

## **COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES**

**Date:** Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2004

**Time:** 10.30 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.

**Place:** Shire Hall, Cambridge

**Present:** Councillor: R Driver (Chairman)

Councillors: P D Bailey, C M Ballard, C C Barker, 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, J E Coston, P J Downes, J A P Eddy, M Farrar, S A Giles, J L Gluza, P D Gooden, A Hansard, B Hardy, G F Harper, V A Hearne-Casapieri, G J Heathcock, W G M Hensley, J L Huppert, S F Johnstone, A C Kent, I C Kidman, 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, 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 H J Fitch and A A Reid

### **222. MINUTES: 25<sup>th</sup> MAY 2004**

The minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **223. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### New Councillor

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Colin Barker, the new member for Fulbourn, to his first meeting of the Council.

#### Assistant Director (Planning)

The Chairman congratulated John Onslow, the Assistant Director (Planning), on his appointment as Director for Development with the Cambridgeshire Infrastructure Partnership.

#### Awards

The Chairman led members in offering congratulations to:

- Matthew Lugg, on his award as Municipal Engineer of the Year by the Institute of Civil Engineers
- Environment and Transport staff on being awarded the Carmen Environmental Award for the Cambridge Core Traffic Scheme
- Trading Standards staff for winning the Brindley Medal, the Trading Standards Institute's award for excellence, for the Ask CEdRIC website
- Staff involved with the Council's Library Learning Vehicle, which had

received a Certificate of Merit from the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

- The Countryside Services Team, which was responsible for the Council and its partners receiving five Riders' Charter Awards from the British Horse Society for the creation of new bridleways
- The Education, Libraries and Heritage Directorate on its achieving Investors in People status.

## **224. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following members declared personal interests under Paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct in relation to item 6(b) on the Cabinet report of 15<sup>th</sup> June 2004 under Minute 226, North Cambridge Primary Education Provision:

- Councillor A J Bowen as a Governor of Park Street Primary School
- Councillor S V Brinton as a Governor of Mayfield Primary School
- Councillor J L Huppert as a Governor of St Andrew's Junior School
- Councillor I C Kidman as a Governor of Arbury Primary School
- Councillor M L Leeke as a member of the temporary governing body of Milton Road School
- Councillor L J Wilson as a Governor of Histon Nursery School.

Councillor S V Brinton declared a personal interest under Paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct in relation to item 4 on the Cabinet report of 13<sup>th</sup> July 2004 under Minute 226, Statement of Accounts 2003/04, as a member of the Learning and Skills Council.

Councillor J L Gluza declared a personal interest under Paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct in relation to item 6 on the Cabinet report of 13<sup>th</sup> July 2004 under Minute 226, Adult Services Strategic Plan, because a relative of his was in receipt of care from Social Services and Cambridge City Primary Care Trust.

## **225. PETITIONS**

The Chairman reported that four petitions had been received.

The first contained 816 signatures and read, 'Petition against decision to axe Citi 5 Fen Estate to Trumpington and Citi 4 Kings Hedges (Meadows) to Cherry Hinton – we the undersigned declare our opposition to the axeing of the above buses'. Mrs Dawn Mabbutt attended the meeting, spoke in support of the petition and answered members' questions.

The second contained 122 signatures and read, 'Save our buses – Stagecoach are removing buses numbers 4 and 5, leaving Chesterton with one minibus per hour. Please sign this petition to save our buses'. Mrs Lilian Speed and Mr William McCann attended the meeting. Mr McCann spoke in support of the petition and answered members' questions.

The third contained 479 signatures and opposed the proposed replacement of Stagecoach services C4 and C5 with a minibus service from 25<sup>th</sup> July. Dr Judith Pinnington attended the meeting, spoke in support of the petition and answered members' questions.

The fourth contained 70 signatures and 13 letters of support and called for a noise reduction barrier to be installed on the A14 at Impington by the Highways Agency. Mr Brian Williams attended the meeting, spoke in support of the petition and answered members' questions.

The Chairman confirmed that written responses would be sent to all four petitioners.

## **226. REPORT OF THE CABINET**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, moved receipt of the reports of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2004 and 13<sup>th</sup> July 2004.

### **Report of the meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2004**

#### Key decisions for determination

- 1) Premature Retirement in the Interests of the Efficient Exercise of the Authority's Functions (PRIEEAF)

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, moved the following, which was seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor J E Reynolds:

That the new PRIEEAF scheme, incorporating the proposed changes agreed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive, be approved.

Councillor J L Huppert asked in what circumstances the discretion given under the new scheme to the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer to allow compensatory added years in exceptional circumstances might be exercised. Councillor S J E King suggested that the scheme should be more explicit about the nature of these exceptional circumstances. He also suggested that the discretion should be exercised by another body, rather than by the three post-holders currently proposed.

Councillor J L Huppert emphasised the need to relate the scheme to long-term retirement planning, to allow for different times and styles of retirement.

Councillor R L Clarke sought assurance that changes to the requirements of jobs and below par performance would whenever possible be managed through the staff development and appraisal processes, rather than by having recourse to the PRIEEAF scheme.

Councillor M Farrar noted that one of the criteria for use of the scheme was to improve the balance in the age structure of the workforce as a whole or of a particular section. He sought assurance that no individual would be compulsorily retired for this reason.

Councillor I C Kidman suggested that employees should be allowed to express an interest in being considered under the scheme.

Councillor P D Gooden commented that the penultimate paragraph on the first page of the scheme should refer to 'unfair dismissal' and not to 'constructive dismissal'.

Responding to the speakers, the Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, accepted a number of the points raised. However, he stated his view that employees should not be allowed to apply for consideration under the scheme and that the exceptional circumstances under which compensatory added years might be given should not be specified, to enable the scheme to be administered flexibly.

On being put to the vote, the recommendation was approved.

[Voting pattern: All members in favour except Councillor P D Gooden who voted against.]

2) 'Prospects for Learning' – Single Education Plan

The Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage, Councillor R Wilkinson, moved the following, which was seconded by the Lead Member for Education Resources, Councillor F H Yeulett:

That the draft Single Education Plan, 'Prospects for Learning', be formally approved.

Councillor R Wilkinson noted that the preparation of a Single Education Plan was no longer a statutory requirement, because new legislation currently going through Parliament would require the preparation of a Children's Plan, to include Education alongside other services. However, given the work that Cambridgeshire had done in piloting the Single Education Plan, it was proposed that it should still be used as the Education framework as the Council moved towards integrated children's services.

Councillors A C Kent and I C Kidman both reported their Groups' support for the Plan as a coherent statement of principles. However, Councillor Kent expressed concern, given that the Plan was no longer statutory, at the amount of time that officers had spent addressing Government's requirements, and suggested that this be raised through the Local Government Association.

On being put to the vote, the recommendation was approved unanimously.

Items for information

3) OfSTED Inspection of the County Council as a Local Education Authority

Comments on this item were made under item 8 of the Cabinet report of 13<sup>th</sup> July 2004.

4) Trading Standards Advice and Enquiries Policy

Councillor J L Gluza noted that under the new policy, complaints that amounted to alleged breaches of criminal law would be formally investigated only in the most serious cases. He expressed concern that minor cases of fraud could be of great significance for vulnerable members of the community and should be given equal importance.

Responding, the Lead Member for Community and Economic Development, Councillor A K Melton, agreed that minor frauds were a serious issue needing to be tackled.

Councillors P W Silby and R L Clarke commended Trading Standards on their recent handling of business enquiries and management of overweight vehicles.

5) Cambridge Information Signing System

Councillor J L Huppert asked for clarification on whether the middle signing ring would be pursued, given that the papers to the Cambridge City Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee and Cabinet had suggested that it would not. He also suggested that full consultation should be carried out on the additional signs now proposed, as had been done for those included in the original proposals.

Councillor J Broadway suggested that there should be a systematic review of signage in the historic core of Cambridge.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, reported that there had been a recent review of signage and that a number of redundant signs had been removed. She confirmed that the middle signing ring would not proceed and noted that there had been local consultation on the additional signs.

6) Other Matters of Interest

a) Social Services Budgetary Control

Councillors J L Huppert and M Farrar expressed concern that weaknesses in financial management skills and training had been known about for some time and sought assurance that these were being addressed as quickly as possible.

Councillor A C Kent expressed concern that financial difficulties within Social Services could affect the integrations of services such as those for people with learning disabilities, older people and children, and emphasised the need for a robust approach to be taken to these.

Councillor J Broadway commented that monitoring reports should be submitted to Social Services Spokes monthly, not quarterly, and to Cabinet more frequently than annually. Councillor S V Brinton endorsed this comment and asked whether the monitoring reports to Spokes had identified during the course of the year the financial difficulties of the Learning Disability Partnership.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, confirmed that the Learning Disability Partnership was covered by the budgetary control reports presented to Social Services Spokes. He agreed that effective budgetary control was essential to partnership working and noted that both the Council and its partners would also be making regular monitoring reports to the Cambridgeshire Care Partnership. He also noted that significant progress was being made in delivering staff training on financial control.

b) North Cambridge Primary Education Provision

Councillor P D Gooden welcomed the decision to proceed with a new primary school at Arbury Camps. He noted that the initial proposal was for a 120-place school and asked whether the design would allow subsequent expansion to 240 places, if this were appropriate.

Councillors P J Downes and A C Kent noted that the School Organisation Service Development Group and some Heads had expressed concern about the need to manage surplus school places north of the river.

Councillor L J Wilson welcomed the decision to build the new school and suggested that, given the development's location as a gateway to Cambridge, the school should be of a flagship design. Referring to the earlier petition about the impact of traffic noise on properties in Impington, he expressed concern that the development at Arbury Camps could intensify the problem by reflecting noise back across the A14.

Councillor I C Kidman welcomed the new school but emphasised the need to address the condition of the buildings at Arbury Primary School, some of which were fifty years old.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage, Councillor R Wilkinson, noted that the decision to proceed with the new school had been taken after extensive consultation. He confirmed that the footprint of the building would allow for a 240-place school, but, recognising the need to review the issue of surplus places north of the river, initially only a 120-place school would be built. He agreed that there were likely to be a number of opportunities for innovative design on the Arbury Camps site.

## **Report of the meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2004**

### Key decisions for determination

1) Local Transport Plan Annual Progress Report 2003/04

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, moved the following, which was seconded by the Lead Member for Community and Economic Development, Councillor A K Melton:

That Council approves the Local Transport Plan Annual Progress Report 2003/04 Prospects (Corporate Plan) and Policy Framework for 2004-08.

In moving the recommendation, Councillor Johnstone offered her congratulations to Matthew Lugg on his nomination as Municipal Engineer of the Year. She thanked him and all staff in Environment and Transport for the achievements reflected in the Annual Progress Report.

Councillor C E Shaw commented that the levels of growth envisaged for the Cambridge sub-region would lead to significantly increased volumes of traffic. He suggested that the Council should give serious consideration to road-pricing, in tandem with improvements to public transport, to help address problems of congestion.

Councillor J A Powley highlighted the need to improve the A412 between the new Fordham bypass and the junction with the A14. He asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport to write to Suffolk County Council, which was responsible for this road.

Councillor T J Bear commended the Directorate on the achievements of the past year, but noted that a number of future initiatives relating to bus and rail travel would be dependent on partners' collaboration. In particular, the deregulation of bus services and companies' focussing on the most profitable routes would make it increasingly difficult for the Council to meet its target on the percentage of rural households within a 13-minute walk of an hourly or more frequent service. Councillor J Broadway noted that the Council was proposing to develop a number of community transport schemes, but commented that these were not an effective alternative to public bus services.

Councillor G J Heathcock emphasised the need for bus operators to consult effectively with the Council and the public when proposing changes to services, because people might have constructive suggestions to make. Councillor L J Oliver emphasised the need for the Council to liaise effectively with operators, particularly with Stagecoach over the changes referred to in the petitions earlier in the meeting.

With regard to the new bus lane scheme for Hills Road, Councillor Heathcock asked for local members to be briefed on this sensitive scheme before the details were made public. He also asked for updates on the introduction of real-time bus information and on proposals to replace street lighting columns. Councillor C M Ballard emphasised the need for real-time bus information to include a robust telephone information line, as well as signs at bus-stops.

Councillor A R Mair congratulated the Directorate on its achievements but expressed concern that Parish Councils did not always receive replies to their correspondence, suggesting that additional administrative support might be appropriate. Councillor P J Downes also expressed concern about the divisional Highways offices' workloads, noting that delay between consultation on a scheme and its implementation could lead to local dissatisfaction.

Councillor I C Bates asked that the A1123 between Houghton Hill and the Wyton junction be included in the Council's noise-reducing road surfacing scheme.

Councillor A K Melton emphasised the need to complete the Ely southern route as soon as possible, especially as traffic in this part of the County would increase once the Fordham bypass was open. He also emphasised the need to dual the A47 as soon as possible, to relieve traffic congestion and help regenerate the Fenland economy.

Councillor J M Tuck welcomed the new Pedestrian Strategy and emphasised the importance of maintaining footways, particularly so that they were safe for vulnerable and elderly people to use. Councillor A J Bowen also emphasised the importance of maintaining cycleways to a high standard, to encourage cyclists to use them in preference to on-road routes.

Councillor S J E King thanked those officers involved in the successful Wisbech Market Town Strategy. He suggested that it would be appropriate to pilot real-time bus information in a market town such as Wisbech, where buses were less frequent than in Cambridge. He also noted that a local group was campaigning to re-open the Wisbech to March railway line as a tourist line and hoped that the Council would support this.

Councillor J E Coston highlighted the need for improvements to junctions on the A10, as well as traffic-calming for villages adjacent to the A14 to discourage 'rat-running'.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, acknowledged the importance of effective consultation by bus operators before changes were made to bus services. She noted that the drought damage caused to roads in the summer of 2003 had necessitated some re-prioritising of the highways maintenance programme, as the full cost had not been met by Government. She recognised the importance of maintaining footways and cycleways, but emphasised that the Council continued to be capital-rich and revenue-poor. She agreed that the Council should support the A47 Alliance, which was campaigning for the dualling of the A47, but at the same time emphasised the need to develop effective public transport issues throughout the County to further social inclusion. She also reported that tenders had been issued for the development of real-time bus information and that further work was being done on the funding of street-lighting column replacement.

On being put to the vote, the recommendation was approved unanimously.

2) Section 31 Partnership Agreement – Integrated Community Equipment Services

The Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, moved the following, which was seconded by the Lead Member for Vulnerable Adults, Councillor D R Pegram:

- i) That the Council agrees to the establishment of a Section 31 agreement for integrated community equipment services;



- ii) To delegate authority to approve and sign the final Section 31 agreement to the Cabinet Member for Social Services in consultation with the Director of Social Services.

Councillor C M Ballard welcomed the integration of community equipment services as the next step following the integration of occupational therapy services. He welcomed the progress made in providing occupational therapy services and expressed the hope that this integration would lead to improved delivery times for equipment. He also emphasised the need to work closely with the District Councils on the delivery of major aids and adaptations. Councillor I C Bates expressed concern that the capping by Government of District Councils' Disabled Facilities Grants would limit collaboration in this area.

Councillors S V Brinton and J L Huppert welcomed the principle of integration, but expressed a number of concerns about the detailed wording of the Section 31 agreement. Issues included the detail of the financial monitoring and reporting arrangements, including the provision of information by the Anglia Support Partnership and reporting to members; local members' access to information as part of their ward casework; and the provision of information to the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee. They sought assurance that these concerns would be taken into account.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, noted that he and the Director of Social Services had listened to members' concerns and would take these into account before finalising the Section 31 agreement. He shared members' concerns about the need for effective financial reporting by both the Council and its partners and noted that a report on this was scheduled for the meeting of the Cambridgeshire Care Partnership on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2004.

On being put to the vote, the recommendation was approved unanimously.

### 3) Financial Outturn for 2003/04

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, moved the following, which was seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor J E Reynolds:

- i) That the Council approves £50,000 of debt charges underspend being rolled forward to fund the Supplementary Credit Approval (SCA) contribution to the repair of drought-damaged roads;
- ii) That the Council approves the virement of £400,000 from Social Services to Policy to finance the capitalisation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) expenditure, which will release funding to cover the Financial Services Income and Payments deficit.

Councillor J L Huppert questioned the way in which the Council's carry-forwards had been presented, noting that the figure of £7.9 million included £9.3 million of schools' carry-forwards, without which the figure

would be - £1.4 million. Councillor P J Downes emphasised that the schools' carry-forwards were distinct and not available for use by the Council.

Councillor M Farrar asked whether the target to reduce debts by 15%, which had been met and exceeded by 10%, related to debts owed to or by the Council, and how this related to the figures reported figures for debtors and creditors.

Responding, the Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, emphasised that the Council's general reserves were £5.6 million, which equated to 1.2% of net revenue expenditure, as compared with the Shire County average of 1.4%. No suggestion had been made that the Council was able to use the schools' carry-forwards funds. He agreed to send a written response to Councillor Farrar's query.

On being put to the vote, the recommendation was approved unanimously.

#### 4) Statement of Accounts 2003/04

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, moved the following, which was seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor J E Reynolds:

That the Council approves the 2003/04 Statement of Accounts, including the Statement of Internal Control.

Councillor S V Brinton welcomed the recognition by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive of weaknesses in some of the Council's financial systems and the need to address these. She expressed concern that the trading account for Financial Services was overspent by £111,000 and that a number of other trading accounts such as Catering and Cleaning were also in deficit, when these had been set up in the expectation that they would remain in surplus. She suggested that there should be a detailed inquiry into the reasons for the overspends on these accounts. She noted that the long-term debt owed by the former Further Education Funding Council had now been transferred to the Learning and Skills Council. She expressed concern that the Statement showed that a significant proportion of the Council's revenue from Government continued to be in the form of specific grants, limiting local flexibility.

Councillor J L Huppert expressed concern that the £229,000 balance in the Capital Financing Fund would be of limited use in financing capital projects. He also noted that the balance of the Good Housekeeping Fund had reduced to £1,254,000 and asked how many loans from the Fund were outstanding, whether they had been used successfully and what were the future plans for the use of the fund. He also highlighted some minor corrections that he would send to the Director of Resources.

Responding, the Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, emphasised that the Cabinet had commissioned the Pegram report to assess weaknesses in financial systems and take steps to address them. He accepted the correction with regard to the Further Education Funding Council and endorsed Councillor Brinton's comments on Government

grants. With regard to the Good Housekeeping Fund, he noted that Resources Spokes had already requested greater transparency of information about the use of this Fund.

On being put to the vote, the recommendation was approved unanimously.

### Key decisions for information

#### 5) Reshaping the Organisation – Initial Proposals

Councillors A C Kent and S V Brinton accepted the principle of reorganisation. However, they expressed concern that the wider reshaping of the organisation, with the need to define senior management structures, was accelerating the integration of children's services, when time was needed to involve all staff and change cultures. They emphasised the need for proper consultation on the integration of children's services and expressed concern that much of the consultation would be taking place over the summer break, although the decision to defer Cabinet's discussion to 12<sup>th</sup> October 2004 was welcome. They also expressed concern that no business plan had yet been prepared for the reshaping and that associated risks had not been assessed. Councillor Brinton urged the Leader of the Council to be flexible in taking forward the proposals and to slow down if necessary, especially to avoid the potential need for further changes with the advent of the new Council in 2005.

Councillor P J Downes thanked the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive for their useful contributions to the Policy Scrutiny and Audit Committee's scrutiny of the proposals. He shared the previous speakers' concern that, even with the extension of time, the proposed consultation period would prevent many school governing bodies from responding, which would not help allay their concerns about the proposed changes. He also highlighted the need for a business plan, particularly given the link being made in the Council's publicity between the reshaping and cost reductions.

Councillor J L Huppert welcomed the greater prominence given to Environment in the revised proposals and suggested that this be taken a step further, separating Environment from Economic Development. He queried the proposed link between Finance and Performance Review.

Councillor I C Kidman reported that the Labour Group supported the reorganisation in principle, but wished to emphasise the need to move forward flexibly and to continue to consult and liaise with partners even after the October Cabinet meeting. He expressed support for a structure based on three Assistant Chief Executives, but suggested that the Assistant Chief Executive responsible for children's services should be an educationalist, reflecting the fact that the Council had responsibilities towards all children in this area, but towards a smaller proportion of children for children's social services. He also noted that the reorganisation should be used to address the issues of corporate overheads and effective corporate use of IT.

Councillor C E Shaw emphasised the need to ensure that the proposed changes to Environment and Transport did not compromise the success of the services covered by this Directorate. Councillor C M Ballard made similar comments relating to Children's Social Services, recognising the need for integration but highlighting the need to maintain current strengths. He expressed some reservations about the proposed six Directors for Children's Services, suggesting instead that there should be three service Directors, with the three area Directors immediately below them acting as drivers for integration and collaboration.

Councillor S J E King welcomed the postponement of the Cabinet decision until 12<sup>th</sup> October 2004, but emphasised the need to maintain sufficient momentum in introducing the changes, especially given the effect of the uncertainty on staff morale.

Responding, the Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, recognised the need to consult and to respond to the representations received, but endorsed Councillor King's comments on the need to take decisions and make progress. He confirmed that a full business case would be presented to members before they were asked formally to approve the restructuring. He emphasised that the main motivation for making changes was not to make savings but to improve service delivery. Nonetheless, it was expected that some savings would ensue.

6) Adult Services Strategic Plan

Councillor J L Gluza expressed concern that integrated health and social care services, including services for older people and people with mental health problems, were still operating very separately from each other. This meant that clients were having long waits for assessment and from assessment to the delivery of services. He emphasised the importance of the Council exercising its accountability for these services, not least because poor performance could adversely affect its forthcoming Comprehensive Performance Assessment score.

7) Proposed Improvements to the A10 Off and On Slip Roads to A14 at Milton – Compulsory Purchase Order

Councillor J E Coston welcomed the proposed improvements to this interchange and highlighted the need for short-term improvements to signing to prevent people from entering it from the wrong direction.

Other decisions for information

8) OfSTED Inspection of the County Council as a Local Education Authority

The Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage, Councillor R Wilkinson, thanked all those officers who had contributed to the inspection process. He noted that the excellent outcome was a particular achievement given that Cambridgeshire had been one of the first authorities to be inspected under OfSTED's new methodology. He also highlighted comments in the report on the positive role played by members.

9) The Youth Service: Post-OfSTED Action Plan

Councillor A C Kent drew attention to the detrimental effect of continued low funding on the Youth Service and noted that the post-OfSTED action plan would be effective only if adequately funded. Councillor P J Downes highlighted the particular importance of the Youth Service to young people in rural areas and asked what would happen if the action plan were not adequately funded.

Councillor I C Kidman expressed disappointment that the OfSTED report had highlighted shortcomings about the use of existing resources. He noted that to fund the Youth Service at the level recommended through the Formula Spending Share (FSS) would require a near-doubling of resources, and emphasised that this service should be one of the first to benefit if there were any relaxation of the ceiling to Cambridgeshire's grant.

Responding, the Lead Member for Lifelong Learning, Councillor V H Lucas, emphasised that steps had already been taken to establish more effective management of the service and that Cabinet had been advised that the implementation of other elements of the action plan should be an MTSP priority.

Other matters for information

- 10) Performance on Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) and Key Performance Indicators for 2003/04
- 11) Monitoring of the Recommendations of the Joint Review of Social Services
- 12) Improving Financial Management: Progress Report
- 13) Cambridgeshire Direct Phase Two: Building Acquisition
- 14) Registration Services: Wisbech/March Premises

**227. COUNCIL CONSTITUTION: SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES**

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Management Committee, Councillor L W McGuire, moved the report of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Committee held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2004 and the recommendations it contained. The recommendations were seconded by Councillor S V Brinton.

Councillor J L Gluza expressed concern that the requirement for call-in requests to state the reason for the call-in would limit the role of the Scrutiny Committee Chairmen. He also felt that the requirement to put call-in requests in writing was unnecessarily restrictive.

Councillors L W McGuire, J K Walters and S V Brinton emphasised that there was no intention to restrict the Scrutiny Chairmen. Rather, the intention was to make the call-in process clearer by ensuring that the reasons for the call-in were known from the outset. Scrutiny Management Committee had agreed that 'writing' should include fax and e-mail.

Council resolved to agree:

- i) To insert the following sentence at the end of Scrutiny Procedure Rule 12(a):

‘The Cabinet shall provide a written response to each of the Scrutiny Committee recommendations, including reasons where scrutiny recommendations are not accepted.’

- ii) To insert the following sentence after the end of the first sentence of Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16(c):

‘The request for the call-in of a decision shall be conveyed in writing and shall specify the reason(s) why the decision is being called in.’

[Voting pattern: All members in favour except Councillors R L Clarke and J L Gluza against.]

## **228. COUNCIL CONSTITUTION: REVIEW OF POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY**

The Chairman, Councillor R Driver, moved the following, which was seconded by the Vice-Chairman, Councillor S B Normington, and agreed unanimously:

To approve a change in the allocation of seats on the Staff Appeals Committee, so that it comprises two Conservative members and one Liberal Democrat member, drawn from a pool of trained members.

## **229. COUNCIL CONSTITUTION: APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE**

The Chairman agreed that this additional item of urgent business be included on the agenda to enable the Appointments Committee to take decisions on local pay and reward in advance of the next Council meeting and to avoid the need for a special meeting of Council which might otherwise be necessary to the agree the change.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, followed the following, which was seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor J E Reynolds:

To authorise the Appointments Committee to determine arrangements for local pay and reward and that Table 2, ‘Responsibility for Council functions’, in Part 3 of the Council’s Constitution be amended accordingly.

Councillor M L Leeke asked whether the Appointments Committee would meet in private session when considering arrangements for local pay and reward. Councillor J K Walters responded that this had not yet been determined.

On being put to the vote, the recommendation was carried.

[Voting pattern: unanimous.]

## **230. WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

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

- Councillor J D Jones had asked the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, about the numbers of disabled adults awaiting assessment and waiting times. The response set out the requested figures, where these were available.

Copies of the question and response are available from Democratic Services.

## **231. ORAL QUESTIONS**

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

- Councillor I C Bates asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, about possible delays to the improvement of the A14 and the significance of these given the planned growth in the Cambridge sub-region. Councillor Johnstone reported that officers were investigating media reports of possible delays. It appeared that, given the complexity of the scheme, its completion date might slip to 2011.
- Councillor J L Huppert asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport what steps the Council might take to respond to the petitions on bus services presented earlier in the meeting, and to encourage Stagecoach to consult more effectively. Councillor Johnstone reminded members that the bus services referred to were commercial services and that the Council's resources to subsidise bus services were very limited. She agreed to raise the matters referred to in the petition with Stagecoach. As a supplementary question, Councillor Huppert asked about the suitability of Union Lane in Chesterton as a route for buses and coaches. Councillor Johnstone agreed to send a written response on this point.
- Councillor C M Ballard asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport about the delay to improvements to Carter Bridge in Cambridge, the cycle bridge over the railway linking Petersfield and Coleridge. Councillor Johnstone explained that the improvements had had to be deferred to the following year, in view of the urgent need to replace the unsafe Cutter Ferry Bridge.
- Councillor G J Heathcock asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport about the scope offered by the recent White Paper for local authorities to pilot new bus schemes using revenue funding from Government. Councillor Johnstone agreed that a successful bid to the proposed Transport Innovation Fund could enable the Council to explore radically enhanced bus services to tackle congestion.

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

## **232. MOTIONS**

The following motion was proposed by Councillor G F Harper under Rule 10 of the Council Procedure Rules and seconded by Councillor J L Huppert:

'This Council views with concern the proposed extension of compulsory postal voting at elections, believing that a secret ballot is the heart of the democratic process and that all-postal elections seriously compromise the security and confidentiality of the vote.'

A number of members spoke in support of the motion, emphasising that they did not oppose voluntary postal voting, but were concerned that all-postal voting would undermine the privacy, security and effectiveness of the ballot, and that there was no evidence that it led to sustained increases in turnout.

Speaking against the motion, Councillor P D Gooden argued that postal voting did encourage turnout, particularly as it made it easier for people working long hours to vote.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

[Voting pattern: Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups in favour; Labour Group against.]

### **233. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES**

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

- 1) Councillors J Broadway, M Farrar, and H J Fitch to replace Councillors B S Bhalla, C M Carter, J L Gluza, P D Gooden and J D Jones on the pool of members from which the Staff Appeals Committee is drawn;
- 2) Councillor J L Gluza to be appointed as Labour substitute member on the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee;
- 3) Councillor I C Kidman to replace Councillor J D Jones as one of the Council's representatives on the Local Government Association and on the County Councils' Network.

Chairman: