

COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 20th July 2010
Time: 10.30 am – 4.40 pm
Place: Shire Hall, Cambridge
Present: Councillor L J Oliver (Chairman)

Councillors S Austen, J D Batchelor, I C Bates, N Bell, K Bourke, B Brooks-Gordon, D Brown, F Brown, P Brown, R Butcher, C Carter, K Churchill, J Clark, N Clarke, S Criswell, M Curtis, P J Downes, J Dutton, S Gymer, G Harper, N Harrison, D Harty, G Heathcock, S Hoy, W Hunt, C Hutton, J D Jenkins, S Johnstone, E Kadić, G Kenney, S G M Kindersley, S King, V Lucas, L W McGuire, V McGuire, A K Melton, R Moss-Eccardt, L Nethsingha, J Palmer, D R Pegram, A Pellew, J A Powley, P Read, P Reeve, J E Reynolds, K Reynolds, T Sadiq, S Sedgwick-Jell, C Shepherd, M Shuter, M Smith, T Stone, S Tierney, J West, R West, F Whelan, S Whitebread, S Wijsenbeek, K Wilkins, M Williamson, G Wilson, L J Wilson and F H Yeulett

Apologies: Councillors N Guyatt, T Orgee, J Tuck, S van de Ven

96. MINUTES: 18th MAY 2010

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 18th May 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

97. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Death of former Councillor Janet Jones

The Chairman reported with sadness the death of former Councillor Janet Jones, who had served on the Council from 1970 until 2005, including 20 years as Leader of the Labour group. Tributes were paid to Mrs Jones by Councillors Carter, Heathcock and M McGuire. Members observed a minute's silence in her memory.

Executive Director: Children & Young People's Services

The Chairman welcomed the new Executive Director for Children & Young People's Services, Adrian Loades.

Appointment of Service Director: Learning

The Chairman advised that Gayle Gorman had been appointed to the post of Service Director: Learning.

Awards and achievements

The Chairman led members in offering congratulations to all those involved in the following awards and achievements:

- Nikki Pasek in Trading Standards, who had been awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List
- Jeremy Adams had been made a Fellow of the Trading Standards Institute
- former County Councillor Hazel Williams had been awarded an MBE
- Cambridgeshire Together was shortlisted in the Total Place Achievement of the Year category of this year's Municipal Journal Achievement Awards
- the County Council was shortlisted in the Best New Technology category of the 2010 National Recycling Awards Public private finance awards
- the County Council and Donarbon were highly commended at the recent Public Private Finance Awards for the County Council's Waste PFI Project
- the Council's Recycling Buses had been awarded the national Learning Outside The Classroom Quality Badge
- Grafham Water Centre had also been awarded the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge and Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres Gold Badge
- the Once in a Lifetime project and the Competition Plus programme had both been awarded an Inspire Mark as part of the London 2012 Inspire programme
- the cycle bridge at Riverside, Cambridge, had received two awards - the prestigious Arthur G Hayden Medal, and highly commended for the Regional Planning Achievement Awards, East of England run by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)
- St Luke's Primary School in Cambridge had won a national award for the way it teaches children to read.

Other matters

The Chairman also advised Members that she and other Members had been present for the marches of the Royal Anglian Regiment, 'the Vikings', in Cambridge, Huntingdon and Ely, following the Vikings' third six month tour of Afghanistan. The Chairman had also raised the commemorative flag at an annual parade to mark Armed Forces Day on 21st June. The Council was proud to record its appreciation and support for the Vikings,

98. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared personal interests under Paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct:

Councillor	Minute	Details
Batchelor	104 (a)	Governor of Linton Village College
D Brown	104 (b)	Wife ran 2 local newspapers
Curtis	104 (a)	Governor of Alderman Jacobs Primary School
Jenkins	106 (c)	Lay member of Cambridgeshire Community Services
Johnstone	104 (a)	Parent of children at Swavesey Village College
Lucas	106 (c)	Chairman of Cambridgeshire Community Services
Pellew	104 (a)	Chair of Governors at Manor Community College

Sadiq	104 (a)	Governor of Ridgefield Primary School and Parkside Federation
Smith	106 (c)	Member of the Anglian (Central) Regional Flood Defence Committee
Tierney	104 (a)	Member of a group trying to set up a free school in Wisbech
Whelan	104 (a) 101 (a)	Two children at Comberton Village College Board member of the National Autistic Society in Cambridgeshire Associate Member of COPE Governor of Caldecote Primary School
G Wilson	106 (c)	Employee of the Environment Agency

99. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Three members of the public had given notice that they wished to ask questions.

- Brian Lynch, UNISON Regional Officer, asked the Deputy Leader, Councillor M McGuire, about the 50% reduction in Trade Union facility time which would make it impossible for unions to meet the workload in a time of significant challenges and asked that the decision be reviewed.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance agreed that Trade Union partners could play an important role in supporting the Council as it managed the changes ahead. The decision to reduce the trade union facility time allocation had been made through due process, as part of the Council's Integrated Planning Process. He was aware that productive discussions between officers and Union partners had taken place, and hoped that they would continue to work with the Council.

As a supplementary question, Mr Lynch asked if this decision could not be reconsidered at this stage, that it be looked at again in the future. He paid tribute to the support received by the Unions from the Council's Human Resources staff at this difficult time. The Cabinet Member thanked Mr Lynch for his comments and reassured him that the Leader of the Council was keen to continue to work in partnership with the Unions.

- Richard Robertson, Chair of the Friends of Milton Road Library, asked if the consultation on local library services would involve external consultants, and if so, how much this would cost, and why existing Council staff could not be used to carry out this work. He also asked if library user groups could assist in planning the consultation to help ensure that it involved as wide a range of the community as possible.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor P Brown, advised that external consultants were not involved in the Library Service Review. There were small costs involved in the materials and resources used, but the majority was existing officer time. Independent consultants were engaged, but as part of an earlier process. The views of those who use the library service were of particular interest. Responding to a supplementary question on partnership working, the Cabinet Member

stressed that the Council would be very happy to work on this issue with Mr Robertson and other stakeholders.

- Reverend Dr Malcolm Guite, Chaplain to Girton College, highlighted the ongoing campaign to reduce the speed limit on the Huntingdon Road, Cambridge, from 40mph to 30mph, following the tragic death of a University undergraduate in 2005.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Access advised that whilst supporting the ambition of extending the existing 30mph speed limit on Huntingdon Road out to Girton College, the recent review suggested that this would not result in a reduction in speed unless the environment was changed through traffic calming measures of some kind. Officers were looking at funding opportunities for such work and would be meeting with the Local Member, Councillor John Reynolds.

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

100. ALTERATIONS TO COUNTY ELECTORAL DIVISIONS

It was proposed by the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor J Reynolds, and seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor M McGuire:

- to note the changes to parish boundaries implemented by the Huntingdon (Parishes) Order 2009 and the related changes effected by the Huntingdonshire (Related Alterations) Order 2010;
- to approve the alteration of Cambridgeshire County Council Electoral Division boundaries, identified by the Electoral Commission as being affected by the above Order, in order to ensure the Electoral Division, District Ward and Parish boundaries are coterminous;
- to instruct the County Returning Officer to formally request the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to implement these changes.

Members voted in favour of the Motion, which was carried unanimously.

101. REPORTS OF CABINET MEETINGS – ITEM FOR DETERMINATION

(a) LOCAL GOVERNMENT SHARED SERVICES (LGSS) DETAILED BUSINESS CASE AND JOINT COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor M McGuire, moved receipt of the report of the cabinet meetings held on 14th June and 5th July 2010.

It was proposed by the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor J Reynolds, and seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor M McGuire:

That the County Council:

- i) appoints a Joint Committee constituted in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Delegation and Joint Committee Agreement, and
- ii) makes arrangements for the Joint Committee to discharge the functions as detailed in Schedule 2 of the Agreement, and
- iii) makes any consequential changes to the Constitution and Officer structures and responsibilities, in order to reflect the above and implement the LGSS.

The main motion was debated. Members made the following comments:

- Pointed out that the proposals followed two and a half years of detailed project work, which had concluded that this was a worthwhile and low risk project, which had the additional benefit of enabling valued professional services to be retained in-house. The £4.6 million revenue investment required was mainly for IT, and this expenditure would be required regardless of whether LGSS went ahead or not. LGSS represented a cost reduction of 28%, the majority resulting from sharing professional services.
- Expressed disappointment that the proposals were limited in ambition, and that the business case estimates for payback and Net Present Value (NPV) of the scheme were relatively low. It was suggested that the predicted savings to both authorities was modest, against potentially significant risks.
- Commented that the aims of LGSS should be to produce a more efficient Council and real savings for the people of Cambridgeshire, and the proposed scheme did not appear to meet these aims in any significant way. Additionally, the impact of policy and funding changes from the coalition government were still unclear and it was not the best time to make these sort of changes;
- Pointed out that there were significant issues related to the legal implications of the proposals, including the different terms and conditions enjoyed by the staff of the two authorities. It was suggested that further work was needed on the legal implications to prevent the Council from being exposed to potentially serious legal consequences;
- Suggested that that the majority of the positive NPV would be attributable to the further redesign of services and improved software functionality. If this was the case, it was suggested that these savings could be achieved without the creation of LGSS which would lead to significant upheaval for both the Council and staff for little return;
- Applauded the proposals, and commented that this was exactly the direction the Council should be taking, in line with the national agenda, and that there were enough robust checks and balances to ensure that any risk was minimised, including a cross party Joint Committee;
- Welcomed the proposals and urged opposition Members to engage fully with the progress of LGSS, and pointed out that LGSS was already generating praise and interest nationally;

- Referred to the work of the joint Member Led Review with Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) Members, which had explored potential savings and the impact on organisational change. The predicted savings alluded to in the report were a prudent estimate, the expectation was that the actual savings would be much greater;
- In response to the above point, it was suggested that the Member Led Review had explored a different proposition, involving Slough Borough Council, and that the current proposal was significantly different;
- Commented that despite the detail of the documents provided, many of the issues were unclear or unresolved, and this appeared to be an unsound basis on which to progress. Specific issues of concerns included the extent of any redundancies and how costs and benefits would be shared with NCC. It was also suggested that the proposal for reviewing LGSS annually was too infrequent;
- Supported the proposals as they were based on a very sound business case and three years' of detailed planning and negotiations, would enable the Council to achieve financial savings at a time when the Council finances were under considerable pressure.
- Suggested that this was a difficult and detailed area with many unresolved areas, and therefore more time was needed to assess the predicted savings and risks. It was suggested that Internal Audit should be embedded in the project to ensure that savings were achieved, to help manage the risks and that problems were addressed;
- Commented that more than one option should be presented to enable Members to make a considered decision, including a "do nothing" option;
- Thanked officers and Members who had worked hard to develop this scheme, and commented that whilst not opposed to shared services in principle, the concerns raised, particularly in relation to the lack of detail and clarity in the proposals, warranted further work before a decision could be made;
- Commented that any savings that could be made would only benefit the Council and the people of Cambridgeshire, and that it was inevitable there were areas still to be resolved as no two authorities worked in exactly the same way. A great deal of work had been undertaken by Members across the authority and ultimately the proposals would enable the Council to deliver its services in a more efficient, cost effective way;
- Highlighted the importance of continuing Member involvement, particularly through the Scrutiny process;
- Commented that the staffing issues would be progressed through the normal processes including consultation;

On being put to the vote, the main motion was carried. [Voting pattern: Conservatives, Green and UKIP in favour; Liberal Democrat Group against; Labour Group, Chairman and Vice Chairman abstained]

(b) COUNTY COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

It was proposed by the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor J Reynolds, and seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor M McGuire:

That the County Council:

- (i) Agree to appoint a joint committee in accordance with Cabinet's recommendation of 5th July 2010;
- (ii) In so far as the proposed delegations to the Joint Committee and officers of the proposed Local Government Shared Service (LGSS) management team, are non-executive functions, to agree their delegation in accordance with Schedule 2 of the joint Committee and Delegation Agreement and subject to the completion of such agreement.
- (iii) Agree the amendments to the Constitution set out in Appendix 1 to the report, and delegate to the Monitoring Officer, the authority to finalise the precise wording of the amendments and the date of implementation, in consultation with the Group Leaders and the Chief Executive, subject to the completion of the Joint Committee and Delegation Agreement by Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC).
- (iv) Agree to the restructuring of the Officer structure within CCC in order to enable and accommodate the implementation of the LGSS, and delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the authority to determine and implement the new officer structure as required by LGSS.

The main motion was debated. Members made the following comments

- Commented that the business case had not been finalised, and that an enormous amount of power was being delegated to a small number of people on the basis of agreements that had not yet been written;
- Suggested that there were a large number of day to day decisions e.g. determination of objections to Traffic Regulation Orders, which appeared to have been, or were potentially, delegated to a third party;
- Expressed concern that there were a number of unresolved issues in the schedule of proposed amendments to the Constitution arising from LGSS, and that this was unconstitutional, and these changes should be agreed at a subsequent Council meeting;
- Expressed concern at the absence of reference to a Joint Scrutiny Committee in the proposals.

Responding to the issue of unresolved issues, the Head of Legal Services assured Members that these subsequent changes would be made in discussion with Group Leaders, adding that it was not legally possible to delegate decisions

to individual Members, and he was satisfied that the proposed changes to the Constitution were lawful.

On being put to the vote, the main motion was carried. [Voting pattern: Conservatives and Green in favour; Liberal Democrat and Labour Groups against; UKIP, Chairman and Vice Chairman abstained]

102. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Four written questions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 9:

- Councillor Bell had asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor M McGuire a question about the completion of the Thistle Corner roundabout in Ely;
- Councillor Jenkins had asked the Cabinet Member for Customer Service and Transformation, Councillor S Criswell, a question about magazines produced by the County Council;
- Councillor Jenkins had asked the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor J Reynolds a question regarding the grading of staff appraisals;
- Councillor Jenkins had asked the Deputy Leader, Councillor M McGuire, a question regarding partnership meetings.

The responses were circulated at the Council meeting and a copy is available from Democratic Services.

103. ORAL QUESTIONS

Eleven oral questions were asked under Council Procedure Rule 9:

- Councillor Sedgwick-Jell asked the Deputy Leader, Councillor M McGuire, if the Cabinet was going to consider and respond to the Government on the Secretary of State for Health's current proposals for the NHS, and the enhanced role that the local authority was likely to have to play. Responding, the Deputy Leader advised that he was in receipt of a letter on this subject which he was happy to share with all Members.
- Councillor Melton asked the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor M Curtis, if he would like to join him in thanking all those involved in ensuring that the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme for Fenland continued, despite the present economic difficulties. Responding, the Cabinet Member for Children advised that he was indeed grateful, and advised that he had lobbied Ministers and spoken to the current Secretary of State for Education, and that Councillor Harty had also worked tirelessly to retain the County's BSF projects.
- Councillor Reeve asked the Deputy Leader, Councillor M McGuire, if the Conservative administration supported the private members' bill on Face Coverings. Responding, the Deputy Leader advised that this was a matter for national government and the Council had no intention of introducing such a policy. Responding to a supplementary question, where it was asserted that this was indeed an issue for the Council, as it manages public buildings

and has a duty of care towards staff, the Deputy Leader advised that whilst the security of staff was paramount, there was no evidence of security issues relating to face coverings.

- Councillor T Stone asked Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor M McGuire, about the distribution of the Local Transport Plan consultation document to households in Cambridgeshire. Residents in Duxford had not received this document, and he was concerned that they would not be distributed on time. Responding, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Access said that whilst he could not guarantee that no household in the county would be missed, he was aware that the distribution process was ongoing and lessons had been learned from the shortcomings of the previous distribution exercises. He agreed to follow this up to ensure that those who were missed on the previous occasion were included, and he urged Members to let him know if they became aware of such omissions.
- Councillor Moss-Eccardt asked the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning, Councillor R Pegram, about his criticism at a recent Cabinet meeting of the project management skills of BAM Nuttall, the contractors for the guided busway. Responding, the Cabinet Member advised that he favoured any project management methodology which reflected the views of the customer and ensured that the specifications laid down by the contract were adhered to, and delivered to the customer in a fit and proper manner.
- Councillor Wilkins asked the Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor P Brown, what he understood by the coalition government's 'Big Society' agenda. Responding, the Cabinet Member explained that this had been developed over some time, the main thing being that more people needed to play more of a part in society, and this was reflected in the library review, because further improvements to the library service would require the support of the people in the community. Responding to a supplementary question on whether this went beyond volunteerism and was an attempt to provide cheap alternatives to Council staff, the Cabinet Member responded that the aim was to encourage those people who had never played a role in society, and this was becoming more pertinent given the shift in global finances.
- Councillor Whelan asked the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty, about capacity at Comberton Village College. She explained that for some time there had been an acknowledgement that by 2013 Comberton Village College would be full, and alternative provision would need to be made for secondary provision for children in Cambourne. It now appeared that years 8, 9, 10 and 11 at Comberton Village College were full, and additional pupils were only being accepted if they had a successful admissions appeal. However, because there were currently so many admissions appeals, many parents could not have their appeals heard until September, by which time the school year would have started. Councillor Whelan sought assurance that this backlog was being addressed. The Cabinet Member advised that due to lack of notice, he was unable to respond fully but would respond to Councillor Whelan as soon as possible.
- Councillor Shepherd asked the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor M Curtis, about a reported overspend in the budget for Looked after Children of

£3.5 million due to an increase in the number of children being looked after. She asked if the Cabinet Member and his team were happy that they were receiving the kind of information and systems and data that would enable them to address this sort of issue early, and put in place management activities and actions to deal with it, rather than seeking budget virement. Responding, the Cabinet Member confirmed that he was happy that both he and his team were receiving correct and timely management information. He advised that the early indications were that the increase in looked after children was justified, and the budget had to be managed in light of this increase.

- Councillor Pellew asked the Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor P Brown, that if the Library Review earmarked a library for closure, the local community would be offered the opportunity to run the library themselves. Responding, the Cabinet Member advised that there were no plans to close any libraries, and the Council was working with communities to make sure library services were retained. However, if there was in the future a situation where a closure of a library was considered, a full and further consultation with the community would take place. In response to a supplementary question, the Cabinet Member advised that the review was very thorough and wide, and open to suggestions from Members and the public.
- Councillor Downes asked the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty, what was the cost to the Council of the Academies Bill so far, in terms of both officer time and opportunity cost. He further suggested that the Authority should invoice any schools that it assists in the process of becoming an Academy. Responding, the Cabinet Member for Learning advised that, consistent with the Council's approach of working in partnership with schools, it had not previously charged schools for work in connection with a change in their status. He would respond in writing to Councillor Downes with more information.
- Councillor Jenkins asked the Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor P Brown, about his understanding of the phrase 'the Third Sector', which he equated to the voluntary sector, when it included other sectors such as charities and not-for-profit organisations. He suggested that the Cabinet Member should look more closely at this issue. Responding, the Cabinet Member stated that he recognised that not everybody in 'the Third Sector' was a volunteer, but that he felt that this label was unhelpful.

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

104. MOTIONS

Two motions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10.

(a) Motion from Councillor T Sadiq

It was proposed by Councillor Sadiq and seconded by Councillor Sedgwick-Jell:

1. There is grave concern across all political parties that the Coalition Government's education reforms could damage the education of children

in Cambridgeshire.

2. Cambridgeshire is a growing county with excellent schools, increasing demand for places and new settlements requiring high-quality new schools. Cambridgeshire County Council plays a vital role in organising and managing educational provision in the County in a manner which respects and promotes local schools' autonomy. This Government's proposals for academies and free schools could destroy a good system which works well in the interests of our children.
3. Academies would benefit outstanding schools but would undermine those left under local authority control and would siphon financial resources away from schools and pupils most in need. Essential support for children with special needs could be put at risk and accountability to staff and parents reduced as greater powers are given to Governing Bodies and, paradoxically, greater centralised control by Government.
4. This Council is concerned at the speed at which Academies are being pushed through even before legislation has been debated and amended by Parliament and urges the Government to legislate with care listening to local authorities, teachers, parents and governors.
5. 'Free Schools' will create a chaotic and socially divisive situation in Cambridgeshire with many small, unregulated schools run by organisations with their own agendas and no real experience of providing high quality education. There is no evidence that 'Free Schools' in Sweden and the US have improved overall educational standards.
6. This Council requests that the Cabinet Member for Learning and the Leader of the Council write jointly to the Secretary of State for Education setting out our grave concerns about the Coalition Government's education reforms.
7. This Council also requests that the Leader of the Council writes to all Cambridgeshire MPs calling on them to oppose these reforms and to put Cambridgeshire's children first

Councillor Downes moved the following amendment, seconded by Councillor Nethsingha:

"That the first sentence of paragraph 3 be deleted and replaced with "Moving to academy status may benefit outstanding schools but would probably undermine those left within the local authority family siphoning financial resources away from schools and pupils in need."

That paragraph 4 be deleted and replaced with "This Council welcomes the amendments that have so far been made to the original Academies bill but remains concerned at the speed with which the reforms are being pushed through Parliament. This Council urges the Government to legislate with care and to take careful note of the serious concerns raised by local authorities, parents, governors, teachers and unions."

That the words "and all our Cambridgeshire MPs" be added after the word "Education in line 3 or paragraph 6.

That paragraph 7 be deleted.”

Following debate, on being put to the vote, the Council approved the amendment. [Voting pattern: Liberal Democrats in favour; Labour Group and Green against; Conservatives, UKIP and Chairman and Vice Chairman abstaining]

Members speaking against the Academies Bill commented:

- The legislation would undermine the good work being done in Cambridgeshire, and would effectively introduce a two tier education system;
- Commented that this was a wholesale experiment with children’s education;
- The proposed academies had no merit whatsoever and the speed of implementation was ridiculous, and there were a large number of unanswered questions;
- The proposals went against the whole Localism agenda – Academies would not be answerable to local people, but to the Secretary of State;
- Stressed the importance of supporting all schools, whether they were doing well and those that were not;
- Advised that the Swedish Minister of Education work trying to unscramble the problems caused by Free Schools in the county;
- Acknowledged that whilst core funding was an issue, schools had received better funding under the Labour government, compared to previous Conservative governments;
- Pointed out that a failing academy would not be able to fall back on the support of the local authority;
- Suggested that Academies would lead to schools spending increased time on administration and budgeting, rather than teaching.

Members speaking in support of the Academies Bill commented:

- Pointed out that much was already devolved to schools in Cambridgeshire
- Observed that the national curriculum, introduced by the Conservative government in 1988, was one of the major constraints on education, and abandoning the national curriculum would be the first step in giving educational professionals freedom
- Pointed out that the UK had already slipped down the OECD tables on performance in reading and maths and that measures needed to be taken to address this
- Pointed out that one school in the county, Crosshall Infant School, had already received provisional approval for Academy status

- Observed that the biggest challenge facing Cambridgeshire schools was the lack of core funding
- Commented that a “one size fits all” approach did not work in education, and that Academies and free school would help with this
- Commented that the government was aiming to raise standards in education, and one way of doing this was through empowering people – Academies would increase choice of both parents and professionals;

On being put to the vote, the substantive motion was defeated. [Voting pattern: Liberal Democrats, Labour Group and Green in favour; Conservatives and UKIP against; Chairman and Vice-Chairman abstained.]

(b) Motion from Councillor K Bourke

It was proposed by Councillor Bourke and seconded by Councillor Jenkins:

Public interest in how taxpayers’ money is spent is understandably high at the present time. Local authorities should be seen to be promoting this interest by being as open and transparent as possible, and by welcoming close public scrutiny of their operations.

The Audit Commission Act (ACA) is compatible with these aims, giving the public the opportunity to inspect the council’s accounts and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers and receipts relating to them.

This Council therefore affirms its commitment to open government by calling upon the Leader of Council to ensure that the period of public scrutiny is effectively publicised as possible in advance, and to use appropriate means of engagement to promote public awareness of it, including:

- A Council press release to the region’s media, and
- The Council’s own publications including its website.

By doing so, this Council would demonstrate a willingness to go beyond its minimal statutory obligation to advertise in one newspaper, and show itself to be firmly committed to promoting openness and public scrutiny.

Members speaking in support of the motion:

- Highlighted that in comparison with the Freedom of Information Act, there was limited public awareness of the provisions in the ACA;
- Commented that the four local newspapers where advertisements were placed excluded many part of the county, especially those near county boundaries;
- Cited a case where a family had great difficulty accessing the information they had requested, which would not have been the case if there was greater awareness of the ACA;
- Pointed out that the Council had a duty to communicate and already had an extensive Communications team, and this could be used to promote issues

with the public, which would in turn improve public confidence in the Council by taking a more transparent approach, in line with coalition government policy.

Members speaking against the motion:

- Commented that the Council already exceeded the statutory requirements in this area, publishing in four different newspapers and on its website;
- Pointed out that the full accounts were available on the County Council's website, and this was preceded by a press release. For 2010, the accounts would be available from 09/08/10-06/09/10, and the public would be able to speak to the Council's auditors;
- Commented that if there was genuine public interest in an issue, this would be pursued by the media – the actions suggested would merely add to costs when there was no evidence of public interest;
- Suggested that Councillors had a role to play in disseminating and publicising important information.

On being put to the vote, the motion was defeated. [Voting pattern: Liberal Democrats, Labour group, and UKIP in favour; Conservatives against; Green and Chairman and Vice-Chairman abstained]

105. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The changes to Committee memberships and appointments to outside bodies attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes were proposed by the Chairman, Councillor Oliver, seconded by the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Powley, and agreed unanimously.

106. REPORT OF THE CABINET – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor M McGuire, moved receipt of the report of the Cabinet meetings held on 25th May, 15th June and 5th July 2010.

(a) Report of the meeting held on 25th May 2010

- 1) Parking Policy Review
- 2) Development at Cambridge North West National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB) 1 site – Section 106 Heads of Terms

Councillor Jenkins commented that since approval for development granted last week, he had a number of concerns, relating to: (i) drainage, which was an issue in this area; (ii) links to the A14, and road transport generally; and (iii) the importance of learning from other developments, such as Orchard Park.

In response, Councillor Pegram acknowledged that drainage was an issue, and this would be addressed through Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. Links to the A14 would only be required after 350 homes were

occupied. He also acknowledged the importance of developers building communities, not just homes.

3) Integrated Resources and Performance Report – March 2010

Councillor D Harty agreed to respond in writing to Councillor Stone's query about the reference to "backfill" in the report on performance against LI206 (% Young People Aged 13-19 Participating in Youth Service Activities)

4) Residential Short Break Review

5) Accident Remedies and Traffic Management Programme – Medium sized schemes

6) Proposed response to the Government's request for comments on proposals to set up an Urban Transport Challenge Fund

7) Public Path Order appointments to divert or extinguish public footpaths and bridleways

8) Cambridgeshire Guided Busway Update – to be covered in the Cabinet report for the 5th July 2010.

(b) Report of the meeting held on 15th June 2010

1) Prescribed alterations to increase the size of six primary schools across Cambridgeshire

Councillor Palmer expressed concern regarding the decision to enlarge Weatheralls Community Primary School from 420 to 630 pupils, as he believed that Cabinet were unaware of a range of issues including the hard work that had been undertaken between the Town Council and the District Council in developing the Soham Vision, and that the expansion plans were dependent on acquisition of allotment land from the Town Council. He was also concerned about the impact on other primary schools in the area. Councillor Nethsingha supported Councillor Palmer's concerns about the creating such a large primary school.

Responding, Councillor Harty advised that the County Council had also been working with partners on the Soham Vision, and the planning for Weatheralls School was consistent with the Soham Vision. The subject of the school expansion had been discussed and endorsed with the School and its Governing Body over the last twelve months, and a full consultation was held in February 2010 with parents and local stakeholders, including all Local Members. With regard to the allotment site, he confirmed that there were plans to relocate the playing field into that area, but the scheme was not dependent on this.

2) Early Years and child care – lease costs and licence fees for County Council properties at less than best consideration delegation

3) Northstowe Eco-town Demonstrator project

Councillor Johnstone sought reassurance that this project would not be

abandoned in the current economic climate. The retrofitting of existing homes on Rampton Drift to improve energy efficiency was a particular concern.

In response, Councillor Pegram advised that originally £1.5m had been awarded, but this had subsequently been withdrawn. However, discussions had taken place with South Cambridgeshire District Council regarding finding the funding for the retrofitting from elsewhere without the need for the purchase of the properties. Councillor Pegram agreed to write to Councillor Johnstone with further details.

4) 2009/10 year end out-turn report

Councillor Jenkins commented on the budget underspend of £1.982 million had only been achieved following a virement of £1.3 million from the Pressures and Developments Reserve, the use of £2.1million of carry forwards and an underspend of £1.8million on debt charges. Councillor Stone sought clarification of the Council's policy in the amount of funding held in reserves.

Responding, Councillor J Reynolds commented that the Pressures and Developments Reserve was intended to be used to support front line services following the reduction in government funding.

5) Gilbert Road, Cambridge – cycling scheme

6) Shared Services – Business Case – Update report
Discussion of this item was included in Minute 101(a).

7) Chatteris Market Town Transport Strategy

8) Cambridge Station Bus Interchange

9) Highways and Access Operation issues

10) Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee Member Led Review – getting maximum value for money on procuring goods and services

(c) Report of the meeting held on 5th July 2010

1) LGSS detailed Business case and joint committee structure
Discussion of this item was included in Minute 101(a).

2) Street Lighting PFI – Selection of preferred bidder

3) Integrated resources and performance report – May 2010

4) East Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework – implications for planning secondary school provision

Councillor Whelan welcomed the conclusions of this report

- 5) Investigation into the choice of single or multi-storey design solutions for new-build primary schools and the implications for the quality and delivery of education

Councillor Whelan welcomed the conclusions of this report and the additional flexibility it offered in providing primary school buildings.

- 6) Library Service review

Councillor Gymer requested that Local Members be copied into letters to Parish and Town Councils regarding changes to mobile library provision and youth services.

Councillor Williamson raised concerns about the capacity for volunteers, given the importance of libraries in communities, and observed that Library Access Points (LAPs) did not have the same provision as libraries in terms of the range of services provided.

Councillor Hunt supported Councillor Williamson's comments on the value of libraries, especially when set against the 25% reduction in funding.

Councillor Moss-Eccardt pointed out that physically, libraries were very important in their communities, and useful e.g. for broadband access, and he hoped that this was an area that Making Cambridgeshire Count would investigate. Some of the publicity linking the library review with the IPP cuts was unfortunate, as it gave the impression that libraries were closing.

Councillor Reeve congratulated Councillor Sir P Brown, and urged greater participation by all parties in the Library review.

Councillor Wilkins referred to Milton Road Library and stressed that people wanted to be involved with the Library Service review, and he hoped that there would be further options and models that could be adopted to allow residents, trusts and other organisations to keep library provision going.

Councillor Sadiq expressed concerns that the new Central Library in Cambridge would be used to justify the reduction of library services elsewhere in the city. He also requested that those in neighbouring divisions should also be kept informed, where a facility served a wider community, and also requested an indicative timetable for the Library review

Councillor Read commented that the problem with library provision was a longstanding one, but there were many good examples of good community provision e.g. the Little Downham Book Café.

Councillor Kenney felt that despite pressures the library service had done well, as demonstrated by the new libraries in Cambridge, Shelfords, Huntingdon and Wisbech.

Councillor Lucas said that he was delighted to see the way in which the library review was being approached, and the ways in which communities could be involved, and he used the example of the great services provided

by the LAPs.

Responding, Councillor P Brown said he was very proud of library services in Cambridgeshire and that it was one of the best in the country. He urged Liberal Democrat members to engage in the process through the Policy Development Groups (PDGs). He confirmed that there was no intention of closing any libraries, but there were spending cuts and the funding must be identified. Similarly, the needs of residents in the city centre had to be balanced against those living in rural communities. He undertook to keep local members informed of developments in their area.

- 7) Developer Section 106 (S106) deferral request (Summersfield development in Papworth Everard)

Councillor Harrison said that she did not have a problem with this particular deferral, but wished to raise a wider issue: any deferrals requests needed to be considered carefully, given that house prices in Cambridge had risen by an average of 26% in the previous twelve months.

- 8) End of Year Performance report 2009/10 and Annual report 2009/10

The following concerns were expressed:

- that the analysis showed no underlying trends,
- that the detail of the report indicates targets had been revised, and it was hoped that the revisions were made in the spirit of continuous improvement;
- whilst it was acknowledged that performance in some areas may have worsened due to factors outside the Council's control, this should not be the case where issues could largely be controlled internally.

In response, Cabinet Members commented that ambitions remained high, and two-thirds of performance indicators were improving. It was also noted that there was still uncertainty as to how National Indicators would be used in future to assess performance. The Council would continue to use performance indicators where they reflected outcomes.

- 9) Draft Great Ouse catchment flood management plan – consultation by the Environment Agency

- 10) Quarterly update report on key partnerships

Councillor Harrison requested maximum involvement of opposition Members in the many reviews that were taking place, and pointed out that the Council was not restricted to PDGs to brief and consult Members - there were other processes and forums available.

- 11) Annual Performance Assessment of Social Care Services for Adults Services for Cambridgeshire and action plan

Members asked for more focus on (i) young carers, and ensuring their needs were being met, and (ii) delayed discharges, which had a major impact on both health and social services.

Councillor Kenney congratulated Adult Social Care on the work they had done to monitor progress.

Councillor Curtis confirmed that the needs of young carers would be considered. Councillor M McGuire agreed to advise the relevant Cabinet member, Councillor Yeulett, of members' concerns.

12) Cambridgeshire Guided Busway

Councillor Shepherd thanked those involved in organising the monthly meetings which kept local people updated on progress. She expressed concern about the way in which the completion dates for both the southern and northern sections kept changing.

Councillor Sedgwick-Jell commented that in terms of the legal and financial issues with the contractor, the process was only just beginning, and he cautioned that there was undue optimism that there would be a favourable outcome for the Council.

Councillor Moss-Eccardt advised that the Director of Sustainable Infrastructure had answered many questions at a recent Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny Committee, which had been most helpful. However, he still had outstanding questions regarding (i) the progress of 'smart ticketing'; and (ii) the business rates assessment.

Councillor Harrison felt that the references to a 'robust contract' with the contractor were clearly misleading, and expressed concern regarding the contracts with the bus operators.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning advised:

- that the contractor, BAM Nuttall, was predicting a December 2010 opening date for the southern section of the Busway. However, there continued to be uncertainty as to whether the Busway would be fully completed, with all defects rectified. There was a progressive inspection regime which was inspecting progress on a sectional basis;
- there was an ongoing project group monitoring progress, which involved the main political parties;
- that progress continued to be made on Smart Ticketing, but this would be the first project in the country to involve more than one operator in such a ticketing scheme;
- that he would respond separately to Councillor Moss-Eccardt regarding the issue of business rates;
- that talks with bus operators were ongoing, including discussions on the frequency of bus services. Longer term, frequency would largely be dependent on the completion of Northstowe.

13) Petition support a proposal to lower the speed limit through Kirtling and Upend from 40mph to 30mph

Councillor Shuter, as the local member, urged Cabinet to look favourably at this petition, which was a strong expression of local democracy, given that 106 of the 145 residents had signed the petition. The mean speed on

this road was already 30mph, which therefore fulfilled the Council's own criteria for reducing the speed limit. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Access reassured Councillor Shuter that officers had responded appropriately and visited the site prior to the presentation of the petition.

Chairman:

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

- (i) To approve the following changes in the membership of Scrutiny Committees:
 - Corporate Issues: Councillor L Nethsingha to replace Councillor B Brooks-Gordon as a member of the Committee. Councillor D Jenkins to replace Councillor K Bourke as a substitute member.
 - Children and Young People: Councillor L Nethsingha to replace Councillor D Jenkins as a substitute member.
 - Adults, Well Being and Health: Councillor B Brooks-Gordon to replace Councillor L Nethsingha as a member of the Committee.
 - Environment and Sustainability: Councillor K Bourke to replace Councillor S Gymer as a substitute member.
- (ii) To approve the addition of the following members to the pool from which the Staff Appeals Committee is drawn: Councillors Farrer, Hoy, Hunt, Hutton, Johnstone, King, Nethsingha, Shepherd, Tierney and Whelan.
- (iii) To appoint Councillor Tuck as the Council's representative on the East of England Local Government Association
- (iv) To appoint Councillors Curtis, J Reynolds and Whelan as members of the Local Government Shared Services Joint Committee and Councillors Butcher, Jenkins and L W McGuire as Substitute members
- (v) To appoint Councillor Pellew as a substitute member of the Corporate Issues Scrutiny Committee
- (vi) To appoint Councillor Shepherd as a substitute member of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
- (vii) To appoint Councillor Whelan as a substitute member of the Adults Wellbeing and Health Scrutiny Committee
- (viii) To replace Councillor Moss-Eccardt with Councillor Jenkins as a substitute member of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee
- (ix) To replace Councillor Wijsenbeek with Councillor Nethsingha as a member of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee
- (x) To appoint Councillors Batchelor and Brooks-Gordon as substitute members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee
- (xi) To appoint Councillor Pellew as a substitute member of the Development Control Committee
- (xii) To replace Councillors Moss-Eccardt and Wijsenbeek with Councillor Nethsingha and Shepherd as substitute members of the Cambridge Traffic Management Area Joint Committee
- (xiii) To replace Councillor Gymer with Councillor Jenkins as a member of the South Cambridgeshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee
- (xiv) To replace Councillor Jenkins with Councillor Gymer as a substitute member of the South Cambridgeshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee