

COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 25th March 2003

Time: 10.30 a.m. – 12.40 p.m.

Place: Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present: Councillor: P W Silby (Chairman)

Councillors: P D Bailey, C M Ballard, R S G Barnwell, I C Bates, T J Bear, B S Bhalla, A J Bowen, J Broadway, M Y Chapple, R L Clarke, P J Downes, R Driver, J A P Eddy, M Farrar, H J Fitch, S A Giles, J L Gluza, P D Gooden, B Hardy, G F Harper, V A Hearne-Casapieri, W G M Hensley, S F Johnstone, A C Kent, I C Kidman, S J Kime, S J E King, M L Leeke, V H Lucas, A R Mair, R B Martlew, A K Melton, S B Normington, L J Oliver, A G Orgee, D R Pegram, J A Powley, P A E Read, J E Reynolds, R C Speechley, A B Stenner, P L Stroude, J M Tuck, J K Walters, R Wilkinson, L J Wilson and F H Yeulett

Apologies: Councillors: S V Brinton, A Hansard, G J Heathcock, J D Jones, L W McGuire and C E Shaw

116. MINUTES: 11th FEBRUARY 2003

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 11th February 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the addition of Councillor P D Bailey to the list of apologies.

117. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Awards and thanks to officers

The Chairman drew attention to a list of awards and thanks to officers. In particular, the Chairman led members in thanking Brian Parrott for his assistance as interim Director of Social Services and congratulating the Director and staff of Environment and Transport on their Park and Ride award.

Former Councillor G Dodson

Members noted with sadness that former Councillor G Dodson had died on 18th March 2003.

Councillor S V Brinton

The Chairman led members in wishing Councillor S V Brinton a speedy recovery following her recent operation.

Extraordinary meeting of Council

The Chairman advised members that she had called an extraordinary meeting of Council on 1st April 2003, to confirm the appointment of the Council's new Chief Executive.

Announcement of the County Returning Officer

At the invitation of the Chairman, the County Returning Officer announced that Councillor E Meyland-Smith had resigned from the Council on 17th March 2003. A by-election for the Newnham ward would be held on 1st May 2003, the same day as the Cambridge City Council elections.

118. REPORT OF THE CABINET

The Council received a report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 12th February and 4th March 2003, covering the following:

Item for determination

1) 'Prospects' (Corporate Plan) and Policy Frameworks

It was moved by the Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, and seconded by Councillor V H Lucas that the Cabinet report be received and the recommendation adopted.

'Prospects'

Councillor J K Walters introduced the 'Prospects' document. Councillor M L Leeke expressed the Liberal Democrat group's opposition to 'Prospects' on the grounds that it did not address local people's priorities, which included adequate funding for libraries, Social Services and schools. Councillor I C Kidman reported that the Labour group shared these concerns, but supported some aspects, such as full passporting to schools, and would therefore abstain.

Individual members made a number of comments:

- Councillor C M Ballard queried the Council's target for the proportion of older people helped to live at home (page 15), which was lower in 'Prospects' than that advised to a meeting of the former Social Services Scrutiny Committee.
- Councillor A J Bowen expressed concern at the forecast £4 million deficit for the Council's secondary schools. Councillor R Wilkinson, the Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage, explained that the causes of this deficit were complex. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Local Education Authority (LEA) and the schools had all been involved in the calculations necessary to achieve 'standstill' funding and the causes of the deficit now forecast

were being investigated carefully.

- Councillor A C Kent commented that, because 'Prospects' was based on statutory plans that the Government required the Council to prepare, it did not include a statement of the Council's intentions in a number of areas, including community and pupil entitlement and lifelong learning.
- Councillors T J Bear and J M Tuck both queried whether it would be possible to update 'Prospects' later in the year to reflect changing situations and priorities, for example as a result of work carried out by scrutiny members. Councillor J K Walters responded that proposals arising from discussion at Scrutiny Committees or Service Development Groups would be considered as part of the preparation of the budget for 2004/05.

Members also highlighted a number of typographical errors for correction, including the replacement of £4.1 million with £5.1 million as the level of resources available to meet new Medium Term Service Priorities (MTSP) provision in 2005/06 in the table on page 9 and on page 41, the correction of the contact officer for the Local Transport Plan.

Councillor J K Walters summed up on behalf of the Cabinet.

The Council then considered each of the Policy Framework Statements individually. Where appropriate, lead Cabinet Members responded to members' questions and comments.

Policy Framework Statements

- Adult Services Plan
- Annual Library Plan

Councillor H J Fitch commended the support given by Libraries staff to local initiatives in those villages where libraries were being closed, but expressed concern that the 'book café' model used successfully in other counties would not necessarily be appropriate for Cambridgeshire.

- Cambridgeshire Learning Plan
- Care and Education Plan

Councillor A C Kent sought an assurance from the Lead Member for Lifelong Learning, Councillor V H Lucas, that sufficient resources would be made available for universal provision to be delivered by the target date of 2004 set by Government. Councillor V H Lucas reported that this had been discussed by the Cabinet and that the Education, Libraries and Heritage budget would seek to ensure that

the target was met.

- Children's and Young People's Strategic Plan
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategies

Councillor T J Bear highlighted the need for plans and resources to address the engagement of young people in general, because this was not covered specifically by any of the Policy Framework Statements in 'Prospects'. Councillor Melton, Lead Member for Community and Economic Development, agreed that a more thematic approach was necessary to address such issues.

- Education Development Plan

Councillor A J Bowen commented on the targets set for schools, noting that these had primarily been imposed by Government and in some cases were expressed in such a way as to be unattainable. The Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage, Councillor R Wilkinson, commented that, although led by the DfES, the targets had been set in consultation with the LEA and schools and set out positive expectations of what would be achieved during the plan period.

- Implementing Electronic Government

Responding to a comment from Councillor A B Stenner, the Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, emphasised that the Council would continue to serve residents by providing telephone and face-to-face services as well as electronic access.

- Local Agenda 21

Councillor T J Bear commented on the need for links between Local Agenda 21 and Waste Management, the Policy Framework for which did not refer to public education about waste minimisation. The Lead Member for Environment, Councillor L J Oliver, noted that the Environment Service Development Group had recently considered an information programme for communities. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, also drew attention to the continuing success of the 'Slim Your Bin' campaign.

- Local Transport Plan
- Structure Plan

Councillor A J Bowen commented that the Policy Framework Statement did not highlight the provision of affordable housing as a key policy.

Councillor M L Leeke queried the status of this Policy Framework Statement in relation to the recent Examination in Public (EiP) report.

Councillor T J Bear commented that the Council was reliant on partner organisations and the buoyancy of the economy in general to deliver a number of the key policies contained in the Policy Framework Statement successfully.

Councillor J Broadway noted that there had recently been a number of redundancies in high-tech industries within the County.

Responding to the speakers, the Lead Member for Strategic Planning, Councillor J E Reynolds, commented that policies on affordable and key worker housing were key elements of the draft Structure Plan, which would be brought forward in conjunction with partners. On the EiP report, he noted that the Strategic Planning SDG would be advising Cabinet on 15th April 2003 on the method of consultation on the modifications proposed. Council itself would consider the modifications in the autumn. He noted the comments of the other speakers.

- Waste Management
- Youth Justice Plan

Following debate, a vote was taken and it was resolved

To approve the Prospects (Corporate Plan) and Policy Framework for 2003-7.

[Voting pattern: Conservative group in favour; Liberal Democrat group against; Labour group abstained.]

Key decisions for information

- 2) Single Regeneration Budget Draft Delivery Plans – Oxmoor and Wisbech North
- 3) Developing the Bus Strategy – A Framework for Public Transport Access and Service Delivery
- 4) Care and Education Implementation Plan
- 5) Statutory Plans
 - a) Connexions Business Plan
 - b) Youth Justice Plan
 - c) Trading Standards Service Delivery Plans

6) Provision for Children and Young People with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

The Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage, Councillor R Wilkinson, reported that by the closing date of 16th March 2003, no objections had been received to the proposal to locate the new residential school for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties on the site currently occupied by the Manor School in Wilburton. Therefore actions necessary to ensure that the new school opened on 1st September 2003 would now proceed without needing to be considered by the School Organisation Committee.

7) Grants to Voluntary Organisations

Councillor C M Ballard expressed concern that the Council's grants to voluntary organisations were again this year at standstill level, when the Council's own figures indicated that care costs had risen by 20%. He emphasised the value of services provided by individual carers and the voluntary sector, which, in their absence, the Council would have to provide. He reminded members that the Council's funding from Government had been increased for 2003/04 and urged that a proportion of this increase be passed on to voluntary sector organisations.

Councillor R B Martlew proposed that the Council should meet with voluntary organisations on a regular basis, to review the changing nature of Social Services and to give direction and encouragement to the sector.

Councillor I C Bates sought assurance that the review would encompass grants to voluntary organisations from other sources, especially health, in recognition of the links between organisations working in these areas

Responding to the three speakers the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, agreed that dialogue with the voluntary sector was essential, but expressed concern about increasing bureaucracy and raising expectations that the Council would be unable to meet. He assured members that the review would take into account grants available to voluntary organisations from other sources.

8) Upkeep of the Definitive Map and Management of the Rights of Way Network

Councillor J Broadway welcomed the considerable work being carried out to update and digitise the Definitive Map, which would be a valuable resource when complete.

Other decisions for information

9) Joint Policy and Eligibility Criteria for NHS Funded Continuing Health Care

Councillor S F Johnstone declared a personal interest in this item under

paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct as a non-executive director of Addenbrooke's NHS Trust.

- 10) Budget Monitoring 2003/04
- 11) Community Safety Strategies

119. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

In the absence of Councillor L W McGuire, the Chairman of the Scrutiny Management Committee, Councillor J M Tuck moved the report of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Committee held on 28th January 2003 and the recommendations it contained, together with an update to recommendation (iv) on panel membership and chairmanship. The report and recommendations were seconded by Councillor M L Leeke.

Members commented on the proposed scrutiny work programmes as follows:

- Councillor T J Bear suggested that the Environment and Transport Scrutiny Committee's consideration of the planning of new communities could involve District Council colleagues. Lessons should also be learnt from the Cambourne development. Councillor Bear also suggested that Scrutiny Committees should consider giving members of the public the opportunity to suggest issues for scrutiny.
- Councillor J Broadway welcomed the identification of teenage pregnancies as a possible topic for scrutiny by the East Cambridgeshire and Fenland Area Health and Social Care Scrutiny Panel.

Council resolved unanimously to endorse:

- (i) the scrutiny work programme for 2003/04, as set out in appendix 1 of the report
- (ii) the work programme for the scrutiny of health and social care, as set out in appendix 2
- (iii) the proposed arrangements for the consideration of the Best Value reviews to be undertaken in 2003/04
- (iv) the appointment of an ad hoc scrutiny panel to review the needs of children in foster care and its terms of reference, as set out in appendix 3. The panel would comprise Councillors C M Ballard, S V Brinton and M Y Chapple and be chaired by Councillor C M Ballard.

Councillor S F Johnstone declared a personal interest in this item under paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct as a non-executive director of Addenbrooke's NHS Trust.

120. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Members noted that no written questions had been submitted under Rule 9 of the Council Procedure Rules.

121. ORAL QUESTIONS

Members noted that no oral questions had been submitted under Rule 9 of the Council Procedure Rules.

122. QUESTIONS ON POLICE AND FIRE AUTHORITY ISSUES

Members were invited to ask questions and comment on issues relating to the Cambridgeshire Police Authority and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority.

Report of the Chairman of the Cambridgeshire Police Authority

- Councillor J Broadway asked Councillor J E Reynolds, the Chairman of the Police Authority, about the Home Office's decision not to approve the inclusion of Dr Christopher Forsyth from the Selection Panel's long list of candidates. Councillor J E Reynolds responded that the Authority regretted this decision and had made representations to the Home Office.

Report of the Chairman of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

In the absence of Councillor L W McGuire, Chairman of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority, questions were answered by Councillor L J Oliver, another member of the Authority.

- Councillor M L Leeke asked Councillor L J Oliver for an update on the firemen's pay dispute. Councillor L J Oliver reported that the Fire Brigades Union would be holding their next Recall Conference on 15th April 2003.

A full transcript of the questions asked and responses given is available from the Democratic Services Section.

123. MOTIONS

No motions had been submitted under Rule 10 of the Council Procedure Rules.

124. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

The following changes to Committee membership were proposed by Councillor P W Silby, seconded by Councillor R Driver and agreed unanimously:

(i) Development Control Committee

- Councillor M Farrar to replace former Councillor E Meyland-Smith as a member of the Committee

- Councillor H J Fitch to replace Councillor M Farrar as a substitute member.
- (ii) Cambridge City Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee
- Councillor M L Leeke to replace former Councillor E Meyland-Smith as a member of the Committee.
- (iii) Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee, Social Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee and East Cambridgeshire and Fenland Area Health and Social Care Scrutiny Panel
- Councillor A R Mair to replace Councillor F H Yeulett as a member of the East Cambridgeshire and Fenland Area Health and Social Care Scrutiny Panel
 - Councillor V A Hearne-Casapieri to replace Councillor F H Yeulett as lead East Cambridgeshire and Fenland member on the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee and as a member of the Social Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee
 - Councillor A R Mair to replace Councillor V A Hearne-Casapieri as a substitute for the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee and as a substitute for the Social Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

Chairman