

COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 30th October 2007

Time: 10.30 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.

Place: Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present: Councillor A G Orgee (Chairman)

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

Apologies: Councillor N Bell, K Churchill, M Curtis, A C Kent, R Moss-Eccardt, D White and M Williamson

176. MINUTES: 17th JULY 2007

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17th July 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

177. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Death of County Councillor

The Chairman announced with sadness the death of County Councillor Brian Hardy. Members observed a minute's silence in his memory.

Director of Business Services and Information Technology

The Chairman reported that the Appointments Committee had now recently agreed to appoint Debbie Bondi permanently to the post of Director of Business Services and Information Technology, in recognition of her achievements in this role over the preceding six months.

Awards and achievements

The Chairman led members in offering congratulations to:

- Kara Hill, a Council Communications and Media Manager, who had been jointly awarded the Young Communicator of the Year award for 2007 by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations

- All those who had contributed to Cambridgeshire's recognition as Transport Local Authority of the Year at the 2007 National Transport Awards
- Staff working on the National Process Improvement Project. Cambridgeshire was one of 25 local authorities chosen by the Department for Communities and Local Government as a pathfinder identifying ways of improving back office processes to release more resources to front line services
- County Council staff involved in construction: the County had been highly commended in the Considerate Constructors' award for Improving the Image of Construction between 1997 and 2007.

178. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

- Councillor Ballard as a Trustee of the Parkside Federation and Councillor Harrison as a Governor of Parkside Community College (Report of the Cabinet meeting held on 11th September 2007, Item 1, New Schools Competition Arrangements Policy and Decision-Making Process)
- Councillor Batchelor as the Chairman of Linton Action for Youth (Report of the Cabinet meeting held on 16th October 2007, Item 2, Joint Area Review)
- Councillors Heathcock and Wilson as members of Cambridgeshire Older People's Enterprise (COPE) and Councillor Williams as a Trustee of Age Concern (Report of the Cabinet meeting held on 16th October 2007, Item 3, Older People's Services: Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) Inspection)
- Councillor Jenkins as a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme, Councillors Downes, McGuire and Sales as beneficiaries of the Scheme and Councillor Melton as his wife and daughter were members of the Scheme (Item 7, Pensions Committee Annual Report 2006/07)
- Councillor Jenkins as a resident of Pease Way, Histon, adjacent to Gatehouse Way (Report of the Cabinet meeting held on 16th October 2007, Item 10, Cambridgeshire Guided Busway – Histon Station Car Park)
- Councillor Johnstone as a Non-Executive Director of the Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Councillors Bates, Johnstone and Melton as Board Members of Cambridgeshire Horizons (Report of the Cabinet meeting held on 16th October 2007, Item 15, Quarterly Update Report on Key Partnerships)
- Councillor J Reynolds as Chairman of Renewables East, Councillors Bradney, Read and K Reynolds as members of the Joint Development Control Committee for Northstowe and Councillors Kenney and McCraith as members of the Joint Development Control Committee for the Cambridge Fringes (Report of the Cabinet meeting held on 16th October 2007, Item 7, Growth and Major Developments, and other items)
- Councillor Smith as a member of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority (Item 11, Questions on Police and Fire Authority Issues)
- Councillor Williams as a Trustee of Burwell Community Print (Report of the Cabinet meeting held on 16th October 2007, Item 13, Learning Disability Day Services Modernisation Programme)

Councillors Johnstone and Lucas declared prejudicial interests under Paragraph 10 of the Code of Conduct as a Non-Executive Director of the Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and the Vice-Chairman of the Hinchingsbrooke NHS Trust respectively (Report of the Cabinet meeting held on 11th September 2007, Item 3, County Council Response to the Mental Health Trust Consultation on Future Plans – Proposed Response) and took no part in discussion of these items.

Councillor Kindersley suggested that it would be useful to have a list of Committees of which membership should routinely be declared as a personal interest. The Chairman agreed to discuss this with the Solicitor to the Council.

179. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Three members of the public attended the meeting to ask questions:

- Bill Kirkman, Chairman of the Trustees of CAMREAD, presented a petition with 227 signatures concerning the Council's withdrawal of funding to CAMREAD, an organisation providing support to visually impaired people in Cambridgeshire. He asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Johnstone, to consider reinstating the funding, given that CAMREAD's services were widely used and appreciated.

Responding, the Leader of the Council noted that the County Council's threshold for providing clients with adult social care was a 'substantial' level of need. The Council's funding to voluntary organisations had been reviewed earlier in the year to ensure that funding and services were offered equitably across the County. Regrettably this had resulted in the discontinuation of funding to CAMREAD, but transitional funding of £3,000 had been agreed and officers were now working with the organisation to help them identify alternative sources of funding.

- Sheila Smith-Rawnsley, the Chief Executive of Directions Plus, reported that the Council had recently withdrawn funding from Directions Plus for its work with disabled children and their families. She asked the Leader of the Council to whom Directions Plus should refer the clients they currently assisted but for whom they were no longer being funded, and who would challenge decisions made by the Council in future about eligibility for services. She also asked to see copies of papers on the basis of which the decision to withdraw funding had been made.

Responding, the Leader of the Council noted that the Council's funding to Directions Plus had been for information and advice, not statutory services. The organisation had been given six months' notice that the funding would be withdrawn, well in excess of the twelve-week minimum agreed in the Cambridgeshire Compact. The Area Director of Children and Young People's Services for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire was happy to meet with Directions Plus again to help signpost clients to alternative sources of support. She would also make available reports and minutes relating to the funding decision, with confidential information relating to other organisations deleted.

- Mike Shellens, the Chairman of Brampton Parish Council, urged the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor Pegram, to

ask officers to discuss with the operator of the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) at Buckden, the Waste Recycling Group, whether there were any means by which its proposed closure could be avoided. He noted that the facility was well used and that alternative facilities were at greater distance and more inconvenient for residents to use.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services accepted that the Buckden HWRC was popular with local residents, but noted that even after its closure, Huntingdonshire residents would still be well served by other HWRCs in the vicinity, including Alconbury, St Neots and Bluntisham. He also noted that the Brampton site was particularly expensive to run, costing more than the other three added together. Staffing at both Alconbury and St Neots would be increased at busy periods to cope with additional visits. In addition, a new all-weather, easy access site was being planned in St Neots, to open in summer 2009.

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

180. COUNCIL CONSTITUTION – UPDATE

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

To approve the revisions to the Council Constitution as set out in the Appendix to the report.

181. REPORT OF THE APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE: APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chairman of the Appointments Committee, Councillor Melton, moved the receipt of the report of the Committee, which advised that the process to appoint a new Chief Executive had not yet reached a resolution and that the Committee would be meeting again shortly to continue its discussions.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Jenkins, made a statement expressing his serious concern at the current situation. He noted that the Appointments Committee had agreed a preferred candidate. Following the Appointments Committee's decision, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Johnstone, had contacted the candidate and the candidate had subsequently withdrawn. Councillor Jenkins expressed concern that Councillor Johnstone appeared to have intervened inappropriately, meaning that the Council would be without a Chief Executive for an even longer period. He called for Councillor Johnstone's resignation from the Leadership and reported that he would be taking steps to:

- Report Councillor Johnstone to the Standards Board for an apparent breach of the Members' Code of Conduct
- Ask the Council's financial officers to investigate Councillor Johnstone's actions, on the basis that she may have acted *ultra vires* in causing the Council to incur further recruitment costs that would otherwise not have been incurred
- Ensure effective scrutiny of the events that had taken place, either by the Appointments Committee or by the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee.

The Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor Ballard, echoed the concerns expressed by Councillor Jenkins, noting that Opposition members had worked hard with Administration members to ensure that there had been no political division over the Appointments Committee's recommendation. He also called for Councillor Johnstone to resign from the Leadership.

Responding to the speakers, the Chairman of the Appointments Committee agreed that the Council needed to appoint an appropriate Chief Executive as quickly as possible. He noted that the Appointments Committee would be meeting again later that day and urged members of the Committee to work with him to move the situation forward.

182. PENSIONS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2006/07

The Chairman of the Pensions Committee, Councillor Melton, moved receipt the annual report of the Pensions Committee for 2006/07.

Councillor Sales expressed concern that actuarial valuations of the Pensions Fund should be carried out every three years. Cambridgeshire's Fund had last been reviewed in March 2004, making it difficult to judge at present whether the Fund was in deficit or not. Councillor Sales emphasised that a fresh valuation should be carried out as soon as possible.

Councillor Downes reported that he had challenged the fees paid by the Council for the management of the Fund. He explained that management fees were usually a percentage of the Fund's total value. Recently the market value of the Fund had increased due to factors beyond the managers' control, meaning that the fees had increased proportionately. The Pensions Committee had now agreed that the managers' fees would also be linked to their performance as measured against external benchmarks.

Councillor Hughes emphasised the importance of managing the Pensions Fund responsibly, to ensure that pensioners' futures were secure.

Responding, the Chairman of the Pensions Committee paid tribute to the previous Chairman, Councillor Walters, who had stood down in May 2007 after serving for ten years. He recognised the importance of managing the Fund responsibly and reported that it was currently performing well. A new valuation of the Fund would be carried out shortly.

Council noted the report.

183. REPORTS OF THE CABINET

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Johnstone, moved receipt of the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 11th September 2007.

Meeting held on 11th September 2007

Key decisions for information

- 1) New Schools Competition Arrangements Policy and Decision-Making Process

Councillor Ballard recognised the need to raise national standards in education, but commented that there were a number of issues in the new competition process and policy still to be resolved. He particularly highlighted the requirement to go out to competition if sixth form provision was to be extended to over 200 pupils, even if this was a development of an existing site, and commented that it would not make sense for two providers to operate from a single site. He also questioned the process for opening new secondary schools; primary schools would have to open as soon as the first children arrived, but secondary schools would not have to open until there were 150 pupils in the catchment area, by which time many of these pupils would already have become established in other schools.

Commenting on this, Councillor Hughes noted that parents had very much appreciated the opening arrangements for the new primary school at Arbury Park. She also emphasised the need for a broad view of school facilities available for use by the community, which should include venues for cultural events as well as sports facilities.

Councillor Downes spoke against the Government's emerging policy in this area, suggesting that the emphasis on diversity and choice was unhelpful in areas such as Cambridgeshire and that the process was highly bureaucratic. He emphasised that it should be local authorities' responsibility to locate good schools close to where people lived.

Councillor Broadway suggested that the section on transport to new schools should be strengthened to include more detail on proximity to bus routes, the development of pedestrian and cycle routes and limitations to on-site car parking.

Councillor Stone suggested that fire sprinklers should be fitted as a matter of course in all new schools, to help counter the increasing incidence of arson.

Councillor Reid expressed concern that the section on school design contained no references to carbon reduction or sustainability and commented that this was a missed opportunity to match the Council's stated aims in its Climate Change Strategy with practical actions. He noted that new public buildings provided the Council with an opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of sustainable development and called on the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services to review the policy accordingly.

Responding, the Chairman of the Development Control Committee, Councillor Read, commented that the Committee would rigorously examine the sustainability elements of all planning applications for new schools. The Cabinet Member for Service Infrastructure, Councillor Harty, emphasised that the Council was required by Government to introduce a competition process for new schools. He agreed to review all of the issues raised and take any possible revisions to the Service Infrastructure Policy Development Group (PDG).

2) Corporate Parent Project Plan

Other decisions

3) County Council Response to the Mental Health Trust Consultation on Future Plans – Proposed Response

Councillor Heathcock welcomed the Cabinet's response to this consultation, particularly in relation to proposals for children's mental health services. He suggested that it was inappropriate for mental health services to be covered by the Government's Payment by Results approach, given that this was a highly sensitive area. He also expressed concern that Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) had already suggested that the Mental Health Trust could be a target for savings in the coming year, and emphasised the need for continuing close scrutiny to ensure that proposed improvements were funded and delivered.

Councillor Sales also welcomed the Cabinet's response. He expressed frustration at the limited time allowed for consultation and the limited flexibility allowed to the Mental Health Trust in carrying out the consultation. He also expressed concern that although a change to Foundation status would enable the Trust to raise more money, no undertaking had been given that mental health services would improve as a result of the change of status.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, Councillor Tuck, and the Lead Member for Enhanced Services, Councillor Yeulett, both commented that they shared the speakers' concerns. They had met with the Mental Health Trust to discuss the issues set out in the Cabinet response and would continue to work to ensure that the Trust worked in effective partnership with the Council.

4) Post-Compulsory Education Discretionary Awards

Councillor Sales expressed disappointment at the Council's continuing decision not to make post-compulsory education discretionary awards, commenting that these could be a valuable source of support to young people.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor Pegram, explained that the Council was legally required to review its policy in this area annually. He noted that there were alternative sources of funding for most if not all of the awards affected.

5) Performance Monitoring Quarter 1

Councillor Huppert expressed concern that the report to Council did not make it clear that a number of areas of poor and deteriorating performance had been reported to Cabinet. The areas included education other than at school, exam performance of young people leaving care, older people helped to live at home, delivery of community equipment and staff sickness absence.

Responding, the Leader of the Council reminded members that the report to Cabinet had also highlighted a number of areas of strong performance, including numbers of school leavers not in education, employment or training, intensive home care provision and speed of social care assessments.

Councillor Hughes also commented on the need to celebrate success and reported on a recent positive meeting between members and a group of highly articulate looked after young people.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, Councillor Tuck, noted that the Council was working with head teachers to improve the delivery of education other than at school. She also emphasised the importance of helping looked after children to achieve their full potential. In many instances this was not quantified by exam results, especially since 42% of looked after children had statements of special educational need.

Councillor Harrison emphasised that looked after young people should be supported to meet the same standards as their peers, not set lower targets.

The Special Adviser on Performance Management, Councillor Bradney, reminded members that since some cohorts were very small, even a slight variation in numbers could significantly affect performance measurements. He also noted that the new performance management system now being introduced would ensure more accurate monitoring.

6) Budget Monitoring

Councillor Harrison expressed concern that the performance status for the Council's income and expenditure as at 31st July 2007 had been red, suggesting that a balanced year-end position would not be achieved. Although more recent reports had now been received, the Office action plans for achieving financial balance by year-end had still not been published. Councillor Harrison noted that the Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee had expressed concerns in the previous year over delays to the publication of action plans and called for this year's to be issued for scrutiny as soon as possible.

Councillors Harrison and Broadway expressed concern that the Learning Disability Partnership was continuing to experience demographic pressures, despite assurances that demographic trends had been addressed in this year's budget. Councillor Broadway expressed particular concern that the Partnership had not planned responsibly for a number of clients making the transition from children's to adults' services.

Councillors Stone and Harrison both expressed concern at the financial position of the trading units, noting that the deficit of £1.753 million brought forward from the previous year had now increased by £500,000. The Audit and Accounts Committee had agreed in July to increase the Traded Services Earmarked Reserve by £600,000, but the deficit now exceeded even the enhanced Reserve. Councillor Stone asked for details of the current and projected year-end balances for the trading

units and sought assurance that the recovery plans would be implemented swiftly and effectively.

Councillor Broadway noted that invoices worth £3 million were still awaited from Atkins and commented that this contract was taking time to become established and operate smoothly.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor Pegram, assured members that financial provision had been made for the money owing to Atkins. He recognised the need to improve transitional planning for clients with learning disabilities moving from children's to adults' services.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Melton, shared members' concern at the performance of the trading units and undertook to investigate how these services could be delivered to budget. He reminded members that the Council had a statutory duty to provide some elements of the services, such as free school meals, and also noted that the option of winding up the units would itself incur costs of restructuring and redundancies. He reminded members that corporately, the Council was facing a very difficult financial settlement, equivalent to a zero increase; if the Council Tax increase was again capped at 5%, the Council would have to find 4% efficiency savings, meaning that some very difficult decisions could lie ahead.

7) Petitions

a) Road Closures and Disruption to Histon and Impington during the Building of the Guided Busway Junction

Councillor Jenkins congratulated officers on completing works at Oakington associated with the Guided Busway and reopening the Oakington to Cottenham road on time. However, he expressed concern that the more recent road closure in Histon had not gone smoothly. He also expressed disappointment at Cabinet's reception of this petition, which had included over 1,200 signatures, and suggested that Cabinet members had shown reluctance to engage meaningfully with the community to discuss the issues they had raised.

b) Request from Residents on Great Shelford and Stapleford for Permanent Change to Route of 31 Bus

Councillor Stone asked the Cabinet also to consider making changes to the other end of this bus route, to improve the service provided to residents of Fowlmere and Thriplow.

Responding to Councillor Jenkins, the Lead Member for Highways and Transport, Councillor McGuire, emphasised that he had taken the comments of local residents seriously and agreed that disruption to the community should be minimised. He noted that he had investigated the request for compensation to local businesses, but that this had proved not to be possible. Responding to Councillor Stone, he noted that a revised draft timetable for the 31 route was

being developed and would be sent to local members, Parish Councils and local businesses for consultation.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Johnstone, moved receipt of the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 16th October 2007.

Meeting held on 16th October 2007

Inspections for information

1) **Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and the Council's Improvement Plan**

Councillor Downes emphasised the importance of taking the Corporate Assessment findings seriously and learning from them. He noted that whilst some areas of good performance had been highlighted, overall the Council's rating had deteriorated. The need to improve performance in three key areas had been emphasised: these were partnership working, community engagement and performance management. Councillor Downes commented that all of these areas impacted directly on residents, making it essential to monitor progress against the improvement plan closely. He suggested that the Council's previously stated aim of top quartile achievement with bottom quartile expenditure was no longer realistic.

Councillor Ballard echoed a number of the concerns expressed by Councillor Downes, noting that other local authorities were now overtaking Cambridgeshire. The Council particularly needed to strengthen its ambition and its prioritisation. Councillor Ballard expressed concern that the Council may now not be meeting the needs of all of its communities. He emphasised the need for effective consultation and engagement of all parts of the community, not only self-selecting groups. He noted that this would become increasingly vital as the importance of the Local Area Agreement increased and public sector organisations were funded and inspected together.

Councillor Jenkins emphasised the importance of reporting Cambridgeshire's performance accurately. A recent press release had stated that the Council had received a Corporate Assessment rating of 2 on a scale of 0 to 4, when in fact the scale was 1 to 4, making Cambridgeshire's rating lower than had been suggested. He emphasised the need to drive improvements to Council services, particularly adult social care, if Cambridgeshire's broader CPA rating was not to deteriorate in 2008. He reminded members that the 2008 rating would be the Council's final CPA rating, since CPA would then be replaced by Corporate Area Assessment, for which effective community engagement and leadership would be essential.

Councillors Downes and Harrison commented that low funding should not be used as an excuse for poor performance. They challenged the Leader's assertion that Cambridgeshire's grant was amongst the lowest received by County Councils, noting that Cambridgeshire was in fact ranked 16 out of 34, just above average.

Responding to the speakers, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Johnstone, accepted that the Corporate Assessment report had been disappointing and that improvements were needed. However, she noted that the report referred to circumstances of almost a year ago; with the advent of the new Administration, significant steps had already been made to drive improvements: for example, a Countywide Sustainable Community Strategy was being developed; a Special Adviser to the Cabinet on Performance Management had been appointed; and a Cabinet member lead on communities had also been appointed. On the issue of funding, Councillor Johnstone commented that it was important to look at the overall picture. Even with several successive maximum increases to the Council Tax, Cambridgeshire was still the third lowest spending of the County Councils. However, despite the difficult funding position, the Administration was determined to drive forward the improvement plan.

- 2) Joint Area Review (JAR)
- 3) Older People's Services: Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) Inspection of Services for Older People May 2007 and Subsequent Action Plan

Councillor Heathcock expressed disappointment at the findings of the CSCI report and highlighted a number of the issues needing to be addressed, including integration of health and social care IT systems; reducing delayed transfers of care and the associated financial penalties; inequitable service provision across the County for older people with mental health problems; and delays to occupational therapy assessments and the delivery of minor aids and adaptations.

Councillor Higginson reported that the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee had noted deteriorating performance against a number of indicators relating to older people's services, including numbers of older people helped to live at home and support for carers. He emphasised that real improvements to services were needed and not only improvements to data capture.

Councillor Jenkins suggested that there were two reasons for the continuing low rating of older people's services. One of these was organisational: the Government was recommending that a local authority's Director of Adult Social Services should rank equally with the statutory Director of Children's Services, whereas in Cambridgeshire the latter was a Deputy Chief Executive but the former a Director. Secondly, financial investment was needed to improve services and enable savings to be made subsequently, rather than cutting costs at the outset.

Councillor Ballard noted that adult social care services were facing difficulties nationally, because unlike health and education they were not receiving investment from the Government. Social care options were all expensive, but would lead to savings on the longer term: for example, the Common Assessment Tool piloted by Cambridgeshire would make the assessment process more cost-effective; and improved care in the community would help to reduce emergency hospital admissions and delayed transfers of care. Close partnership working between the

Council and the PCT was needed to ensure that as much investment as possible was made in initiatives such as these.

Councillor Hughes emphasised the importance of discussing older people's social care directly with them and their carers, to ensure that their needs were being met. She also noted that staff should be encouraged to be visionary in developing and providing services, rather than feeling that they had to adhere to existing procedures.

Responding, the Lead Member for Enhanced Services, Councillor Yeulett, reminded members that the Council's older people's services had been assessed as having promising capacity to improve. The inspectors had identified a number of areas of good performance and further progress had been made since the inspection. The Cabinet, the PCT and the Cambridgeshire Care Partnership were all committed to driving further improvements.

4) Youth Offending Service Inspection and Action Plan

Councillor Broadway congratulated the Youth Offending Service on the inspection findings, but noted that the inspectors had assessed Cambridgeshire's funding of its Service as low compared with that of its statistical neighbours. She suggested that the Service could do even better with greater funding and proposed that this should be a priority, given the importance of offering appropriate support to young offenders and young people at risk of offending. She also noted that this would tie in with Local Area Agreement targets on youth provision and addressing public perception of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Griffiths reminded members that Cabinet had also received the report of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee on outcomes for young offenders. She expressed concern that this member-led review had been carried out without members meeting any young offenders. However she commended the review recommendations on accommodation and education or training for young people leaving institutions and emphasised the importance of ensuring that the Service was adequately staffed to offer support in these areas.

[Responding, the Lead Member for Communities, Councillor Lucas, also offered his congratulations to the Youth Offending Service. He noted that the Service had received a financial increase in the current year, enabling some key staff vacancies to be filled and agreed to write to Councillor Griffiths regarding staff numbers. He also welcomed the Scrutiny review, reporting that Cabinet had fully accepted recommendations 2 to 7. The financial implications of recommendation 1, relating to educational and vocational learning, were being investigated; and on recommendation 8, which suggested writing to the Secretary of State, some final research was being done before a letter was sent.](#)

5) Direction of Travel Self-Assessment

Councillor Downes emphasised the importance of this document and encouraged all members to read it. However, he expressed concern that

it concentrated disproportionately on the Council's achievements and did not give enough information about areas for improvement. He welcomed the Council's emerging priorities, for example in relation to involving and listening to local communities, and challenged the Administration to ensure that they were met.

Key decisions for information

- 6) Section 29 Cambridge Fringes Joint Policy Committee
- 7) Growth and Major Developments
 - a) Competitions Programme for New Schools to Serve Northstowe, the Cambridge Fringe Developments and Relating to the Proposed Amalgamation of Huntingdon Infant and Junior School

- b) Cambridgeshire Design Guide for Streets and the Public Realm

Councillor Kindersley asked those involved in developing the Design Guide to ensure that common sense was applied, to avoid some of the mistakes that had been made in existing highways schemes in the County.

Councillor Harrison noted that the Government was developing its policy on highways design and welcomed this work to tailor the emerging policy to local need. She encouraged all those involved in the planning process to ensure that the guidance was fully embraced.

- c) Long-Term Transport Strategy (LTTS)/Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) Bid

A large number of members spoke on this item. Some expressed support for Cambridgeshire's TIF bid, commenting that it was appropriate for the Council to seek to benefit from funding offered by Government. Others, including members from all three political groups, expressed concern about various aspects of the bid. Members expressing concern about the TIF proposals identified the following issues:

- Concern that the Government was setting the pace for development of the bid and that this was faster than Cambridgeshire would otherwise have chosen
- The need for all of the proposed public transport improvements to be in place before any congestion charge was introduced and a suggestion that the congestion charge should be applied only when there was a public transport alternative that people could use
- The need for any scheme to take into account the significant expansion planned for Cambridge East, even though the Government was saying it was too early to do this. The eastern entrance to Cambridge was already heavily congested

and would be further affected by other developments within the City, even before the airport site was built on

- Concern that a congestion charge would disadvantage Cambridgeshire residents living outside Cambridge to the benefit of those in the City and that the TIF bid did not include improvements to public transport services outside the City
- Concern that a congestion charge would also disadvantage Cambridge residents, who would have to pay for very short local trips within the City
- Concern that it would not be appropriate to charge people who were leaving the City, travelling against the rush
- Concern that a congestion charge based on a morning only charge would discriminate against the lowest paid workers, who were required to travel into Cambridge for their work at specific times
- A suggestion that the University's Park and Cycle facility should not be included within the congestion charge zone
- Concern that the TIF bid seemed to be a missed opportunity to put the Council's Climate Change Strategy into action, since it contained little detailed information on the reduction of carbon emissions and how the projected reductions would tally with national and international targets. The Lead Member for Planning and Regional Matters, Councillor J Reynolds, was asked to provide clear information on the Government's targets from the reduction of carbon emissions and on what the TIF bid was expected to achieve. It was also suggested that further carbon reduction measures could be added to the bid, such as a reduced congestion charge for low emission vehicles, and the addition of new public transport routes serving both the City centre and the outskirts
- Concern that the bid was based on a theoretical computer model of traffic flows that was operated by consultants on behalf of the Council and was not transparent to members, officers or the public
- Concern that the Council would be required to contribute 10% of the costs of any scheme and that Section 106 money would be used for this, diverting funding from other projects
- The need to involve local residents and businesses fully in discussion about the proposals, and concern that there was no scope for proper consultation, since no real alternatives were being put forward
- Concern that Cambridgeshire did not have an alternative strategy for dealing with new development and associated

traffic movements, should its TIF bid prove unsuccessful.

Members also raised a number of questions about the TIF proposals and the wider Long-Term Transport Strategy:

- How the TIF bid would be used to benefit schemes outside Cambridge, such as the Ely southern bypass
- How much the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway had cost Cambridgeshire Council Tax payers to date. Responding to this point, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Melton, confirmed that no County Council funds were being used for the scheme. Costs were being met by Government and from developers' Section 106 contributions
- Whether the Council would consider providing a Park and Ride site for the Guided Busway at Hertford Road in Huntingdon, given that there was no suitable parking adjacent to other proposed stops in the town.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor Pegram, responded to a number of specific points raised by the speakers. He emphasised that the Council had not yet committed itself to a congestion charge, but was discussing this with Government. If implemented, the TIF bid would benefit the wider area as well as Cambridge, since income from the charge would free up LTTS funding to enable other schemes to be brought forward sooner. On the question of a Huntingdon Park and Ride site, Councillor Pegram agreed that this was a good suggestion but queried how it could be funded.

8) Parking Policy Review

Councillor Huppert welcomed some aspects of the new Parking Policy, such as local determination of areas of parking control. However, he also expressed concern about a number of issues, particularly the new aim of generating a financial surplus from schemes rather than only meeting the costs of their administration. He suggested that this was an inequitable charge on Cambridge residents. He also expressed concern that the Highways and Transport PDG had not taken into account the views of the Cambridge Environment and Traffic Management Area Joint Committee.

Councillor Hughes expressed concern that the Policy should not discourage disabled people from using their cars, given the difficulties that they already faced as a result of their limited mobility.

Councillor Broadway questioned the justification for the comment in the Cabinet report's climate change paragraph that on-street parking controls would help to promote the use of cleaner vehicles.

Responding, the Lead Member for Highways and Transport, Councillor McGuire, reminded Council that the cross-party Highways and Transport PDG had given full support to the draft Policy. He emphasised that there

was no intention to disadvantage disabled people, but noted that with increasing numbers of elderly and disabled people entitled to blue badges, it was important to manage resources to the benefit of the most disabled. He offered to discuss this further with Councillor Hughes.

- 9) Strategy for Complying with the Network Management Duty as Defined in the Traffic Management Act
- 10) Cambridgeshire Guided Busway – Histon Station Car Park

Councillor Bradney congratulated members and officers who had worked with local residents to save Histon station.

Councillor Jenkins commented that the history of determining whether the station building should be retained or demolished to make way for a car park for users of the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway was convoluted. He suggested that the Council's main reason for deciding to retain the building had been to save money on the overall Busway scheme. He asked why the Council had not gone back to consult local residents on what they wanted.

Responding, the Lead Member for Highways and Transport, Councillor McGuire, commented that the Council had taken local residents' wishes into account. He acknowledged that retention of the station building would reduce costs, but noted that many local people had opposed the creation of a small car park on this site, expressing concern that it would fill easily and lead to an increase in on-street parking nearby. He noted that the future of the station building was now being discussed with the original owner.

- 11) Country Park, Milton and Bassenhally Farm, Whittlesey

Councillor Butcher welcomed the agreement of a 25-year lease of land in Bassenhally to Coates Crusaders, the local football club. He and the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Melton, emphasised the importance of providing facilities in small communities such as this.

Other decisions

- 12) County Council's Annual Report 2006/07

Councillor Harrison expressed disappointment that the annual report was not in her view an honest portrayal of the Council's performance, but rather focussed too much on positive points. She expressed particular concern that the section on 'What watchdogs say about us' did not set out recent inspection scores, and that the Report also made no reference to the Council's declining public satisfaction rating. She noted that she had raised all of these comments when the draft report had been discussed at Policy, Resources and Performance PDG.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services reminded members that the Council had been required by Government to produce the report. He noted that it included a feedback section inviting recipients to let the Council know their views.

13) Learning Disability Day Services Modernisation Programme

Councillor Heathcock asked the Lead Member for Enhanced Services, Councillor Yeulett, what he hoped specifically to achieve by meeting with service users to discuss the modernisation of learning disability services. He also expressed concern that some service users had received visits from review officers without their parents being advised beforehand. He and Councillors Downes, Higginson and Hughes expressed concern that the consultation had been very badly handled, causing considerable distress to some families and risking emotional breakdowns. They emphasised that service users' families should be fully involved in any discussions about changes.

Councillor Heathcock also asked what steps would be taken to ensure that service users continued to receive services of equal quality, especially given that some had been in their current placements for 15 years. He asked why some service users had been placed at great distance from Cambridge, for example in Scotland.

Responding, the Lead Member for Enhanced Services, Councillor Yeulett, acknowledged that the consultation could have been handled better and noted that he had already apologised to service users and their families. He reported that he would now be meeting with carers' groups across the County to hear their views and help move the modernisation programme forwards. He noted that 99 clients were currently placed out of County, many close to Cambridgeshire but some at a distance, often where a client had attended a residential school and then become established in that area. It would be important to work closely with these service users and their families to understand their needs and wishes and the support they might need if they chose to move.

14) Play Policy: 'Time to Play'

Councillor Hughes welcomed the Play Policy, emphasising the importance of play to children's development and commending the achievements of Cambridgeshire's three SureStart programmes in providing support in this area.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, Councillor Tuck, also welcomed the Policy. She paid tribute to the staff who had developed it and also to all those who had contributed to the achievements described under two earlier agenda items, the Corporate Parent Project Plan and the findings of the Joint Area Review.

15) Quarterly Update Report on Key Partnerships

16) Petitions

184. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

185. ORAL QUESTIONS

Four oral questions were asked under Council Procedure Rule 9:

- Councillor Hunt noted that a case of blue tongue had been reported in cattle kept on the Washes. He asked the Lead Member for Communities, Councillor Lucas, what steps were being taken to minimise the inconvenience to farmers as a result of this outbreak. The Lead Member for Communities reported that a control zone had been implemented around the affected area. This meant that parts of Norfolk and Suffolk were now affected by the controls, as well as most of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The Council would continue to ensure that the interests of farmers were represented as fully as possible, whilst ensuring that the outbreak was contained.
- [Councillor Higginson asked the Lead Member for Highways and Transport, Councillor McGuire, to arrange to make a joint statement with the Chairman of the Development Control Committee at East Cambridgeshire District Council concerning the adoption of a number of new roads in Ely. The Lead Member for Highways and Transport agreed to investigate whether this was possible and also undertook to ensure that Councillor Higginson received copies of the responses to his earlier questions.](#)
- Councillor Jenkins asked the Lead Member for Enhanced Services, Councillor Yeulett, what effect the Council's withdrawal of grant for benefits advice from the Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) had had on the organisation in terms of redundancies and impact on their financial position. The Lead Member for Enhanced Services explained that this information should be requested from the CAB, since it was a separate organisation. Councillor Jenkins also asked what advice was now being given to people who would previously have been referred to the CAB. The Lead Member for Enhanced Services explained that clients were referred to the Council's Village Benefits Scheme. There were also other independent sources of advice, such as the 'Fenland Ferret'.
- Councillor Stone asked the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Melton, whether the new consultation roadshows in market squares were proving more effective in gathering feedback from the public than the previous events in libraries. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services commented that the consultation programme was not yet complete, but undertook to provide feedback to all members in due course. Councillor Stone also asked whether it would be more effective to stage joint consultation events with key partners such as District Councils and the PCT. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services agreed that this approach should be developed, especially as more services would be delivered jointly in future through the Local Area Agreement.

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

186. QUESTIONS ON POLICE AND FIRE AUTHORITY ISSUES

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

a) Report of the Cambridgeshire Police Authority

Councillor Carter noted that a recent report by Her Majesty's Inspection of Constabulary had rated Cambridgeshire as 'poor' in addressing local priorities. She asked what steps were being taken to improve performance in this area. The Chairman of the Police Authority, Councillor Walters, explained that this issue was already being addressed. In particular, there was scope to improve the longer-term feedback given to the victims of crime. This would be monitored via a specific performance indicator over the coming year.

b) Report of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

There were no questions relating to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority.

A full transcript of the question asked and the response given is available from Democratic Services.

187. MOTIONS

No motions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10.

188. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

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

- Councillor Kenney to replace Councillor Hunt as a member of Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee
- Councillor Douglas to replace Councillor Huppert as a substitute on Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee
- Councillor Huppert to replace Councillor Bell as a substitute on Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee
- Councillor Bell to replace Councillor Wilkins as a substitute on Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee
- Councillor Wilkins to replace Councillor Douglas as a substitute on Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee.

Chairman: