

COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 19th February 2002

Time: 10.30 a.m. – 3.30 p.m.

Place: Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present: Councillor: P W Silby (Chairman)

Councillors: P D Bailey, C M Ballard, R S G Barnwell, I C Bates, Dr T J Bear, B S Bhalla, A J Bowen, S V Brinton, J Broadway, C M Carter, R L Clarke, J E Coston, P J Downes, R Driver, J A P Eddy, M Farrar, H J Fitch, 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, J D Jones, A C Kent, I C Kidman, S J Kime, S J E King, V H Lucas, A R Mair, R B Martlew, L W McGuire, A K Melton, E Meyland-Smith, 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, 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: M Y Chapple, M L Leeke and C E Shaw

43. MINUTES: 22nd JANUARY 2002

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 22nd January 2002 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

44. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Financial Management Trainees' Success

The Chairman congratulated the Council's six financial management trainees on passing their final accountancy exams set by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. She thanked their colleagues and managers who had supported them in their studies.

Local Government Chronicle Awards

The Chairman announced that Cambridgeshire was one of three authorities short-listed in the category Councillor Development Initiative in this year's LGC awards, in recognition of a range of development and training initiatives for members which had taken place last year.

Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change

The Chairman informed members that the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive had signed this declaration on behalf of the Council, confirming that, together with 50 local authorities in the UK, the Council acknowledged the

significance of climate change and was committed to addressing the causes and effects of climate change. The signing ceremony had taken place at the new Cromwell Park Primary School in Huntingdon, which was being designed and built with energy efficiency very much in mind.

45. REPORT OF THE CABINET

The Council received a report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 29th January 2002, covering the following:

Key decisions for determination

1) County Council Budget 2002/03

It was moved by Councillor J K Walters and seconded by Councillor J E Reynolds that the Cabinet report be received and the recommendations adopted, subject to the first recommendation on the Budget 2002/03 being amended to read (addition in italics): 'That approval is given to a County Budget Requirement in respect of general expenses applicable to the whole County area of £394.0m *as set out in Table 1 of the Budget Book*'.

Councillors J M Tuck, L W McGuire, J Broadway and C M Ballard respectively moved the receipt of the reports of the Policy Scrutiny and Audit Committee, Education, Libraries and Heritage Scrutiny Committee, Environment and Transport Scrutiny Committee and Social Services Scrutiny Committee.

Members declared the following non-pecuniary interests and did not speak on matters pertaining to their interests other than where dispensations were in place:

Councillors S V Brinton, R L Clarke, P D Gooden, S F Johnstone, A K Melton, A G Orgee and L J Wilson declared that they were parents of children in full time education but were able to speak and vote by virtue of a standing dispensation granted by the Secretary of State.

Councillor C M Ballard declared that his wife was a Home Care worker previously employed by the County Council.

Councillor R L Clarke declared that he had contracts with the Council.

Councillor J A P Eddy declared that he was a tenant of the County Farms Estate.

Councillor S A Giles declared an interest relating to a contractual arrangement with Social Services.

Councillor S J E King declared that he was a non-executive member on the board of the Fenland Primary Care Trust and his wife's employer had a contract with Social Services.

Councillor J K Walters opened the budget debate on behalf of the Cabinet. Councillors S V Brinton and J D Jones responded on behalf of the Liberal Democrat and Labour groups respectively.

In each of the three main service areas (Education, Libraries and Heritage, Environment and Transport and Social Services) the report of the relevant Scrutiny Committee was presented by its Chairman or representative. A Cabinet Member then spoke in support of the Cabinet's budget proposals prior to member discussion of the proposals. For each service, the relevant Cabinet member summed up the debate.

The following members asked questions relating to the Budget proposals as set out below:

- Councillor R Wilkinson asked the Chairman of the Education, Libraries and Heritage Scrutiny Committee whether the statement in the Scrutiny Committee report about the capitalisation of revenue spending on the Education, Libraries and Heritage broadband project was an accurate reflection of the information presented to that Committee. Councillor L W McGuire confirmed that the report reflected the advice received that £350,000 could be released by the capitalisation of this project.
- Councillor M K Ogden asked the Cabinet Member for Social Services what the impact of asylum seekers was on the Council's Social Services budget. Councillor J A Powley advised that the cost to the County Council had increased from £75,000 to £160,000 although the future impact was unclear. As a supplementary to the above question, Councillor S V Brinton asked the Cabinet Member for Social Services to confirm that the reason for the increase was because the Council was now taking asylum seekers from other areas. Councillor J A Powley indicated that he thought that this was the case.

Councillor J M Tuck spoke to the report of the Policy Scrutiny and Audit Committee on the scrutiny of the overall budget proposals, as well as on the specific budget proposals relating to the Chief Executive's Department and Resources Directorate. The Deputy Leader of Council spoke in support of the Cabinet's proposals.

Councillor S V Brinton then moved the following amendment, seconded by Councillor T J Bear:

'That the Cabinet's recommendations 1, 2, and 3 on the Budget Requirement, the Precept and the Council Tax stand, but that the underlying detailed proposals be varied as follows, with consequences for Table 1 of the overall Budget Report (revised version attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes) and for recommendation 5 regarding the Capital Budget (affecting Tables 11 and 12, which will need revision if this amendment is accepted):

- (a) delete the capital programme provision for the proposed joint health community centre to be built at Cambourne, and that this facility be built by

the private sector which would then rent it to Health, enabling a capital saving to the Council of £1.270m. This would enable an equivalent sum to be contributed to the revenue budget from reserves (the Capital Financing Fund);

(b) capitalise the proposed revenue Education, Libraries and Heritage expenditure on the Broadband project (via the Standards Fund) of £0.450m, which permits the Base Education, Libraries and Heritage budget to be reduced by the same sum;

(c) allocate the additional funding of £1.720m thus made available as follows:

	£000
(i) funding the financing charges re capitalising ELH broadband	45
(ii) funding for unfunded pressures:	
Libraries	250
Home Care Help	115
Learning Disabilities	200
Foster Carers	200
(iii) limiting the increase in home care charges to under 6% (from £8.40 to £8.95)	160
(iv) allocating a one-off sum for the Standards Fund for Education	750
TOTAL	1720

(d) accept the consequent unfunded budget pressure of £0.970m in 2003/04 on the basis that the Government's proposals for changing local government finance will be known by then and that the expenditure on the Standards Fund, foster carers, and the Care and Education Partnership in 2002/03 will increase the ability of the Council to achieve the Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets and the consequent receipt of additional funding through the PSA;

(e) submit a bid of £200,000 to the Preventative Services Fund for 2002/03 in respect of the Council's contribution to the Care and Education Partnership budget.'

Following discussion, the amendment was put to the vote and was declared to be lost with 11 votes in favour, 31 votes against and 7 abstentions.

[Voting pattern: Liberal Democrat group in favour, Conservative group against and Labour group abstaining.]

Councillor S V Brinton asked the Leader of Council to confirm whether the Cabinet's proposals for the Budget 2001/02 included the use of £3 million from the Capital Financing Fund (CFF) for revenue expenditure. Councillor J K Walters confirmed that this was the case and that this was considered to be the limit of what could be prudently taken from the CFF to support revenue spending.

Council then voted on the substantive motion, revised as indicated at the beginning of this minute.

It was resolved:

Revenue budget

- | | £ |
|---|-------------|
| (i) to approve a County Budget Requirement in respect of general expenses applicable to the whole County area as set out in Table 1 of the Budget Book: | 393,973,847 |
| (ii) to approve a recommended County Precept for Council Tax from District Councils: | 142,640,366 |
| (to be received in ten equal instalments payable from 19 th April 2002 in accordance with the 'fall-back' provisions of the Local Authorities (Funds) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 1995); | |
| (iii) to approve a Council Tax for each Band of property, based on the number of 'Band D' equivalent properties notified to the County Council by the District Council (195,256): | |

Band	Council Tax	Band	Council Tax
A	£487.02	E	£892.87
B	£568.19	F	£1,055.21
C	£649.36	G	£1,217.55
D	£730.53	H	£1,461.06

- (iv) to approve the Council's borrowing limits;

Capital budget

- (v) to approve Capital Payments in 2002/03 arising from earlier commitments and the consequences of the New Starts listed within the Service Directors' reports set out, subject to the receipt of appropriate Grants and Supplementary Credit approvals, or when the Director of Resources is satisfied that sufficient funds have been secured.

[Voting pattern: resolution (i) was carried with 39 votes in favour, 10 against and 1 abstention (*Conservatives and Labour groups in favour, Liberal Democrats against*); resolutions (ii)-(v): unanimous]

2) Best Value Performance Plan

A number of members requested detailed drafting amendments, including annotations to explain measures used, emphasising the need for the Plan to be readily comprehensible.

It was resolved:

That the draft Best Value Performance Plan 2002/03 be endorsed as a

basis for the production of the Household Summary.

[Voting pattern: agreed without dissent]

Key decisions for information

- 3) Behaviour Support Plan 2002-4
- 4) Quality Protects Management Action Plan
- 5) Delegations to Schools
- 6) Single Regeneration Budget Delivery Plans
- 7) Connexions Business Plan

Councillor A C Kent expressed concern that the Cabinet had endorsed the Connexions business plan for 2003/04 on the basis of an executive summary, rather than considering the full plan. She also expressed concern that Government guidance recommended the inclusion of elected members on Connexions's local management committees, but that no arrangements for this had been made in Cambridgeshire.

Councillor D R Pegram reported that the Lead Member for Lifelong Learning would be on the main management board.

Other decisions/matters

- 8) Citizens' Panel and Related Consultation
- 9) Local Government White Paper
- 10) Budget Monitoring

Councillor J L Huppert asked the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, to confirm that Social Services expenditure would be within budget in the current financial year. Councillor J A Powley responded that it was not possible to confirm this at this stage; when end-of-year figures were available, they would be reported to the Cabinet.

In response to a query from Councillor J Broadway, the Lead Member for Lifelong Learning, Councillor D R Pegram, confirmed that the Libraries budget was currently overspent by £138,000, that efforts were being made to rectify this overspend within the current year, but that this would inevitably have an effect on services. Councillor S V Brinton asked a supplementary question on whether any over-spending in 2001/02 would be carried forward to 2002/03 and add to the spending pressures. Councillor D R Pegram indicated that he was not prepared to speculate on the treatment of any over-spending on the library service, as the Director would take into account spending across all parts of the Directorate budget.

46. THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

The Council considered a report from the Chief Executive recommending a number of amendments to the Council's Constitution.

It was resolved that:

- (i) the Key Partnerships Service Development Group be abolished with immediate effect and the table set out in paragraph 10.7 be amended accordingly;
- (ii) the terms of reference of the Community and Economic Development Service Development Group be amended to include reference to matters relating to crime and disorder and the table set out in paragraph 10.7 be amended accordingly;
- (iii) the terms of reference of the Children in Need Service Development Group be amended to include reference to matters relating to the development of effective partnerships with key agencies that relate to the health improvement of children and the table set out in paragraph 10.7 be amended accordingly;
- (iv) the terms of reference of the Vulnerable Adults Service Development Group be amended to include reference to matters relating to the development of effective partnerships with key agencies that relate to the health improvement of adults and the table set out in paragraph 10.7 be amended accordingly;
- (v) the Schools Organisation Service Development Group be confirmed as a permanent Service Development Group with immediate effect and paragraph 10.7 be amended accordingly;
- (vi) responsibility for the Care and Education Plan and associated matters be transferred from the Children in Need Service Development Group to the Lifelong Learning Service Development Group and the table set out in paragraph 10.7 be amended accordingly, to take effect from 1st April 2002, following Council approval of the Care and Education Policy Framework;
- (vii) the composition of Service Development Groups as detailed in the table set out in paragraph 10.7 and in paragraph 4 of Annex A to Article 0A be amended to facilitate the appointment of an additional member from each political group, thereby increasing the maximum number of members on any Service Development Group to ten; the decision to take up these additional places to be at the discretion of the political Group Leaders.

[Voting pattern: unanimous]

47. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

48. ORAL QUESTIONS

No oral questions were asked under Rule 9 of the Council Procedure Rules.

49. MOTIONS

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

50. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

No changes to Committee membership were put forward for approval.

Chairman

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Appendix 1: Table relating to Councillor Brinton's amendment - Budget Summary of 2002-03 Net Revenue Expenditure

(1)	Budget 2001-02 (2) £000	Variations in expenditure 2002-03				Estimate 2002-03 (7) £000	Planning Guideline 2003-04 (8) £000	Planning Guideline 2004-05 (9) £000
		Inflation Outturn to Outturn (3) £000	Transfer of Functions (4) £000	Base Changes (5) £000	Spending Pressures & Savings (6) £000			
Education, Libraries and Heritage	217,627	10,034	-10,415	-1,320	4,900	220,826	225,876	231,076
Environment and Transport Policy:	32,803	1,512		-3,170	470	31,615	31,865	32,065
- Direct and Support Services	16,311	1,775		-309	1,600	19,377	19,202	19,152
- Financing and Debt Charges	12,792			-352	2,195	14,635	16,190	17,390
Social Services	82,136	5,319	-740	-200	3,375	89,890	90,415	90,715
Contributions to Other Bodies								
Fire Authority	14,516	722				15,238	15,238	15,238
Magistrates' Courts Committee	556	17		122		695	695	695
Environment Agency - Flood Levies	2,454	123				2,577	2,577	2,577
TOTAL SERVICE SPENDING	379,195	19,502	-11,155	-5,229	12,540	394,853	402,058	408,908
One-off Preventative Services Fund						400		
Contribution to or from (-) reserves	-3,100					-1,270		
Contribution to or from (-) balances	171					-9		
Inflation Provision for Future Years							17,078	34,975
BUDGET REQUIREMENT	376,266					393,974	419,136	443,883
LESS								
Business Rates	-138,538					-152,382		
Revenue Support Grant	-109,560					-99,002		
Collection Funds Deficit	142					51		
Contribution to Benefit Subsidy Limitation	1,075					-		
COUNTY PRECEPT	129,385					142,640		

