, L J Wilson and F H Yeulett

Apologies: Councillors B Bean, G Griffiths and K Wilkins

164. MINUTES: 15th MAY 2007

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 15th May 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

165. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths of former County Councillors

The Chairman announced with sadness the deaths of former County Councillors Bachan Bhalla and Ken Archer. Members observed a minute's silence in their memory.

Awards and achievements

The Chairman led members in offering congratulations to:

- Abigail Brown, a teacher at Soham Village College, who had won the Most Inspirational Teacher Award at the Cambridge Evening News Community Awards
- All those whose efforts had resulted in the Council winning a Silver National Clean Air Award for its commitment to protecting staff and the public from the dangers of second-hand smoke in the workplace.

166. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared personal interests under Paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct. The items to which the interests relate are shown in brackets.

- Councillors Batchelor, Kindersley, McCraith, Orgee and Turner as members of South Cambridgeshire District Council (general declaration and specifically Minute 169, Report of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 11th June 2007, Item 8, Draft Consultation on Trumpington Meadows Planning Applications)
- Councillor Downes as his wife was an employee of the Citizens Advice Bureau in Huntingdonshire and a guidance tutor (Minute 169, Report of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 2nd July 2007, Item 11, Welfare Benefits Take-Up Initiative – Extension of Funding)
- Councillor Giles as a provider of supported lodgings for young people (Minute 169, Report of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 2nd July 2007, Item 9, Empowering Young People Pilot Project)
- Councillors Hyams and Moss-Eccardt as members of the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation Management Committee (Minute 169, Report of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 11th June 2007, Item 6 b), Report from the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee on Procurement)
- Councillor Johnstone as her husband was an astronomer with specific views on street lighting (Minute 169, Report of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 22nd May 2007, Item 5 a), Report from the Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee on Street Lighting)
- Councillor Melton as a Director of Cambridgeshire Horizons (Minute 169, Report of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 22nd May 2007, Item 5 b), Report from the Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee on the Structure Plan)
- Councillor Tuck as the Chairman of the Interim Executive Board at the Queen's School, Wisbech (Minute 169, Report of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 11th June 2007, Item 4, The Queen's Secondary School, Wisbech – Progress Report)

Councillor Batchelor declared a prejudicial interest under Paragraph 10 of the Code of Conduct as the Chairman of Linton Action for Youth (various items relating to youth services under Minute 169, Reports of the Meetings of Cabinet) and took no part in discussion of these items.

167. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Council noted that no questions had been received from members of the public by the deadline.

168. COUNCIL CONSTITUTION – AMENDMENTS

It was proposed by the Chairman, Councillor Orgee, and seconded by the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Oliver, to

- i) Approve the revisions to the Council Constitution as set out in the Appendix 1 and the Annexes to the report, subject to references to the 'Head of Social Care' being replaced by the 'Head of Children's Social Care' in Annexe 2;

- ii) Agree that the Deputy Chief Executive – Corporate Services be appointed as Acting Head of Paid Service pending the appointment of a new Chief Executive:
- iii) Agree the temporary arrangements for the allocation of the Chief Executive’s Constitutional roles as set out in Appendix 2 to the report;
- iv) Agree the following recommendation from Group Leaders for an amendment to the Disclosures Policy for members:

That the Council’s Disclosures Policy requiring standard Criminal Records Bureau checks on the members of certain groups be amended to replace references to the following former Service Development Groups (SDGs):

- Children and Young People’s Services Inclusion SDG
- Children and Young People’s Services Planning and Development SDG
- Environment and Community Services Community Learning and Development and Adult Social Care SDG

with references to the following Policy Development Groups (PDGs):

- Enhanced Services PDG [which covers vulnerable children and adults – previously covered by the Inclusion and Community Learning and Development and Adult Social Care SDGs]
- Service Infrastructure PDG [covered previously by the Planning and Development SDG].

Members discussed the following aspects of the proposals:

Removal of the requirement for a show of hands

Several members opposed the proposed removal from the Constitution of the requirement for a show of hands when votes were taken by Council. Concern was expressed that the plasma screens showing how members voted were not clearly visible from the public gallery, and that they might not always work. It was suggested that the wording of the Constitution be amended to enable the Chairman of Council to call for a show of hands when he or she considered this to be necessary. However, the Solicitor to the Council advised that the opening sentence of the relevant paragraph – ‘Where indicated by the Chairman presiding at the meeting, voting may be by means of the electronic voting system’ – would still allow the Chairman to choose the alternative of a show of hands. Members therefore agreed to accept the amendment as set out in the report.

Development Control delegations

A number of members expressed concern at the implications of the second proposed change set out in Annexe 3, Proposed Amendments to the Scheme of

Delegation to Officers – Development Control. The proposed change was to amend the fourth bullet point of a delegation to the Head of Strategic Planning as follows [the delegation is set out in its full context in the Council report]:

- ~~'relate to County Council transport and highway developments relate to land and buildings managed by the County Council'~~

Members were concerned that the proposed change would diminish the power of the Development Control Committee to make decisions relating to land and buildings managed by the County Council.

It was proposed by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Johnstone, seconded by Councillor West and agreed unanimously

Not to accept the proposed change to this bullet point at this meeting and to request a report to the next meeting of Council on 30th October 2007 setting out a more detailed explanation of why the change should be made.

Members then voted on the original motion as amended and it was agreed unanimously.

169. REPORTS OF THE CABINET

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Johnstone, moved receipt of the reports of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 22nd May 2007, 11th June 2007 and 2nd July 2007.

Meeting held on 22nd May 2007

Key decisions for information

1) Former Windmill School, Fulbourn

Councillor Sales welcomed the Cabinet's decision to sell the former Windmill School at Fulbourn to Steiner and Mencap, especially since the Steiner School's current premises were not fit for purpose.

Councillor Williamson also welcomed the Cabinet's decision. He noted that the Quirk review was suggesting that local authorities' disposal of assets to community groups should be made easier and asked when the Cabinet would be considering the implications of this review.

Councillor Butcher noted that the site had been sold at significantly less than best consideration and asked how this benefited the Council.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Melton, noted that selling the premises to Steiner and Mencap would result in significant community gain; the premises would be used by people coming from all across the County. He confirmed that the Cabinet was aware of the Quirk review. A thorough review of the Council's assets and their future use would be needed. Community applications would each be considered on their merits and proper assurances of their long-term viability sought.

2) Secondary Education Provision to Serve Cambridge

Councillor Hughes welcomed decisions taken in the past relating to the Manor Community College, which meant that it could now be expanded from four to eight forms of entry, helping to meet the population growth planned for the north of Cambridge.

Councillor Kent welcomed the decision to open a new secondary school on the Cambridge Southern Fringe. She also welcomed the principles agreed by Cabinet, particularly that schools should play a central role in their communities, and emphasised that these should be adhered to throughout future competition processes and negotiations with developers. She commented that it would be important for the Learning and Skills Council also to identify their principles and requirements for 14+ education to inform their negotiations with developers.

Councillor Kindersley welcomed the proposed provision to serve new developments but urged the Cabinet also to remember the needs of existing communities. He gave an example from his own division of secondary school pupils who were having to travel over the border into Bedfordshire.

Responding, the Lead Member for Service Infrastructure, Councillor Harty, noted that the proposals, especially those for 14+ education, would be discussed further by the Service Infrastructure Policy Development Group. He also noted that the Cabinet would be taking the needs of existing communities into account.

3) Development of Grafham Water Centre

Councillors Sales, Downes and Hughes welcomed Cabinet's decision to approve a loan of £1 million to Grafham Water Centre to help ensure their future sustainability. Councillor Downes noted that the Council held considerable land assets in the vicinity and expressed the hope that it would be possible in future to devise a development scheme that was acceptable to Huntingdonshire District Council, enabling some of the capital value to be recognised. Councillor Hughes highlighted the legal requirement to improve disabled access so that disabled people could make full use of the premises.

Responding, the Lead Member for Communities, Councillor Lucas, noted that Grafham Water Centre was fully aware of the needs of disabled people and was already involved in a number of relevant initiatives, including Sailability. The Lead Member for Universal Services, Councillor Curtis, agreed that the Centre was particularly important in offering opportunities to children and young people, especially those who were not academic highfliers. He agreed to ensure that there was a continuing dialogue between the Centre, the District Council and any other parties interested in the future development of the site.

4) Changes to Mobile Library Service Delivery Policy

Councillor Jenkins accepted that it was appropriate to review the Council's policy on the delivery of the mobile library service, but expressed concern that the decision to reduce the mobile library fleet from eight to six vehicles was not feasible. He asked whether a detailed analysis had been carried out to check whether it was possible to achieve the new policy with six vehicles.

Councillor Williamson commended the work done by volunteers to support the Library service but highlighted the risk involved in becoming too heavily dependent on the voluntary sector.

Responding, the Lead Member for Universal Services, Councillor Curtis, reported that the reduction from eight to six mobile libraries had been considered carefully. There would be a minimal impact on service users, and there would be flexibility to respond to changing circumstances in future.

Other decisions

5) Issues Arising from Scrutiny Committees

a) Report from Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee on Street Lighting

Speaking as the former Chairman of the Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Harrison welcomed the Cabinet's positive response to the Scrutiny Committee's report. She and other members raised several issues relating to street lighting, including:

- The urgency of developing a street lighting policy to inform practice in new developments
- The cost to the Council of the Street Lighting Private Finance Initiative (PFI) over the 25 years of the contract. Members noted that the cost of complying with EU standards for street lighting would be approximately £60 million. However, there was no statutory obligation to comply with these standards and so it was suggested that other, less expensive options should also be costed
- The need to include flexibility in the PFI contract to adopt new technologies as they emerged
- The role of District, Town and Parish Councils in providing footway lighting. Members commented on the importance of involving local people in decisions about lighting and queried whether it would be possible to involve these Councils in the PFI project

- The importance of taking into account the needs of partially sighted and disabled people, who could have difficulty in negotiating different surfaces if they were not well lit.

Responding, the Lead Member for Highways and Transport, Councillor McGuire confirmed that the Cabinet would be asking the Highways and Transport Policy Development Group to carry out a review of the issues raised by the Scrutiny Committee and to report back in due course. He emphasised that the PFI credits would not be used for significant amounts of new lighting, but primarily to maintain existing stock. The role of District, Town and Parish Councils would be taken into account, but it might be too expensive to include them in the PFI project.

b) Report from Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee on the Structure Plan

Councillor Ballard welcomed the work of the Scrutiny Committee in highlighting some of the challenges associated with Cambridgeshire's ambitious growth agenda. He and Councillor Hughes emphasised the importance of working with the City and District Councils to provide sufficient social housing in new developments, including rented social housing as well as shared equity properties. Councillor Ballard welcomed the Government's proposal to give Northstowe a high profile as an 'eco-town' and urged the Council to embrace the opportunities this could involve.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor Pegram, agreed that the Council should work with the Government to make Northstowe as sustainable a community as possible, but noted that no specific funding to support this aim had yet been offered.

Councillors Jenkins and Johnstone emphasised the need to develop sustainable new communities in which all the necessary facilities were provided at an early stage, and not just housing estates. Councillor Melton noted that the need for facilities to support new development also applied to the expansion of existing market towns.

Councillor Jenkins commented that the Council should hold Cambridgeshire Horizons to account more effectively, monitoring its delivery of actions against an agreed business plan.

Councillor Harrison reminded members that the Scrutiny Committee report had focussed on practical measures to address the challenges ahead, including business planning, project planning and effective use of risk management. She urged the Council to be both innovative and decisive in its partnership working.

Meeting held on 11th June 2007

Key decisions for information

1) Financial Outturn and Budget Monitoring Report 2006/07

Councillor Ballard expressed concern at the precariousness of the Council's financial position at the end of 2006/07. There had been an underspend of £2.1 million, but this had been due primarily to favourable interest rates; the Office of Children and Young People's Services had used reserves to achieve a balanced budget; deficits relating to older people's services and to the Learning Disability Partnership were being deferred to 2007/08; and the deficits on the trading units were continuing to accrue.

Councillors Jenkins and Huppert expressed concern that it had been possible to balance budgets at year-end only because of cuts to services during the year, and that it was essential to keep in mind the impact of these cuts on service users. Councillor Jenkins asked whether services were keeping to budget during the current year and commented that because of the time-lag in reporting, information about the first quarter would not be considered by Cabinet until September and Council until October.

Councillor Stone expressed concern that deficits on the trading units had continued to rise during 2006/07, despite the actions taken. The deficits had risen by £0.46 million during the year and now totalled £1.76 million. The Audit and Accounts Committee had reluctantly agreed the transfer of a further £600,000 from general reserves to the Trading Services Earmarked Reserve, bringing this reserve to £1.63 million. Councillor Stone emphasised that this situation could not be allowed to continue.

Responding, several Cabinet members commented that careful management and flexibility to respond to changing circumstances had made it possible to achieve a balanced budget for 2006/07. The need to match services to available funding was emphasised. With regard to the trading units, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Melton, emphasised that there was no intention at present to use the funds in the Traded Services Earmarked Reserve. The future of services currently delivered through the trading units would be reviewed thoroughly.

2) Every Disabled Child Matters

Councillor Hughes expressed concern that the aim of delivering the nine standards in the Every Disabled Child Matters Charter by January 2008 was very ambitious, given the tight timescale, limited resources and competing priorities.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, Councillor Tuck, accepted that it would be challenging to meet the standards in the Charter but emphasised that good progress was being made, including by working with the voluntary and community sector.

3) Grants Review

Councillor Heathcock asked the Cabinet Member for Enhanced Services, Councillor Yeulett, when the forthcoming report on contracting arrangements for organisations supporting the Disabilities Service would be available. He commented on the need for the Council to be honest with voluntary sector organisations, making it clear at an early stage if their grant applications were unlikely to be successful, so that they did not waste their limited resources going through the lengthy application process.

Councillor Hughes emphasised the need for formal contracts between the Council and the voluntary sector, to enable them to plan their services. She and Councillor Broadway expressed concern at the recent decision to withdraw funding from Camread, a voluntary organisation providing a reading service for blind and partially sighted people. They noted that the Council had supported Camread for over 20 years; that the Council's grant of £10,000 constituted half their income; and that the funding had been withdrawn at very little notice. An interim payment of £3,000 agreed subsequently would be insufficient to meet the organisation's needs.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Enhanced Services noted that the report on contracting arrangements for organisations supporting the Disabilities Service would be published shortly. He reminded members that the aim of the recent review of the grants process had been to streamline the application process and to give greater stability to organisations in receipt of grant. All grant applications had been considered on their merits and in accordance with the terms of the Cambridgeshire Compact.

Other decisions

- 4) The Queen's Secondary School, Wisbech – Progress Report
- 5) Primary Education in Swaffham Bulbeck – Proposal for Lower Admission Age to Permit Pre-School Education

Councillor Kent welcomed the Cabinet's decision to lower the admission age for Swaffham Bulbeck Primary School. She reminded members of the aim of the Council's early years policy, 'All Our Futures', which was to prioritise deprived and new communities when developing maintained provision, to help improve the equity of coverage across the County. She emphasised that this principle should be adhered to when reviewing private, voluntary and independent as well as maintained provision, to ensure that services were levelled up and not down.

- 6) Local Authority Parking Enforcement – Dispensations for Medical Workers
- 7) Cambridgeshire Local Safeguarding Children Board – Annual Report for 2006/07 and Priorities for 2007/08

8) Draft Consultation on Trumpington Meadows Planning Applications

Councillor Kindersley expressed concern that the planning applications as submitted had not adequately addressed climate change and sustainable development issues and sought assurance that these issues would be promptly and rigorously pursued.

Councillor Kent expressed concern that these were amended planning applications and yet still did not satisfy the local authorities' concerns. She emphasised the need for the local authorities to work together to develop joint responses and to show leadership on planning and infrastructure issues.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor Pegram, accepted the speakers' comments and noted that the County Council would be using the Joint Strategic Growth Implementation Committee and other forums to ensure that infrastructure was delivered in a timely manner and in appropriate locations.

9) Issues Arising from Scrutiny Committees

a) Report from Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee on Youth Services

The Chairman of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Batchelor, thanked the Cabinet for adopting some of the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations, including the introduction of a central function to support youth work managers in pursuing grants. However, he expressed concern that the Committee's main recommendation, that funding of youth services be given higher priority, had not been adopted, and that funding for youth services was lower in real terms for 2007/08 than it had been in 2006/07. He reminded members that Cambridgeshire's youth services continued to be the lowest funded of all local authorities nationally.

Councillor Kent shared Councillor Batchelor's concerns about funding and noted that there was an element of local choice over how much funding was made available for youth services.

Councillor Hughes commented that it was not only young people who were guilty of anti-social behaviour; adults also had a responsibility to recognise young people's potential and give them opportunities to develop.

Councillor Downes reminded members that a youth services project on the Oxmoor estate had led to a reduction in anti-social behaviour and crime over the same period, and suggested that this example should be used as a lesson for tackling anti-social behaviour and crime elsewhere in the County.

Responding, the Lead Member for Universal Services, Councillor Curtis, welcomed the Scrutiny Committee's work on youth services. With regard to funding, he noted that because of the

Council's financial position, many other aspects of children and young people's services were also amongst the lowest funded nationally; youth services were not unique. He emphasised the importance of attracting as much external funding for youth services as possible, to enable optimal use to be made of Council resources. He also highlighted the wide range of youth activities that would be taking place across the County over the summer.

- b) Report from Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee on Procurement – The Use of the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) and Transactions

Councillor Broadway commended the Scrutiny Committee's report and agreed that all officers should be encouraged to make full use of ESPO. She noted that there was scope for further efficiency when paying invoices by BACS; suppliers were currently sent a paper letter saying that the payment had been sent, when an e-mail would suffice.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Melton, confirmed that all issues raised by the review group would be considered to ensure that the best possible value for money was being achieved.

- c) Report from Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee on the Contact Centre

Councillor Moss-Eccardt welcomed the Scrutiny Committee's report and Cabinet's acceptance of the recommendations. He commented that the contact centre should have targets for answering e-mails as well as the phone, since in his experience e-mails could go unanswered.

Responding, the Lead Member for Universal Services, Councillor Curtis, noted that the contact centre did have targets relating to e-mail and agreed to review these. He also noted that the contact centre was working with the Channel Content Team to increase the number of forms members of the public could complete online.

Meeting held on 2nd July 2007

Key decision

- 1) Section 31 Project

It was proposed by the Lead Member for Enhanced Services, Councillor Yeulett, and seconded by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor Pegram, that the Council

- i) Approves the rewritten Section 31 agreements in respect of:
- Older People and Occupational Therapy
 - Learning Disability
 - Adults' Mental Health

- Integrated Community Equipment Service;
- ii) Delegates authority to the Deputy Chief Executive – Environment and Community Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Enhanced Services and the Opposition parties, to approve minor changes that may be requested by the Boards of Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust or of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Trust.

Councillor Heathcock emphasised the need to ensure that these Section 31 agreements worked effectively, but expressed concern at the differing accountability arrangements for the County Council and the NHS. He noted that the Cambridgeshire Care Partnership (CCP) met only quarterly and that the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee had a very full agenda, and asked who would be responsible for regular monitoring of budgetary reports. Councillor Heathcock also expressed concern that the Section 31 agreements did not appear to have been strengthened sufficiently to address financial problems, should any partner run into difficulties mid-year.

Councillor Ballard welcomed the officers' detailed work on the Section 31 agreements but expressed concern that jointly funded services would continue to face significant financial pressures. Budgets for the Integrated Community Equipment Service and for the Learning Disability Partnership had been increased substantially for 2007/08, but in real terms the budgets for older people's services and occupational therapy had decreased. Councillor Ballard called for the original aims of service integration, including reductions to emergency hospital admissions and delayed transfers of care, to be revisited and for these aspirations to be funded appropriately.

Several members commented on the proposal to give recipients of learning disability services more choice in future about the kinds of services they received. Some members questioned whether it was fair or realistic to expect service users to make informed choices, given the extent of their disabilities, whilst others commented that a proportion of service users would derive considerable benefit from being able to make choices.

Councillors Read and Sales expressed concern that the 2007/08 budget had not been constructed using the process defined in the proposed Section 31 agreements, which meant that the financial risk share defined in the proposed agreements would not easily apply.

Responding to the speakers, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor Pegram, commented that the new Section 31 agreements would help to ensure the greater accountability of all partners. The agreements would come into effect in April 2008 and 2008/09 budgets would be constructed accordingly, with other preparatory work beginning in autumn 2007. Costs and care packages would be managed carefully, with more early intervention helping to ensure that fewer critical care packages were needed. Financial reporting to CCP members would include exception reporting if needed as well as regular reporting to the CCP's quarterly meetings.

On being put to the vote, the motion was approved. [Voting pattern: unanimous]

Key decisions for information

2) Primary School Provision in Cambourne

Speaking as the local member, Councillor Wilson thanked Cabinet for agreeing to reconsider the site of the third primary school in Cambourne. He commented that, in his view, the site put forward by developers was not appropriate, as it would involve the destruction of woodland and was situated close to a hazardous traffic junction. He suggested that it would be preferable to locate the new school on the outskirts of Lower Cambourne, so that Lower, Upper and Great Cambourne were each served by an appropriately situated school.

Councillor Kindersley expressed concern that there would be no secondary school at Cambourne, even though it would now be a settlement of 4,200 houses and in future could be larger still. He commented that the County Council should lead in specifying the infrastructure needed in new communities, not be led by developers.

Responding, the Lead Member for Service Infrastructure, Councillor Harty, reported that Council representatives would be meeting with developers shortly to discuss a possible alternative site for the third primary school. He noted Councillor Kindersley's comments on secondary school provision.

3) Taking Forward Neighbourhood Management in Huntingdonshire

Councillor Normington welcomed the proposals but noted that it should be made clear that they applied to the villages surrounding Ramsey as well as to Ramsey itself.

Councillor Dutton welcomed the progress made in Huntingdonshire and commented that it should be used as a template for the rest of the County.

Councillor Downes emphasised the need for elected members to be fully involved, to avoid a parallel structure being created in which members were marginalised.

Responding, the Lead Member for Communities, Councillor Lucas, confirmed that the surrounding villages in each of the named areas would be included in the approach. He emphasised that the aim of the initiative was to involve local communities, encouraging their participation in decision-making and ownership of the decisions made.

4) Sustainable School Travel Strategy

Councillor Moss-Eccardt welcomed the Strategy but commented that a joined-up approach between services was needed to ensure its effective delivery. He gave an example from his division where the installation of

a pedestrian phase in existing traffic lights would encourage more children and parents to walk to school.

Councillors Broadway and Jenkins expressed concern that the Government's additional funding of £35,000 per year for five years was inadequate to implement the Strategy effectively. Councillor Broadway noted that the current review of Passenger Transport would include home to school transport and that some useful measures could result from this. Councillor Jenkins highlighted the need to ensure that children living in smaller developments of new houses had good transport links to school, as well as those living in the larger new communities.

Councillor Batchelor reported that the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee had been considering home to school transport and were concerned that a number of the proposed cost-saving measures were not sustainable. In particular, making some unsafe routes safe, to enable transport to be withdrawn, was likely to be prohibitively expensive. Members were also concerned that proposals to introduce charges for home to school transport for pupils from low income families were not appropriate.

Responding, the Lead Member for Highways and Transport, Councillor McGuire, agreed that the funding of £35,000 per year was not generous, but noted that many of the actions contained in the Sustainable School Travel Strategy did not have cost implications. With regard to costs, he noted that the Highways and Transport Policy Development Group would be considering the Home to School/College Transport Policy in detail at its meeting on 19th July 2007.

5) Review of Current Speed Limit Policy

A number of members commented on the recent review of the Council's speed limit policy, as follows:

- Due consideration should be given to the views of local residents, since the introduction of appropriate speed limits could significantly improve residents' quality of life
- It should be possible to apply policy criteria flexibly to enable distinctive local circumstances to be taken into account
- Where Parish Councils were willing to pay for speed limits and traffic calming features to be introduced, the County Council should respond positively
- Some members felt that speed limits were only as effective as the enforcement measures that accompanied them
- Other members felt that speed limits could be effective in reducing the speed of some vehicles, even if they were not reinforced by physical enforcement measures, and that the policy should be worded sufficiently flexibly to permit this
- The decision to extend 30 mph speed limits to the developed parts of all settlements was welcomed, as was the introduction of 20 mph speed limits in the vicinity of schools
- It would be important to ensure adequate financial provision was made for the maintenance of traffic calming features.

Responding, the Lead Member for Highways and Transport, Councillor McGuire, commented that physical enforcement measures were appropriate, since the Police were not resourced to enforce speed limits across the County. However, in some areas relatively soft measures such as flashing road signs were likely to be sufficient. The Lead Member for Highways and Transport noted that the County Council already worked with Parish Councils who were willing to pay for schemes, but that it was important to ensure that funding was available for ongoing maintenance as well as initial set-up costs. The Government had asked all local authorities to review their speed limits on A and B class roads by 2011. Cabinet had agreed to defer this wider review to focus on speed limits on local roads for the time being; however, on the longer term, the wider review was likely to mean that some local schemes would have to be deferred.

6) Invest to Transform Fund – Additional Proposals for 2007/08

Councillor Stone expressed concern that uses of the Invest to Transform Fund had not been reported transparently. He suggested that a record should be kept detailing the purpose of each bid, whether it was supposed to be repaid and whether it was used successfully to achieve its intended purpose.

Councillor Ballard expressed concern that unlike its predecessor, the Good Housekeeping Fund, the Invest to Transform Fund was not being used sufficiently strategically or innovatively. He suggested that the original intentions in setting up the Fund should be revisited.

Councillor Jenkins shared the other speakers' concerns and commented that given the large sums of money involved, much more detailed information was needed about payback periods.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Melton, emphasised that the purpose of the Invest to Transform Fund was to transform services to ensure that the best possible value for money was achieved. He accepted that some refining of recording mechanisms could be appropriate.

7) Property Transactions

8) Local Area Agreement Funding Use Sub-Agreements

Councillor Stone drew attention to the challenge for Internal Audit in auditing services funded and delivered through partnership arrangements. He asked whether the Council had sufficient audit capacity.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Melton, noted this concern and confirmed that the situation would be kept under review.

9) 'Empowering Young People' Pilot Project

Councillor Ballard welcomed this pilot, which would involve making monthly payments to disadvantaged young people that they could spend on positive experiences. However, he suggested that parental receipt of benefits would be a more effective means of assessing entitlement than take-up of free school meals, since many pupils who were entitled to free school meals did not take them up. He suggested that the maximum age for receipt of payments should be 16 instead of 17, since young people aged 17 were entitled to Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and it was not desirable for the payments to overlap.

Councillor Batchelor welcomed the principles behind the pilot but expressed concern that making payments only to specific groups of young people, those looked after and those in receipt of free school meals, could be discriminatory and could lead to young people being singled out and victimised. He and Councillor Hughes noted that the pilot would initially run only for one year and questioned whether it was appropriate to experiment with vulnerable young people.

Councillor Reid noted that the pilot would cost almost £1 million to run in its first year and asked whether the Cabinet had considered whether this was the best use of funding for young people, and if so whether it had made its views known to Government.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, Councillor Tuck, noted that the Government would be funding the pilot and that the money was being offered for this use only. The Government was also specifying which young people should be targeted. The Cabinet Member agreed to investigate the overlap in payments to 17 year olds via this project and via the EMA. She reported that officers at the Department for Children, Schools and Families had recommended Cambridgeshire's proposals to ministers as some of the best received, but that it would not be known formally until August whether the Council's bid for involvement in the project had been successful.

Other decisions

10) Building Schools for the Future Project – The County Council's Strategy for Change Part 2

Councillor Moss-Eccardt sought assurance that in developing the Building Schools for the Future project, the Council would ensure that community use of school buildings outside of school hours was taken fully into account.

Responding, the Lead Member for Service Infrastructure, Councillor Harty, confirmed that it would be.

11) Welfare Benefits Take-Up Initiative – Extension of Funding

Councillors Heathcock and Ballard expressed their disappointment at the Cabinet's decision not to approve a further extension of funding for the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) welfare benefits take-up initiative. The

members commented that this initiative had helped to improve the health and well-being of some of the most disadvantaged people in the County, as well as bringing £7 million of additional investment into the local economy. They urged the Cabinet to reconsider its decision and if necessary to explore alternative sources of funding, for example through the Local Area Agreement.

Councillor Downes commented that the initiative had resulted in an extra 3,000 people claiming benefits. Whilst take-up could not continue to grow at this rate indefinitely, there was evidence that there were still significant numbers of people not claiming benefits to which they were entitled. A return of £7 million for vulnerable citizens for an investment of £250,000 by the Council was a considerable achievement.

Councillor Stone expressed concern that the Council had not made responsible financial provision to support the initiative to date, and that this was part of the reason why it was now proving necessary to withdraw funding.

Responding, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Johnstone, and the Lead Member for Enhanced Services, Councillor Yeulett, reported that the funding for the initiative would run until October 2007. It was not appropriate to use Invest to Transform funding for this initiative in future, since changes to the way in which the Council was funded by Government meant that there was no longer a clear correlation between benefits take-up and grant received. It was not appropriate to divert the £250,000 needed from other services, given that the Council's Finance and Benefits Assessors and Village Benefits Advisors provided a similar service, together with other advice agencies. The Leader of the Council also noted that the Council would continue to provide funding for the CAB via Trading Standards and the Commissioning Manager – Mental Health.

12) Closure of Rural Post Offices

Councillor Douglas noted that the Post Office closure programme included urban as well as rural Post Offices. In urban areas poorly served by banking facilities, Post Offices could play a very important role.

Councillor Boddington asked the Lead Member for Communities, Councillor Lucas, to ensure that local members were kept informed of proposed closures.

Responding, the Lead Member for Communities agreed that it now seemed that the whole of the Post Office network was under review. The review team would be considering the network on an area-by-area basis, following Parliamentary constituency boundaries. Cambridgeshire was expected to be reviewed in April 2008. Local members would be kept informed, including those whose divisions spanned more than one constituency. In the meantime, partners would be working together to try to preserve both the Post Office network and the role of Post Offices in their local communities.

13) 2006/07 Best Value Performance Indicator Analysis

Councillor Jenkins expressed concern that the Best Value performance indicators highlighted a number of areas in which the Council's performance could be better. He particularly drew attention to indicators relating to adult social care, where seven out of twelve targets had been missed; and to the findings of the citizens' satisfaction survey. This survey was held once every three years and the most recent survey had found that 48% of citizens were satisfied with Council services, a drop from 64% the previous time.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Melton, accepted these comments and noted that the Administration would be working to improve both service performance and data recording.

14) East of England Regional Assembly Public Consultation Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation in the East of England – Issues and Options

170. STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2006/07 AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Councillor Orgee, as Chairman of the Standards Committee for 2006/07, moved receipt of the annual report of the Standards Committee. Council noted the report.

The New Members' Code of Conduct

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Orgee, seconded by Councillor Broadway and agreed unanimously:

- i) That the Members' Code of Conduct attached as Appendix 1 to the Council report be adopted for application from 1st August 2007;
- ii) That the ten Principles of Public Life be included as a preamble to the Code but not forming part of the Code itself;
- iii) That the Constitution's 'Guidance on Confidentiality' be amended to require members to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer on the disclosure of confidential information in advance of the information being disclosed.

Protocol on Member/Officer Relations

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Orgee, seconded by Councillor Broadway and agreed unanimously:

That the outcome of the review be noted and that amendments be made to the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations to:

- Delete the first bullet point in paragraph 4.3 of the Protocol relating to private photocopying by members

- Replace references in the Protocol to Policy Planning Panels and Policy Development Groups with more generic terms
- Amend paragraph 11.6 of the Protocol to read, 'Similarly, whenever the Council undertakes any form of consultative exercise, the local member(s) should be notified immediately prior to the outset of the exercise.'

171. AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2006/07

The Chairman of the Audit and Accounts Committee, Councillor Stone, moved receipt of the annual report of the Audit and Accounts Committee for 2006/07. In presenting the report, he commended the good level of co-operation now in place between the external and internal auditors, other Council officers and the members of the Committee. He highlighted three main issues: the level of the Council's reserves, £40.9 million, with £34.8 million earmarked for specific purposes; the challenge of ensuring effective audit of partnership working; and the relatively low level of resourcing of the Council's audit function, with the associated impact on the Audit Plan of unplanned pieces of work.

Councillor Moss-Eccardt suggested that the relatively high number of days of unplanned audit activity carried out during 2006/07 could mean that the methodology used to prioritise risks and compile the Audit Plan needed reviewing. He also expressed concern that as a result of the audits carried out by Internal Audit during 2006/07, no opinions of full assurance had been given and half had been of only limited or moderate assurance.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Melton, thanked Councillor Stone for his efforts as Chairman and confirmed that the Committee would continue to monitor the issues identified in the report.

Council noted the report.

172. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

One written question had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 9:

- Councillor Heathcock had asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor Pegram, about contract management arrangements and response times for street lighting repairs. The response set out details of the Council's contract management arrangements and provided specific background information about the problems that had arisen in Councillor Heathcock's division.

173. ORAL QUESTIONS

Eight oral questions were asked under Council Procedure Rule 9:

- [Councillor Downes noted that following the consultation by the former Department for Education and Skills on changes to the schools funding formula, the Government had now published its decisions. He asked the Lead Member for Service Infrastructure, Councillor Harty, whether the Council was satisfied with the Government's decisions and whether there](#)

were any implications of which Cambridgeshire's school governors should be made aware. The Lead Member for Service Infrastructure agreed to send a written response.

appendix

- Councillor Higginson asked what lessons were being learned in conducting the current review of day services for adults with learning disabilities. The Lead Member for Enhanced Services, Councillor Yeulett, reported that lessons were being learned on how best to consult and involve service users, carers and the public. He would be attending meetings at a number of day centres across the County. As a supplementary question, Councillor Higginson asked the Lead Member for Enhanced Services to reply to two letters received from families of service users. The Lead Member for Enhanced Services confirmed that he would reply to these letters.

In the absence of the Lead Member for Highways and Transport, Councillor McGuire, the following questions were directed to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Johnstone.

- Councillor Moss-Eccardt welcomed the amendment to the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations to emphasise the importance of keeping local members informed. He asked the Leader to ensure that the Protocol was observed, and gave the example of a planned road closure in his division, about which statutory consultees had been informed, but he had not. The Leader of the Council apologised for this and agreed to help ensure that local members were kept fully informed of matters affecting their divisions.
- Councillor Douglas asked whether the delivery of the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway was on schedule. The Leader of the Council confirmed that it was. As a supplementary question, Councillor Douglas asked whether the impact of road closures associated with the construction of the Guided Busway had yet been assessed. The Leader of the Council commented that the Council routinely carried out roadworks to benefit the public, including users of public transport, and that it was not usual practice to assess their impact in advance.
- Councillor Jenkins drew attention to the impact on the local economy in Histon of a recent road closure linked to the construction of a cycle path. He asked the Leader of the Council and Cabinet to reconsider proposals to close to aid the construction of the Guided Busway, and noted that a petition would be coming to Cabinet on 11th September 2007 on this matter. The Leader of the Council noted that an Evaluation Board would be considering whether businesses affected by the recent closure should receive a rebate on their business rates. She agreed to consider the petition at Cabinet but noted that traders should also take into account the long-term benefits of improved public transport.
- Councillor Bradney drew attention to a recent 16-week closure of Station Road in Oakington, of which insufficient notice had been given, and asked the Leader of the Council to ensure that sufficient notice was given of road closures in Histon to construct the Guided Busway. He also asked the Leader to ensure that members were involved in discussions over the future of Histon station. The Leader of the Council agreed that the notice given of

the closure of Station Road, Oakington. She also confirmed that members would be involved in decisions relating to Histon station.

- [Councillor Sales drew attention to a recent publicity campaign highlighting rat-running along Wadloes Road by drivers wanting to avoid traffic lights on Newmarket Road. He asked for a review to be conducted of traffic arrangements in the area, given the unacceptable impact of rat-running on local residents. The Leader of the Council agreed to ask the Lead Member for Highways and Transport to send a written response to Councillor Sales.](#)
- Councillor Stone reminded members of his question at the last meeting of Council about interactive road signs. He asked the Leader of the Council to support his request for a formal system to be put in place to ensure that local members and Parish Councils were kept fully up to date on works relating to highways, bridges, lighting and interactive signs, and planning applications relating to highways. The Leader of the Council agreed to discuss this request with the Deputy Chief Executive – Environment and Community Services.

174. MOTIONS

No motions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10.

175. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

The following appointments to Committees and outside organisations were proposed by the Chairman, Councillor Orgee, seconded by the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Oliver, and agreed unanimously:

- Councillor Normington to replace Councillor Smith as a member of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee
- Councillor Downes to replace Councillor Harrison as a member of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee
- Councillor Smith to replace Councillor Normington as a substitute member of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee
- Councillor Batchelor to replace Councillor Broadway as a substitute on the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee
- Councillor Bean to be added to the pool of members from which the Service Appeals Committee is selected
- Councillors Bradney, Jenkins, Read and K Reynolds be appointed as the County Council's representatives on the Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee
- Councillors Harrison, Kenney, McCraith and Turner be appointed as the County Council's representatives on the Northern Fringe Joint Development Control Committee
- Councillors Melton and Hyams to be appointed to the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) replacing Councillor Powley and filling the current vacancy
- Councillor Dutton to be appointed to the vacancy on the Local Government Association Urban Commission
- Councillor Melton to be appointed as a substitute on the County Councils Network Executive Committee.

Chairman: