

COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 16th October 2001

Time: 10.30 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.

Place: Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present: Councillor: P W Silby (Chairman)

Councillors: 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, M Y Chapple, 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, G F Harper, V A Hearne-Casapieri, G J Heathcock, W G M Hensley, J L Huppert, S F Johnstone, J D Jones, A C Kent, I C Kidman, S J Kime, S J E King, M L Leeke, V H Lucas, A R Mair, R B Martlew, L W McGuire, A K Melton, S B Normington, M K Ogden, L J Oliver, A G Orgee, D R Pegram, J A Powley, P A E Read, J E Reynolds, C E Shaw, R C Speechley, A B Stenner, P L Stroude, J M Tuck, J K Walters, R Wilkinson, L J Wilson and F H Yeulett

Apologies: Councillors: P D Bailey, B Hardy and E Meyland-Smith

21. MINUTES: 4th SEPTEMBER 2001

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 4th September 2001 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

22. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Terrorist attacks on the United States

At the start of the meeting, the Council observed a minute's silence in memory of those who had died in the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11th September 2001.

The Chairman advised Members of letters received from the United States Ambassador and the Deputy Commander of United States Naval Forces in Europe, thanking the Council for its sympathy and support following the attacks.

Head of Legal Services

The Chairman welcomed Joy Postings, who had been appointed as the Council's new Head of Legal Services and would be acting as Clerk to the Council.

Harlow College students

The Chairman also welcomed students from Harlow College, who were attending the meeting as part of their study of local government.

Transport Local Authority of the Year Award

Members were advised that the Council had won the Transport Local Authority of the Year Award, in recognition of its innovative transport solutions and its partnership working with other organisations. The Chairman led Members in congratulating the Director of Environment and Transport and his staff on this achievement.

March Station

Members noted that March Station had been judged as Best Station in the CycleMark 2001 awards, in recognition of efforts made to promote the integration of cycling and rail travel.

Member visit to Grafham Water Centre

The Chairman informed Council that, following the cancellation of a visit earlier in the year due to foot and mouth, Grafham Water Centre had renewed its invitation to Members to visit the Centre and to find out about the work being carried out with young people.

23. REPORT OF THE CABINET

The Council received reports from the meetings of the Cabinet held on 3rd and 25th September 2001, covering:

Key decisions for determination

1) Annual Library Plan

Councillor R Wilkinson, the Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage, agreed to review the format of information about the Annual Library Plan brought to Council in future years.

It was resolved:

That the Council adopts the Public Library Plan for Cambridgeshire for 2001-2004.

[Voting pattern: Conservatives and Liberal Democrats in favour, Labour Group abstained.]

Other decisions/matters for determination

- 2) Health Service consultations on creating a Mental Health Service Trust and establishing a Strategic Health Service

It was resolved:

That the Council endorses the establishment of a new Health and Social Care Trust for Mental Health Services in Cambridgeshire and authorises the Director of Social Services to take all necessary steps to implement the new Mental Health Trust and appropriate commissioning arrangements.

[Voting pattern: unanimous]

(Councillor P D Gooden declared an interest as an employee of Addenbrooke's NHS Trust and a member of UNISON involved in the consultation process and did not speak or vote on this item.)

- 3) Consultation on Primary Care Trust Status for Primary Care Groups in Cambridgeshire and the dissolution of Lifespan Healthcare NHS Trust

Councillor J A Powley confirmed that, following debate of this issue at the meeting of Council on 4th September 2001, the Chief Executive had written to the Health Authority asking for a six-day extension to the consultation period to enable the Council to agree its view at this meeting. The Health Authority had agreed the request.

Councillor J L Gluza moved an amendment to the recommendation from Cabinet to amend the final bullet point to read, 'The ability to meet individual needs of patients should not be compromised and therefore the merger of East Cambridgeshire with Fenland Primary Care Trust should not be envisaged'. This was seconded by Councillor S V Brinton.

Following discussion, a recorded vote was taken and the amendment was defeated: 19 votes in favour, 27 against and 1 abstention. Details of the recorded vote are set out in an appendix to these minutes. [Voting pattern: Liberal Democrats and Labour Group in favour, Conservatives against.]

A vote was then taken on the original recommendation and this was carried: 30 votes in favour, 14 against and 2 abstentions.

It was resolved:

That Cambridgeshire Health Authority be requested to consider the following principles in making its decision on the configuration of Primary Care Trusts:

- Maximum possible co-terminosity with the two tiers of local authority boundaries in order to assist with locality sensitive planning and integrated service delivery

- Trusts of a sufficient size to employ the range, quality and quantity of professional expertise required to serve both patients and the resident population
- Stability of organisational arrangements for at least a five-year period. It is accepted that service models will change substantially in the search for better models of patient care, but the recent turbulence in NHS structures has not been conducive to stable partnership work and a strong focus on delivery
- Capacity and capability to pursue an immediate agenda of integrating health and social care whenever and wherever this offers clear benefits for Cambridgeshire residents
- Trusts that are fully committed to working collaboratively with each other and with other agencies so that strategic priorities and complex, specialist services are not compromised by fragmented and uncoordinated activity
- The ability to meet individual needs of patients should not be compromised.

[Voting pattern: Conservatives in favour, Liberal Democrats against, Labour Group abstaining.]

(Councillor S J E King declared a pecuniary interest under the National Code of Local Government Conduct in relation to this item and withdrew from the Council Chamber whilst it was discussed.)

Key decisions for information

- 4) Funding package to reduce delayed discharges of elderly patients from hospital beds

The County Council and Cambridgeshire Health Authority had each agreed to provide £500,000 during 2001/2 to help address delayed discharges. As an update to this, Councillor J K Walters, the Leader of the Council, informed Members that the Government had just announced that £300 million was to be made available nationally to address delayed discharges. Cambridgeshire was expected to receive just over £1 million in the present financial year and not less than this amount in the following year.

- 5) Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi-Modal Study (CHUMMS) – final report

Councillor M L Leeke, Chairman of the Environment and Transport Scrutiny Committee, provided an update on the call-in of that part of the Cabinet decision relating to public transport options in Strategy 2. The Scrutiny Committee had decided not to refer the matter back to Cabinet, but had asked the Cabinet to make clear its support for guided bus along the whole of the Huntingdon to Cambridge route, including the stretch to Addenbrooke's Hospital and Trumpington.

Councillor S F Johnstone, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, agreed to make it clear in responding to the CHUMMS final report and in commenting on the London to South Midlands Multi-Modal Study that the Cabinet supported the dualling of the A428 at St Neots right through to the junction with the A1. She also agreed to take forward via the London to South Midlands Multi-Modal Study the issue of road realignment at the Brampton A14-A1 junction.

6) The Cambridgeshire Bus Strategy

Councillor S F Johnstone, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, agreed to look into the discontinuation of certain commercial evening and weekend bus services in Cambridge City.

7) Education, Libraries and Heritage – ‘Prospects for Learning’

8) Medium Term Service Priorities – resourcing options

Other decisions/matters for information

9) Extension of Home Care contracts

10) Social Services Inspectorate – inspection of Child Protection services

Councillors D R Pegram and J A Powley recorded Members’ thanks to the Director of Social Services and all her staff for their work leading to the SSI’s lifting of ‘special measures’.

11) Beacon Council scheme – Libraries

12) Process for the Structure Plan review

Councillor J E Reynolds, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, advised that the two meetings of the Strategic Planning Service Development Group in November would be open to all Members and the public and Members would have the opportunity of commenting on the new settlement proposals at those meetings.

13) The County Council’s response to climate change

14) Greater Cambridge Partnership

(Councillor J K Walters declared an interest in relation to this item, as the Council’s representative on the Partnership. Councillor S V Brinton declared an interest as a member of the Partnership.)

15) Connexions service for young people

(Councillor S V Brinton declared an interest in relation to this item, as the Chairman of the Learning and Skills Council in Cambridgeshire.)

16)Statement of accounts 2000/2001.

24. QUESTIONS ON POLICE AND FIRE ISSUES

Members commented on police and fire issues and asked a number of questions of Councillor J E Reynolds, Chairman of the Cambridgeshire Police Authority, and Councillor L W McGuire, the Chairman of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority.

Police Authority

- Councillor G J Heathcock asked about initiatives to remove abandoned vehicles, which could be a target for arsonists. Councillor Reynolds advised that the Police, County Council and District Councils were working together to address this problem
- Councillor H J Fitch asked whether there were sufficient training places available to meet the needs of all new police recruits. Councillor Reynolds confirmed that there were sufficient places in the current year; this issue would be monitored for the future
- Councillor T J Bear queried the role of Community Contact Officers, and how this differed from that of Community Beat Officers. Councillor Reynolds explained that Community Contact Officers were civilians who assisted uniformed officers in their work
- Councillor J D Jones asked whether the Fens Project and new rural policing measures would have been introduced if special funding had not been received from the Government. Councillor Reynolds emphasised the importance of this Government funding and noted that if it had not been received, it would have been necessary to review policing priorities
- Councillor Jones also asked sought clarification of the comment that the Police Authority no longer used the County Council's Secretariat to service its meetings and that this was no reflection on the standard of service provided previously by the Council's staff. Councillor Reynolds noted that the Police Authority had been pleased with the support it had received from the County Council, but noted that the County Council had wished to withdraw from this role and it had therefore been necessary to consider how to continue to obtain efficient support
- Councillor I C Bates asked whether the Government would continue to make special grant contributions towards the cost of policing Huntingdon Life Sciences. Councillor Reynolds responded that the future of special funding from the Government for this area of work was not yet clear
- Councillor S J E King sought assurance that the Constabulary was according appropriate weight to legislation and to Home Office guidance concerning the licensing of firearms in preference to that issued by the

Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). Councillor Reynolds noted that this was a service issue for the Constabulary and suggested that anyone with concerns could make a formal complaint

- Councillor King also asked what measures were being taken, particularly in the Wisbech area, to address the fear of crime. Councillor Reynolds highlighted current initiatives in rural policing and the Fen Project, but noted that resources for community policing were finite.

Fire Authority

- Councillor G J Heathcock asked for comments on progress with community fire safety and whether a reduction in the number of incidents would result in a reduction in funding. Councillor McGuire commented that a reduced number of incidents was likely to lead to reduced funding
- Councillor Heathcock also asked how the problem of unsatisfactory office accommodation at the Hinchingsbrooke headquarters was being addressed. Councillor McGuire explained that the Fire Service's expansion into Hinchingsbrooke Cottage was dependent on the relocation of Trading Standards to Cambourne. He had recently raised this issue with the Chief Executive
- Councillor J E Coston asked how the Fire Authority was addressing the problem of recruiting retained fire fighters. Councillor McGuire explained that this was a national problem and noted that a number of initiatives were currently being explored
- Councillor S A Giles asked about proposals to improve disabled access to fire stations in St Neots and elsewhere in the County. Councillor McGuire agreed to provide a written reply on this to Councillor Giles
- Councillor M Farrar asked whether the Fire Authority had considered using the County Council's Records Office for advice on the storage of essential documents. Councillor McGuire agreed to investigate whether this service might be available to the Fire Authority
- Councillor I Kidman asked whether the replacement of the radio scheme was being undertaken in conjunction with the Police service and, if not, whether this represented a missed opportunity. Councillor McGuire reported that the replacement was not being undertaken in conjunction with the Police, but noted that their experiences were being taken in account.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Constable, Ben Gunn, and the Chief Fire Officer, Tom Carroll, for attending for this item.

25. THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

The Council considered a report from the Chief Executive which recommended amendments to the Council's Constitution in the following areas:

- Protocol on scrutiny media relations
- Council Procedure Rules – guidance on written motions
- Financial and Contract Procedure Rules.

It was resolved unanimously:

- (i) that the revised protocol governing relations between the Council's scrutiny process and the media attached to the report as Appendix 1 be approved;
- (ii) that the guidance on the submission and consideration of written motions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10 attached to the report as Appendix 2 be approved;
- (iii) that the amendment of paragraph 7.1(b) of the Council's Financial and Contract Procedure Rules agreed at the meeting of Council on 4th September 2001, to substitute the word 'may' for 'would' so that it reads as follows:

'in **exceptional circumstances** by the Cabinet – any such decision **may** be a 'key decision' in accordance with Article 13 of this Constitution',

be confirmed.

26. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

27. ORAL QUESTIONS

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

- Councillor J D Jones asked Councillor R Wilkinson, the Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage, about the comments he had made about a recent Education appeal concerning Impington Village College
- Councillor I C Kidman asked Councillor R Wilkinson to clarify a statement he had made about whether all schools in Cambridgeshire were fully staffed
- Councillor A C Kent asked Councillor S F Johnstone, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, whether there was a procedure for reviewing the quality of road works once complete, and, if there was, how this could be fed into. Councillor Johnstone agreed to provide a response on this issue

- Councillor M Farrar asked Councillor J K Walters, the Leader of the Council, how the Council had marked Local Democracy Week
- Councillor T J Bear asked Councillor J K Walters what consideration the Council was giving to upgrading Microsoft software in view of recent changes to Microsoft's pricing strategy, and whether the Council would consider alternatives to Microsoft products
- Councillor C M Carter asked Councillor S B Normington, the Lead Member for Vulnerable Adults, how she had represented the interests of vulnerable adults since her appointment to the post
- Councillor S J Kime asked Councillor S F Johnstone about the need for an accident remedial scheme on the A505 at Whittlesford.

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

28. MOTION

The County Council considered a motion submitted under Rule 10 of the Council Procedure Rules.

Delegation to Schools

Councillor P J Downes moved the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor A C Kent:

'In the interests of the pupils in our schools and in order not to impose unnecessary bureaucracy on teachers, heads, governors and officers, Council urges Cabinet to suspend its programme of further delegation to schools for the year 2002/2003.'

Members' attention was drawn to a briefing paper prepared by the Director of Education, Libraries and Heritage.

Following discussion, a recorded vote was taken and the motion was defeated by 32 votes to 12, with no abstentions. Details of the recorded vote are set out in an appendix to these minutes.

[Voting pattern: Liberal Democrats in favour, Conservatives and Labour Group against.]

29. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Chairman agreed to the consideration of an additional item of urgent business on changes to the membership of Committees necessitated by the illness of members and the need to maintain political proportionality.

It was resolved unanimously:

- (i) That the following changes in Committee membership be approved:
 - Cambridge City Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee – Councillor C M Carter to replace Councillor B S Bhalla as Labour substitute
 - Standards Committee – Councillor J L Gluza to replace Councillor C M Carter as Labour member
 - Ad hoc Scrutiny Panel – Councillors P A E Read and R C Speechley to be appointed as Conservative substitute members.
- (ii) That all future Council agendas include appointments to Committees as a regular item.

Chairman

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