

COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 8th July 2003
Time: 10.30 a.m. – 2.15 p.m.
Place: Shire Hall, Cambridge
Present: Councillor: R Driver (Chairman)

Councillors: P D Bailey, C M Ballard, R S G Barnwell, I C Bates, Dr T J Bear, B S Bhalla, A J Bowen, S V Brinton, J Broadway, C Carter, M Y Chapple, R L Clarke, P J Downes, J A P Eddy, M Farrar, H J Fitch, S A Giles, A Hansard, B Hardy, G F Harper, V A Hearne-Casapieri, G J Heathcock, W G M Hensley, J L Huppert, S F Johnstone, J D Jones, 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, L W McGuire, A K Melton, 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, 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: J L Gluza, P D Gooden and J E Reynolds

142. MINUTES: 13th MAY 2003

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 13th May 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

143. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths of former County Councillors

Members noted with sadness the deaths of former County Councillors Grenville Dodson and Rex Perkins.

Lord Lieutenant

The Chairman reported that the new Lord Lieutenant had been announced by Downing Street the previous day. He was Mr Hugh Duberly of Great Staughton.

Chief Executive

The Chairman welcomed to his first meeting of the Council the new Chief Executive, Ian Stewart.

Awards

Members joined the Chairman in congratulating officers on the receipt of a number of awards, including:

- A European Public Transport Award for the Cambridge City core traffic scheme

- An award for Excellence and Innovation in Trading Standards for the 'ASK CE dRIC' website
- The achievement by a number of schools of Leading Edge or Beacon status or of becoming Specialist schools
- The appointment of the Director of Education, Libraries and Heritage as Chair of the East of England Leadership Development Centre
- Selection of the Education, Libraries and Heritage Directorate by the Department for Education and Skills to participate in two pilot schemes, and recent achievements by the Cambridgeshire Personal, Social and Health Education Service and the Cambridgeshire Advisory Service.

144. 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 17th June 2003.

Key decision for determination

1) Local Transport Plan

It was moved by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, and seconded by Councillor J K Walters,

That the Council approve the revised transport strategy and programme for the Local Transport Plan.

Members made a number of comments on the Plan:

Councillor T J Bear commended the Plan, but commented that it was very ambitious in terms of capital expenditure and that if the Council were to adopt it, it would also need to commit itself to related revenue expenditure in future years.

Councillor G J Heathcock asked whether the Environment and Transport Directorate had sufficient officer capacity to deliver the aspirations set out in the Plan. He also emphasised the need to develop the rail network and promote integrated transport with buses and other modes of travel.

Councillor C E Shaw proposed the following amendment, which was seconded by Councillor C M Ballard:

That the recommendation be amended to add a second paragraph so that it reads as follows:

- (i) That the Council approve the revised transport strategy and programme for the Local Transport Plan;
- (ii) That the Cabinet be requested to investigate further ways of alleviating traffic congestion in Cambridge, including the use of congestion charges.

Speaking to the amendment, Councillor C E Shaw reminded members that traffic congestion in Cambridge was already severe. He suggested that congestion charging would alleviate this, improving access for

buses. Schemes in London and Durham had already been proved successful. Councillor J L Huppert endorsed these comments, emphasising that the amendment sought consideration of congestion charging, not its certain introduction.

A number of members spoke against the amendment:

- Councillor T J Bear noted that monitoring of the current Local Transport Plan showed that traffic entering Cambridge was already reducing. Traffic congestion problems were most severe outside of Cambridge, and would therefore not be addressed by congestion charging within the city. In addition, the Government was already considering the development of a national scheme, meaning that any scheme introduced locally might quickly be superseded.
- Councillor J K Walters argued that congestion charging was an additional tax on motorists and could have a detrimental effect on businesses within the charging area. He also noted that Cambridge was not comparable to Durham, where the charging area and access to it were clearly defined; furthermore, the scheme in Durham had reduced traffic to such an extent that it was no longer self-financing.
- Councillors P A E Read and P W Silby commented that congestion charging would place an additional financial burden on poorer people living in rural communities, many of whom were dependent on car use to access services in Cambridge as there were inadequate public transport connections.
- Councillor S F Johnstone noted that the Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi-Modal Study had advocated not congestion charging specifically, but demand management, which the Council was already implementing in Cambridge. She reminded members that the Council was a member of the Charging Partnership and would continue to monitor the national development of congestion charging.

Following debate, the amendment was put to the vote and was defeated.

[Voting pattern: 10 votes in favour, 35 against, 2 abstentions.]

The original motion was then put to the vote and carried.

[Voting pattern: agreed without dissent.]

The following members declared interests in this item under paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct:

- *Councillor G J Heathcock as a member of Railfuture*
- *Councillor S F Johnstone as a member of the National Cycling Strategy Board*
- *Councillor L J Oliver as a member of the Aviation Environment Federation*
- *Councillors C M Ballard and R B Martlew as members of Friends of the Earth.*

Key decisions for information

2) Local Authority Parking Enforcement

Councillor J L Huppert welcomed the introduction of local authority parking enforcement in Cambridge and expressed the hope that in time it would be extended to the rest of the County. He asked whether the service would be provided in-house or be out-sourced, and whether there was any intention to update parking ticket machines.

Councillor G J Heathcock expressed concern that Cambridgeshire was behind some other local authorities in introducing local authority parking enforcement. He also emphasised the need for the local authorities to liaise with the Police to ensure that traffic wardens continued to work effectively until the local authorities took over the service.

Councillor R L Clarke asked whether local authority employees would be easily identifiable and helpful to the public.

Speaking as a member of the Police Authority working group on the decriminalisation of parking enforcement, Councillor R Wilkinson emphasised that the local authorities and the Police were working together closely to ensure the introduction of an effective local authority service.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, explained that local authority parking enforcement in Cambridge had been deferred to allow full consideration of its implications, since once transferred the service could not be returned to the Police. It was not yet known whether the service would be provided in-house or out-sourced. Ticket machines were likely to be updated to accept card payments and might be solar-powered. Local authority officers would continue to provide assistance to the public and would be assisted by police community support officers.

3) Youth Service Plan

Councillor T J Bear spoke of the need to engage with young people, particularly those who were disaffected or at risk of becoming so, at a very local level. He reminded members of the Linton Action for Youth project, which provided active outreach work and was funded by the National Lottery. He urged members to support the Plan and in so doing, to ensure that it was also adequately financially supported.

Councillor A C Kent emphasised that the Government expected the Council to spend £4 million of its Formula Spending Share (FSS) on the Youth Service, when in practice it spent only £2 million. She also reminded members that whilst the Government was prioritising support for 13-19 year olds, it was also essential to support 11-13 year olds, who were at a key transitional stage in their lives.

Councillor C M Ballard shared Councillor Kent's concern that the Council spent only £2 million on its Youth Service. He noted that there was likely to be a Government inspection of the Service within the next two years

and reminded members that the Government could remove provision from the County Council and give it to another provider, such as Connexions. If the Government did this, it was likely to remove the full £4 million from the Council's FSS at the same time. He proposed that the Youth Service should be reviewed now, to identify and begin to address any problems that the Government inspection might highlight.

Councillor S V Brinton asked the Lead Member for Lifelong Learning, Councillor V H Lucas, for a detailed analysis of the corporate overheads for the Service. He agreed to provide this information in writing.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage, Councillor R Wilkinson, accepted that the Council had been spending only half of its FSS allocation on the Youth Service. However, he reminded members that if spending were to be increased, the money would have to be taken from elsewhere, which would be very difficult given the current extreme pressures on schools' budgets. He emphasised that the Council was working closely with its partners, including Connexions, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Care and Education Partnership, to plan the long-term future of the Service.

The Lead Member for Lifelong Learning agreed that it was essential to identify the needs of young people locally. He advised members that a programme of surveys was being carried out by young people for young people, the results of which they were sharing with local Parish, District and County Councillors. He agreed with the need to focus on 11-13 year olds as well as 13-19 year olds. With regard to the expected Government inspection, the Youth Service would shortly be producing a self-assessment and action plan to demonstrate how well it could meet standards within the resources available.

4) Adult and Community Learning Plan 2003/04 and

5) Adult Learning Inspection and Action Plan

The Chairman advised members that the Education, Libraries and Heritage Scrutiny Committee had called in and discussed these two items. The Scrutiny Committee had decided not to refer the decisions back to Cabinet for reconsideration, but had agreed that a number of comments be passed on to Cabinet.

The Chairman agreed that these two items be discussed together.

Councillor J D Jones expressed concern that the aspirations set out in the Adult and Community Learning Plan were not consistent with a letter recently sent by the Director of Education, Libraries and Heritage to the heads of the Village Colleges, which announced the withdrawal of LEA funding from community education in many parts of the County. She expressed concern that this letter had been sent by the Director without prior involvement of the Lifelong Learning Service Development Group. She also expressed concern that the Village Colleges had been advised that their funding would be for only six months at a time, which was preventing them from planning ahead.

Councillor A C Kent expressed concern that key objectives of the Plan, to increase demand and participation, could not be achieved with the resources currently available.

Councillor I C Kidman agreed with Councillor Kent on the challenges posed by the lack of resources. He emphasised the need to consider Community Education in its totality, reviewing the Council's traditional model of service delivery to ensure that the service retained its high reputation.

Councillor P J Downes reported that the Education, Libraries and Heritage Scrutiny Committee had called in the Cabinet item on the Adult Learning Inspection and Action Plan as it had felt that Cabinet had not given this the attention it deserved. The Inspection had highlighted shortcomings in provision, leadership and quality assurance. Councillor Downes expressed concern that the Council's traditional model of service delivery was the only way of achieving breadth of provision and ease of access, given the geographically dispersed nature of the County's population.

Councillor L J Wilson commented negotiation with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) would be essential to achieve a balance between the Cambridgeshire tradition and the delivery model they now proposed.

Responding to the speakers, the Lead Member for Lifelong Learning, Councillor V H Lucas, emphasised that funding for community education was now largely held and allocated by the LSC, rather than by the County Council. The County Council was liaising closely with the LSC on the allocation of funding and had prepared the Adult and Community Learning Plan in close co-operation with them. The Director's letter to providers of community education had been necessary following the publication of the inspection report, to inform them of the review now underway. Councillor Lucas agreed to provide a written response to Councillor Jones on the detailed questions she had raised.

Councillor S V Brinton declared a prejudicial interest in these two items under paragraph 10 of the Code of Conduct as the Chairman of the Cambridgeshire Learning and Skills Council. She withdrew from the Council Chamber whilst the items were discussed.

Councillor A C Kent declared a personal interest in these two items under paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct as a governor of Cambridge Regional College.

Other decisions

- 6) Local Transport Plan Annual Performance Report
- 7) Strategy Review of the Libraries and Information Service

Councillor M Farrar asked the Lead Member for Lifelong Learning, Councillor V H Lucas, whether the provision of 1,000 books a year to Library Access Points would continue indefinitely. He also asked how far the strategy review would address the Libraries budgetary shortfall.

Councillor V A Hearne-Casapieri asked the Lead Member for Lifelong Learning about maintenance work needed at Ely Library.

Councillor I C Kidman welcomed the reduction in single staffing of libraries, but argued that this should be eliminated altogether to prevent staff from being placed at risk.

Responding to the speakers, the Lead Member for Lifelong Learning confirmed that the Council had made an ongoing commitment to provide Library Access Points with 1,000 books a year, and to exchange 100 books each month. The numbers would be increased if there were evidence of demand. This provision was funded within the Council's Medium Term Service Priorities and, together with the provision of mobiles, would cost less than the existing service. The Lead Member for Lifelong Learning also confirmed that the strategy review included proposals to refurbish and upgrade remaining libraries, to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and routine maintenance needs. Libraries where staff were most at risk would have at least two staff on duty at all times; libraries where there would continue to be staff working alone would be monitored carefully.

8) Rapid Transit – Proposals for Preliminary Consultation

A number of members made comments on the consultation process:

- Councillor J L Huppert expressed concern that as the same consultation leaflet was being delivered across the County, it provided residents with insufficiently detailed information about their local area. He also expressed concern that whilst people whose properties were immediately affected by the scheme had received letters from the Council, their near neighbours had not.
- Councillor I C Bates expressed concern that as the leaflets had been delivered with the free papers, this had meant that some parishes affected by the proposals had not received them.
- Councillor T J Bear expressed concern that the Council was still unable to answer detailed questions on how the scheme would work in Cambridge and in particular what steps would be taken to ensure that it would operate reliably irrespective of traffic congestion.
- Councillor A J Bowen commented that the details provided during the consultation in Cambridge had not been sufficiently detailed. In particular, no assessment had yet been carried out of the impact of the additional vehicles on Cambridge streets, especially Emmanuel Road, the single point of entry to Drummer Street.
- Councillor S V Brinton commented that residents of Histon Road continued to be very concerned about how vehicles would enter Cambridge. She commented that there was a lack of detail on how bus priority measures would operate and suggested that there should be further negotiations with the Strategic Rail Authority on an alternative route into the city.

- Councillor P J Downes expressed concern that sufficient consideration had not yet been given to the safety of the guided sections of the route, especially at junctions with existing roads.
- Councillor A A Reid suggested that only low-pollution vehicles such as those powered by compressed natural gas or a hybrid of electricity and fossil fuel should be allowed to use the route. As this would have cost implications, it was essential to consider the proposal at an early stage in the development of the scheme.
- Councillor D R Pegram asked whether Government had yet accepted the level of funding needed for the scheme, as identified by the County Council.

Responding to the speakers, the Lead Member for Environment, Councillor L J Oliver, commented that the single greatest environmental benefit of the scheme would be reduction in car use. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, noted that the Transport and Waste Service Development Group had been given the opportunity to comment on the draft consultation leaflet. She accepted that distribution problems could arise when leaflets were circulated with free papers and asked members to notify her of any areas particularly affected. She also emphasised that the static and staffed exhibitions contained information specific to the local areas in which they were held.

9) Huntingdonshire Agency Agreement

Councillors I C Bates, R L Clarke, P J Downes, S A Giles and A Hansard declared personal interests in this item under paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct as members of Huntingdonshire District Council.

10) Write-off of Loan

Other matters

11) Review of the Management of IT Projects

12) Proposed Riverside Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge, Cambridge

Councillor J L Huppert asked for local members and members of the Cambridge City Environment and Transport Joint Committee to be included on the panel evaluating designs for the bridge. He emphasised the need for it to be sufficiently wide for both pedestrians and cyclists to pass each other easily.

13) Sustainable Communities Plan

14) South Eastern Region Airport Study (SERAS) – Extended Consultation: Gatwick

Councillor C M Ballard commented on the serious effect that aircraft emissions were having on global warming. He noted that this should be

taken into account when considering airport expansions and urged members to lobby Government to work with international partners to tax aviation fuel and curb escalating demand for flights.

Councillor C E Shaw endorsed these comments, reminding members that the Council had signed up to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change and was currently consulting on its own climate change strategy.

Councillor J Broadway further supported moves to curb the rapid increase in air travel, reminding members that it was also having a detrimental effect on communities living close to airports.

The Lead Member for Environment, Councillor L J Oliver, welcomed these comments, noting that a recent report from the Institute for Public Policy Research had made it clear that Government targets for climate change could not be met without reducing aircraft emissions. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, commented that in its response, the Council had confined itself to comments on local issues as it was felt that these would have greatest impact. However, she shared members' concern that the Government did not appear to be considering SERAS in conjunction with other regional airport studies and that it appeared to be moving back from a 'plan, monitor and manage' approach to 'predict and provide'.

145. PERIODIC ELECTORAL REVIEW OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE

It was proposed by the Chairman of the Periodic Electoral Review Working Party, Councillor G F Harper, that

The Council approve the County Council's Periodic Electoral Review of Cambridgeshire, as recommended by the Periodic Electoral Review Working Group, for submission to the Boundary Committee for England.

This was seconded by Councillor M L Leeke.

A number of members made comments:

- Councillor J Broadway welcomed the proposals for the Soham area and in particular the proposal that each ward should remain a single-member ward.
- Councillor P W Silby expressed disappointment that the proposals for West Huntingdonshire did not take into account the close links between some villages in the area.
- Councillor I C Bates suggested that to prevent confusion with Huntingdonshire District wards, the proposed County ward of Fenstanton should instead be called Hemingford-Fenstanton.
- Councillor R L Clarke noted that he would be submitting his own report to the Boundary Committee for England, concerning proposals for Little Paxton.

Following debate, members approved the recommendation.

[Voting pattern: all political groups in favour, five individual abstentions.]

146. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO THE COUNCIL'S STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Standards Committee, Councillor S B Normington, proposed that

Mr David Boreham and Dr Christopher Forsyth be appointed as independent members of the Council's Standards Committee for a period of five years to July 2008.

This was seconded by Councillor T J Bear and agreed unanimously.

147. COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

The Chairman of the Council, Councillor R Driver, proposed a number of amendments and additions to the Council's Constitution, which were seconded by Councillor S B Normington:

- i) The revised 'Guidance on the Cabinet Procedure Rules', as set out in Appendix 1 of the report to Council, for inclusion in the Council's Constitution, subject to the correction of references in paragraphs 13 and 14 to 'paragraph 13 (b)' to 'paragraph 12 (b)';
- ii) The 'Guidance on Confidential Information', as set out in Appendix 2 of the report to Council, for inclusion in the Constitution as a supplement to the Code of Conduct;
- iii) The deletion of paragraph 3.3 (d) of the Financial and Contract Procedure Rules relating to the treatment of home to school transport costs.

The recommendation was agreed unanimously.

148. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

- Councillor C M Ballard asked the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, about the provision of financial assessments and welfare benefits advice to Social Services clients, as required under 'Fairer Charging'.

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

149. ORAL QUESTIONS

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

- Councillor P J Downes asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, about the non-payment of a £300,000 debt to Social Services by a care home provider and about the same care home provider's status as preferred bidder for Etheldred House. Councillor Walters agreed to provide a written response.
- Councillor J L Huppert asked the Leader of the Council about the allowances paid to members by Cambridge City Council.
- Councillor A C Kent asked the Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage, Councillor R Wilkinson, for an update on Cambridgeshire schools' budgetary position.

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

150. MOTIONS

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

151. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

The following membership change was proposed by the Chairman of Council, Councillor R Driver, seconded by Councillor S B Normington and agreed unanimously:

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

- Councillor P L Stroude to replace Councillor V A Hearne-Casapieri.

Chairman: