

COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES

Date: Wednesday 22nd October 2003

Time: 10.30 a.m. – 1.20 p.m.

Place: Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present: Councillor: R Driver (Chairman)

Councillors: C M Ballard, R S G Barnwell, I C Bates, T J Bear, B S Bhalla, A J Bowen, S V Brinton, J Broadway, C Carter, R L Clarke, P J Downes, J A P Eddy, M Farrar, H J Fitch, S A Giles, J L Gluza, P D Gooden, A Hansard, B Hardy, V A Hearne-Casapieri, G J Heathcock, W G M Hensley, J L Huppert, S F Johnstone, J D Jones, I C Kidman, S J Kime, S J E King, M L Leeke, V H Lucas, A R Mair, R B Martlew, L W McGuire, A K Melton, A S Milton, S B Normington, M K Ogden, L J Oliver, A G Orgee, D R Pegram, J A Powley, P A E Read, A A Reid, J E Reynolds, C E Shaw, P W Silby, 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: P D Bailey, J E Coston, G F Harper and A C Kent

162. MINUTES: 16th SEPTEMBER 2003

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16th September 2003 were approved as a correct record, subject to the addition of the following sentence to the end of the second paragraph on page 11, on the rapid transit scheme:

‘Councillor Gooden also expressed concern at the impact that the scheme would have on residents and businesses within his electoral division.’

The minutes were signed by the Chairman.

163. REPORT OF THE COUNTY RETURNING OFFICER

The Head of Democratic, Legal and Registration Services reported that at the by-election held on 2nd October 2003, Councillor Anthony Milton, a Liberal Democrat, had been elected to represent the Melbourn electoral division and that he had completed his declaration of acceptance of office.

164. CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Councillor

The Chairman welcomed Councillor A Milton, the new member for Melbourn, to his first meeting of the Council.

Awards

The Chairman led members in offering congratulations to:

- Alan Payton, the City Centre Access Team Assistant Manager for Cambridge, for his nomination as Employee of the Year in this year's Bus Industry Awards
- all Council staff involved in the Cambridgeshire Community Network, which had received *Computing* magazine's 'Broadband Project of the Year' award. The award had been made jointly to ntl Business, the Council's partner in the project.

Death of former Councillor

The Chairman announced with sadness the death of former Councillor P Skoulding, who had served the Council from 1997 to 2000. His funeral would be held on 28th October 2003. The Council asked the Chairman to send condolences on its behalf to his family.

165. REPORT OF THE CABINET

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, moved receipt of the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 30th September 2003.

Items for determination

1) Public Library Position Statement

It was moved by the Lead Member for Lifelong Learning, Councillor V H Lucas, and seconded by the Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage, Councillor R Wilkinson,

That Council approves the Public Library Position Statement for submission to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) as the Council's committed position in response to the strategies put forward in *Framework for the Future* and for subsequent publication on the website.

Councillor A J Bowen welcomed the clarity and detail of the Position Statement. He suggested that the Library Access Points being developed in the communities in which branch libraries had recently closed could provide a model for wider future provision of the service, particularly in the north of the County.

Councillor I C Kidman also welcomed the Position Statement. He commented that it would set the standard against which future provision would be judged and emphasised the importance of making proper financial provision to achieve this standard. However, he noted that even with the targets contained in the Statement, the Council would still not fully be meeting the National Library Standards.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage and the Lead Member for Lifelong Learning welcomed these comments. They agreed that the Library Access Points could provide a model for future provision, both within Cambridgeshire and nationally. They noted that the early response from the DCMS to the Council's Statement had been positive.

The motion was put to the vote and was carried.

[Voting pattern: unanimous]

Councillor V H Lucas declared a personal interest in this item under paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct, as a close relative of his was employed in the redevelopment of Cambridge city centre.

2) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Local Plan – Response to Proposed Modifications

It was moved by the Lead Member for Strategic Planning, Councillor J E Reynolds, and seconded by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone,

- i) That the Council confirms the minor changes to the Proposed Modifications, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report to Council;
- ii) That the Council in its role as the Waste Planning Authority adopts the Plan, with Modifications;
- iii) That the Director of Environment and Transport be given delegated powers to formally adopt the Waste Local Plan, subject to Peterborough City Council having also resolved to adopt the Plan.

The Lead Member for Strategic Planning thanked the Development Control Committee, the Transport and Waste Service Development Group and the Cabinet for their work on the Plan.

Councillor J Broadway welcomed the Plan and in particular the inclusion of the modification proposed by Suffolk County Council to restrict the volume of waste being handled at the Red Lodge waste transfer station.

Councillor P W Silby asked whether the Council had been consulted on new legislation currently proposed concerning the disposal of farm waste and whether the Plan took the proposed legislation into account. The Lead Member for Strategic Planning agreed to ask officers to send a written response to Councillor Silby.

The motion was put to the vote and was carried.

[Voting pattern: unanimous]

Councillors R Driver, J A P Eddy and P W Silby declared personal interests in this item under Section 8 of the Code of Conduct as farmers.

Key decisions for information

3) Draft Community Strategies and Local Public Service Agreement Topics

Councillor R B Martlew expressed concern about the enforcement of Section 106 agreements and delays in the provision of new community

facilities by developers and asked what the County Council could do to promote compliance.

Councillor L J Wilson, who was also a member of South Cambridgeshire District Council, commented that the District Council did enforce Section 106 agreements. Referring to Cambourne, he noted that the District Council was taking legal action against developers for non-compliance and had also agreed not to grant any further planning permissions until the requirements of the Section 106 agreement had been met.

Councillor A B Stenner emphasised the importance of providing vocational training for young people, to enable them to benefit from economic growth in the County.

The Lead Member for Community and Economic Development, Councillor A K Melton, welcomed these comments. He recognised that District Councils' legal budgets were often limited, but agreed that investment to progress Section 106 agreements was worthwhile.

Councillor P L Stroude declared a personal interest in this item under paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct as a signatory to a relevant Section 106 agreement.

4) Adult Education: Proposals for Future Management and Structure

Councillor I C Kidman expressed concern that the proposals for the future management of adult education did not adequately address the issue of corporate overheads. In his view, the level of corporate overheads being carried by the service was not proportionate to the benefits received.

The Lead Member for Lifelong Learning, Councillor V H Lucas, noted that the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) had endorsed both the post-inspection action plan and the three-year development plan. He welcomed the positive contribution made by the LSC to these plans.

The Lead Member for Lifelong Learning also congratulated Councillor S V Brinton on her recent receipt of an honorary doctorate from Anglia Polytechnic University.

The following members declared personal interests in this item under paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct as governors of schools and colleges with community education responsibilities: Councillor A J Bowen (Parkside Community College); Councillor S V Brinton (Impington Village College); Councillor H J Fitch (Bottisham Village College); Councillor S F Johnstone (Cottenham Village College); Councillor J D Jones (Manor Community College); Councillor I C Kidman (Chesterton Community College); Councillor V H Lucas (Long Road Sixth Form College); Councillor A R Mair (City of Ely College); Councillor S B Normington (Ailwyn School); Councillor J A Powley (Soham Village College); Councillor P L Stroude (Swavesey Village College); and Councillor F H Yeulett (Neale-Wade Community College).

Councillor S V Brinton also declared a personal interest in this item under paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct as the Chairman of the Learning and Skills Council in Cambridgeshire.

Councillor P W Silby declared a personal interest in this item under paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct as a member of the Management Committee for the Grafham Water centre.

Other decisions

5) The Youth Service: Future Management Proposals

Councillor P J Downes emphasised that the Council currently funded its Youth Service at approximately half the level expected by Government. He asked the Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage, Councillor R Wilkinson, how this situation would be addressed in the forthcoming round of budget preparations.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage responded that the budget for the Youth Service would be considered both as part of the current review of the Service and in the wider context of the Medium Term Service Priorities (MTSP) process.

The following members declared a personal interest in this item under paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct as school governors: Councillor A J Bowen (Parkside Community College) and Councillor S V Brinton (Impington Village College).

6) Youth Participation and the Youth Parliament

Councillor J L Huppert congratulated Councillor S F Johnstone on her appointment as the Cabinet's young people's champion. He asked her how she would be developing her role, especially in encouraging young people to vote.

Councillor Johnstone reported that she had already met with the County's Youth Parliament representative and would shortly be meeting with the Director of Education, Libraries and Heritage to give further consideration to these issues. She noted that her former role as the Cabinet's older people's champion had now been taken on by the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley. Responding to a question from Councillor J D Jones, the Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, explained that the 'strong leadership' model agreed by Council enabled him to make these appointments.

7) Review of Grants to Voluntary Organisations: Findings and Recommendations

Councillor G J Heathcock expressed concern that, following the review, work would be necessary to reinforce relationships with some parts of the voluntary sector. He commented that some smaller voluntary organisations felt that they were not being listened to and asked the Cabinet to take this into account in the grant allocation process. He asked when the Council as a whole would have the opportunity to

receive feedback from and comment on the conference held on 14th October 2003.

Councillor A J Bowen expressed concern that the review could result in a reduction in funding to some organisations. He noted that whilst voluntary organisations could access other sources of external funding, these were often available only for specific projects. Many voluntary organisations relied on the Council for core funding to meet their running costs. He emphasised that voluntary organisations provided many services that Social Services would otherwise have to provide.

Councillor A B Stenner commented that, in many cases, voluntary organisations were able to provide services more cheaply than the Council. However, he emphasised the need for close working between the Council and the voluntary sector, both to minimise duplication and to avoid people falling into the gaps between services.

Councillor T J Bear agreed that whilst voluntary organisations could be more cost-effective than the Council, the Council should not transfer responsibilities to them without adequate funding. He expressed concern that as voluntary organisations increasingly became the Council's partners in service delivery, they would have to meet increased requirements for quality assurance and performance measurement, with associated administrative costs.

Councillor R B Martlew commented that voluntary organisations were not always able to provide services more cheaply than the Council. However, they did have access to other sources of funding and were able to contribute different approaches and skills, often contributing to the Council's objectives for preventative work and community development.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage, Councillor R Wilkinson, emphasised the need for review and modernisation of the policy framework within which the Council made grants to the voluntary sector. The review had been thorough, involving a wide range of voluntary organisations, and had demonstrated extensive support for the Council's proposals.

The Lead Member for Lifelong Learning, Councillor V H Lucas, paid tribute to the valuable partnership working between the Council and the voluntary sector. He emphasised the need for the Council to receive value for money through its grants. The conference on 14th October 2003 had been part of an extensive consultation process to seek the involvement and commitment of the voluntary sector.

Councillor A J Bowen declared a personal interest in this item under paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct as the Council's representative on Youth Action Cambridgeshire.

Councillor M Farrar declared a personal interest in this item under paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct as a member of the Board of Cambridgeshire ACRE, as a member of the Management Committee of CALC and as a member of the Board of the Cambridgeshire Mental Welfare Association.

Councillor A B Stenner declared a personal interest in this item under paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct, as the Chairman of a local voluntary organisation.

8) Developments in Services for Children

Councillor R B Martlew expressed concern that the recent Green Paper, 'Every Child Matters', would mean further structural change for Social Services, diverting energies from service delivery. He welcomed the proposal that every child should have a designated contact, but questioned how this would work in practice.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, welcomed many of the proposals contained in the Green Paper. However, he was concerned that this was another instance in which the Government was making requirements of local authorities without providing any additional funding. It was estimated that implementation in Cambridgeshire of the proposals contained in the Green Paper would cost approximately £1 million. He also expressed concern that the Green Paper proposals were likely to be enacted directly into a Parliamentary Bill, bypassing the usual White Paper stage and thereby limiting the opportunities for local authorities to discuss and influence the proposals.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, echoed the concerns of the Cabinet Member of Social Services about the absence of funding for Government initiatives and also expressed concern at the challenge of continuing to provide services during a period of structural change.

9) Social Services Service and Financial Framework 2003/04 to 2005/06

By leave of the Council, the Chairman proposed that item 5 on the Council agenda, the reports of the meeting of the Social Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on 10th October 2003, be debated in conjunction with this item.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Sub-Committee, Councillor J M Tuck, moved receipt of the majority report. She noted that the Sub-Committee had requested more detailed information on the framework, to enable members to be as sure as possible that the proposed savings were achievable. She noted that a number of new responsibilities had been passed to local authorities without additional funding, and commented that Cambridgeshire was currently spending £9 million above the Government's Formula Spending Share on its Social Services.

Councillor S V Brinton moved receipt of the minority report.

Councillor P J Downes welcomed the requests made by the Scrutiny Sub-Committee for more detailed information. He stressed the need for backbench members to be fully informed of the extent of the risk to services and to seek transparency in the use of the Council's resources. He welcomed the inquiry currently being carried out by the Lead Member for Vulnerable Adults, Councillor D R Pegram, and particularly the inclusion in the inquiry team of independent consultants, although the

cost of this was queried. He also indicated that the terms of reference of the inquiry did not refer to the role of members and asked whether, as part of the inquiry, Councillor Pegram would be calling on the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, to answer questions.

Councillor C M Ballard expressed his support for both the majority and the minority reports from the Scrutiny Sub-Committee. He emphasised that the use of the Social Services contingency budget and of the Council's general reserves meant that there was no fall-back position, should the proposed savings not be achieved. He highlighted a number of areas in which expenditure was likely to exceed the provision made. £100,000 had been earmarked for fines relating to delayed discharges, but he estimated that if current hospital numbers did not change from January to March 2004 £700,000 would be required. No budgetary provision had been made for repayments required under Section 117 of the Mental Health Act, but the report to Cabinet on 28th October 2003 indicated that at least £239,000 would be needed. £200,000 had been allocated for the costs of implementing 'Fairer Charging', but actual costs were likely to be significantly higher, in part due to delays in implementation. Finally, projected expenditure on independent fostering agencies was more than double the budgetary provision made for the current financial year.

Councillor J L Gluza commented on the proposal to achieve £150,000 of savings in the current financial year by transferring further provision of homecare for the elderly from the in-house service to the independent sector. He commented that, as a result of this transfer, some homecare workers were still being employed by the Council but were not able to provide services to clients. He asked for this situation to be addressed as a matter of urgency. He also expressed serious concern at the failure to keep commitment records up to date and asked the Cabinet Member for Social Services how this would be rectified.

Councillor R B Martlew welcomed the list of measures proposed to address the deficit, but expressed concern that some had been proposed before and hoped that they would be realised this time. He commented that the integration of older people's services was unlikely to result in savings. The Council was required to make a commitment to the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) on funding for joint budgets, reducing flexibility. In addition, the four PCTs were currently recruiting Directors of older people's services at a cost of approximately £250,000, excluding support costs for these posts.

Councillor G J Heathcock expressed concern at the likely impact of the framework on vulnerable service users and on waiting lists for services. He commented that members of the Scrutiny Sub-Committee had submitted detailed questions in advance of the meeting and had yet to receive full responses, suggesting that management information systems within the Directorate were inadequate. He commented that it would therefore be even harder for service users and members of the public to assess the situation. Councillor Heathcock recognised that the overspend was in part due to national funding shortages, but emphasised that the situation also had a local dimension and suggested that the Cabinet Member for Social Services should consider the viability of his

position.

Councillor A R Mair accepted that the pressure of demands on the Directorate had meant that its financial management had not been adequate. However, he emphasised that all the money spent had been spent on people in need and that the Council's difficulties were due in part to inadequate funding by Government of Social Services. Councillor Mair noted that Cambridgeshire's Liberal Democrat Group had not yet brought forward any alternative solution to that proposed by the Administration. He suggested that the alternative would be significant Council Tax increases, which would be difficult for many residents to meet.

Councillor A J Bowen asked the Cabinet Member for Social Services to explain how the Directorate proposed to reduce dependence on independent fostering agency placements, whilst at the same time placing a stronger emphasis on commissioning from these agencies.

Councillor J Broadway noted the proposal to provide additional funding for Social Services through the MTSP process and asked how this would be achieved, given the Cabinet's commitment to a low Council Tax increase, and what the impact on other Directorates such as Education, Libraries and Heritage and Environment and Transport would be.

Responding to Councillor P J Downes, the Lead Member for Vulnerable Adults, Councillor D R Pegram, reported that a number of members would be asked to give evidence as part of his inquiry. He emphasised the rising levels of demand across Social Services, including residential care, homecare and children's services, and the rising per capita costs of service provision. He drew attention to a recent report that 80% of Social Services local authorities were now facing an overspend in the current financial year.

Councillor J L Huppert expressed concern at the proposal to use part of the Council's general reserves to reduce the deficit, given that they were already below the average for Shire counties. He also expressed concern that the current problems evidenced poor communication between the Resources and the Social Services Directorates and asked that this be addressed by the inquiry of the Lead Member for Vulnerable Adults and also by the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Social Services. Councillor Huppert noted that the Cambridgeshire Citizens' Panel had indicated that it was more concerned about Social Services than about the level of the Council Tax, suggesting that a higher increase in Council Tax might find support. He joined Councillor Heathcock in expressing his lack of confidence in the leadership shown by the Cabinet Member for Social Services.

Councillor S V Brinton expressed her thanks to the Chairman of the Scrutiny Sub-Committee for the opportunity to consider the framework in detail. She noted that the Scrutiny Sub-Committee had hoped to submit a single report to Council and Cabinet, but that some members had felt the need to elaborate on some of the points contained in the majority report. In particular, she highlighted members' concern that the Leader of the Council had been surprised by the extent of the overspend and at

the failure to log the costs of services for some people. She expressed her concern at these indications of a lack of financial control and emphasised the need for Cabinet to reconsider the situation more fully. Councillor Brinton also invited the Cabinet Member for Social Services to consider his position.

Councillor J D Jones expressed concern at the evidence of financial mismanagement within Social Services. She called for the resignations of Councillor J A Powley as Cabinet Member for Social Services and of Councillor J K Walters as Cabinet Member for Resources. She also called on the Cabinet to be explicit about the cuts to services implied by the framework. She commented that reducing the inflation factor in homecare contracts with the independent sector was likely to impede their ability to provide services. Similarly, reducing the use of independent fostering agencies could affect the support that the Council was able to offer to vulnerable children. Councillor Jones also asked to be advised of the cost of Councillor Pegram's inquiry to the Council.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services warned members that the Directorate faced a period of challenge and change. Increasing responsibility was being transferred from central Government to local authorities, without additional funding. The Council was increasingly becoming an enabler of services, rather than a provider. Demand for services was increasing due to demographic growth, with both an expanding and an ageing population, and legislative change. It was not possible accurately to forecast levels of demand, but the Council would continue to be required to provide services to all those people meeting its eligibility criteria. The Council would continue to lobby Government for better funding for Social Services. The Cabinet Member for Social Services accepted that commitment records had not been adequately maintained, but emphasised that staff were now aware of the consequences of this and that proper procedures were being put in place.

Councillor S J E King expressed his confidence that the difficulties in Social Services would be addressed and that both improved services and fiscal accountability would be delivered. He spoke of the need to manage the situation responsibly, to avoid causing unnecessary concern to vulnerable service users.

The Leader of the Council also spoke of the need to address the situation responsibly. He emphasised that many other Social Services local authorities were facing a similar financial situation. He noted that the opposition Groups had not proposed alternative strategies and that the only alternatives to the framework proposed would be an increase in the eligibility criteria for services or a significant increase in the Council Tax, neither of which he considered to be acceptable.

Councillor S A Giles declared a personal interest in this item under paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct as a foster carer.

Councillor J L Gluza declared a personal interest in this item under paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct, as a relative of his was in receipt of homecare from Social Services.

10) Protocol for the Allocation of Key Worker Housing

Councillor P D Gooden declared a personal interest in this item under paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct, as an employee of one of the organisations that would benefit from key worker housing.

Councillor M L Leeke declared a prejudicial interest in this item under paragraph 10 of the Code of Conduct, as an employee of Hereward Housing Association.

11) Self-Evaluation Requirement by OFSTED

12) Performance on Local Public Service Agreement and Key Performance Indicators for the First Quarter of 2003/04

Councillor A J Bowen highlighted the point that Education targets were unlikely to be met. He asked the Cabinet to review whether the shortfalls were significant, but suggested that they might be due to unrealistic targets having been set.

Councillor J Broadway noted that the waste target would not be met. She expressed concern that proposals by East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) to discontinue the collection of green waste would not help the achievement of recycling targets. The Lead Member for Environment, Councillor L J Oliver, stated that no decision had been made by ECDC to discontinue the scheme. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, commented that central Government had set increased targets for the Council for recycling, but had not provided additional funding to help these to be achieved.

Councillor C M Ballard noted that some Social Services targets were showing cause for concern. He commented that under-investment in preventative services would lead to increased costs elsewhere. The Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, reported that performance was not on target for the educational attainment for looked after children, placement stability for looked after children, or the adoption of looked after children. However, performance was on track for elderly people helped to live at home, delayed discharges, households receiving homecare and child protection reviews. The Directorate would continue to strive to meet all targets.

13) Performance of the County's Schools

The Chairman led members in congratulating officers on improved performance.

14) Delegations to Individual Cabinet Members

15) Huntingdon Town Centre Redevelopment Proposals

Councillor P J Downes welcomed the scheme selected as the most imaginative of those submitted. However, he emphasised the need for the County Council and Huntingdonshire District Council to work together

closely to ensure coherent service provision, recognising the increasing levels of partnership working between the Councils.

Councillor R Wilkinson confirmed that the County Council was working closely with both the District and the Town Councils. In particular, he noted that there would shortly be a joint meeting to consider more detailed proposals from the developer for options for the future of the library.

Councillor I C Bates sought assurance that adequate provision was made in the scheme to accommodate the required numbers of staff.

Councillor S J E King expressed concern that the scheme as proposed did not allow sufficient car parking provision, given that many people coming to this part of the town would be travelling by car.

The Lead Member for Community and Economic Development, Councillor A K Melton, noted the comments made. He reminded members that the Council had a history of positive joint working with Huntingdonshire District Council, but noted that he could not give an assurance as to staffing levels and accommodation at this stage.

16) Complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman

166. REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Item for determination

The Chairman of the Standards Committee, Councillor S B Normington, moved receipt of the report of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 6th October 2003, together with the recommendation

That paragraph 9.02 of Article 9 of the Council's Constitution be amended to read as follows (additions shown in italics):

The Standards Committee will be composed of the Vice-Chairman of the Council and three other Councillors who may not include the Leader or any other political Group Leader, and two persons who are not Councillors or officers of the Council or any other body having a Standards Committee (the Independent Members). The Independent Members will be entitled to vote at meetings. The Committee may not include more than one member of the Cabinet.

The Standards Committee will be chaired by one of the Independent Members when meeting to hear complaints against members and co-opted members. Other meetings will be chaired by the Vice-Chairman of Council.

The quorum of the Committee when meeting to hear complaints against members and co-opted members will be one Independent member and 3 Councillors. The quorum for other meetings will be one Independent member and 2 Councillors.

This was seconded by Councillor T J Bear and agreed.

[Voting pattern: unanimous]

Items for information

2) Membership of the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances

Councillor J L Huppert suggested that the structure of the Council's Special Responsibility Allowances did not allow for a Cabinet formed jointly by more than one political group and that the Independent Panel should consider this possibility. The Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, agreed to look into this.

3) District Audit Review of Registers of Gifts and Hospitality

167. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Members noted that one written question had been submitted under Rule 9 of the Council Procedure Rules:

- Councillor G J Heathcock had asked the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, about the effect of the vacancy freeze in Social Services on recruitment to the three Income Recovery Officer posts currently vacant. The response advised that recruitment to these posts would not be affected by the freeze.

A copy of the question and the Cabinet Member's response are available from Democratic Services.

168. ORAL QUESTIONS

Three oral questions were asked under Rule 9 of the Council Procedure Rules:

- Councillor S A Giles asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, about delays to a traffic-calming scheme in her ward, which had been funded by the Town Council only, rather than jointly with the County Council. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport reported that work would begin by 3rd November 2003 at the latest, but expressed some concern that such schemes tended to distort County priorities based on need.
- Councillor J L Huppert asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, to review the membership of the Cabinet in the context of the recent difficulties in Social Services. The Leader of the Council stated that he had every confidence in Councillor J A Powley as Cabinet Member for Social Services and that he would continue in post.
- Councillor P J Downes asked the Leader of the Council why the Council had not responded to the Government's recent consultation on local authorities' balance of funding and whether it was intended to send a response at a later stage. The Leader of the Council responded that in keeping with the Council's usual practice, a response had not been sent on behalf of the Council as this issue was considered to be politically contentious.

A full transcript of the questions and responses is available from the Democratic Services Division.

169. MOTIONS

Members noted that no motions had been submitted under Rule 10 of the Council Procedure Rules.

170. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

The following membership changes were proposed by the Chairman of Council, Councillor R Driver, seconded by the Vice-Chairman, Councillor S B Normington and agreed:

- Councillor S J E King to be appointed to the vacancies on the Policy Scrutiny and Audit Committee and Scrutiny Management Committee
- Councillor J Broadway to replace Councillor J L Huppert on the Policy Scrutiny and Audit Committee
- Councillor J L Huppert to replace Councillor M L Leeke as substitute member on the Scrutiny Management Committee
- Councillor J L Huppert to replace Councillor M L Leeke as a member of the joint committee with Peterborough City Council responsible for making appointments to Cambridgeshire Police Authority
- Councillor A S Milton to replace Councillor M L Leeke on the Environment and Transport Scrutiny Committee
- Councillor A A Reid to replace Councillor M L Leeke on the Cambridge City Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee
- Councillor J L Huppert to replace Councillor M L Leeke on the Management Committee of the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO)
- Councillor J E Coston to be appointed to the vacancy on the South Cambridgeshire Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee.

[Voting pattern: unanimous]

Chairman: