

COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 18th July 2006

Time: 10.30 a.m. – 3.30 p.m.

Place: Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present: Councillor: S B Normington (Chairman)

Councillors P D Bailey, D Baldwin, C M Ballard, J D Batchelor, I C Bates, B Bean, N Bell, B Boddington, M Bradney, J Broadway, P Brown, T Butcher, C Carter, M Curtis, A Douglas, P J Downes, J Dutton, R Farrer, S A Giles, G Griffiths, B Hardy, G F Harper, N Harrison, D Harty, W G M Hensley, S Higginson, P E Hughes, W Hunt, J L Huppert, C Hyams, J D Jenkins, S F Johnstone, E Kadić, G Kenney, A C Kent, S G M Kindersley, S J E King, S Lee, V H Lucas, D McCraith, L W McGuire, A K Melton, R Moss-Eccardt, M K Ogden, L J Oliver, A G Orgee, D R Pegram, J A Powley, A A Reid, J E Reynolds, K Reynolds, P Sales, M Shuter, L Sims, M Smith, T Stone, J M Tuck, J K Walters, J West, D White, K Wilkins, H Williams, M Williamson, L J Wilson and F H Yeulett

Apologies: Councillors J A P Eddy and G J Heathcock

91. MINUTES: 16th MAY 2006

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16th May 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

92. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Awards and achievements

The Chairman led members in congratulating:

- David Groom, one of the Council's Divisional Maintenance Engineers, who had been awarded an MBE for his services to local government as part of the Queen's eightieth birthday celebrations.
- The Cambridgeshire Parliament as a winner of this year's Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. The Parliament represented 1,500 people across the County who had learning difficulties.

93. 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 Batchelor as a member of South Cambridgeshire District Council (Minute 95, Report of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 11th July 2006, Item 1, Cambridgeshire Guided Busway and Item 6, Cowley Road Park and Ride Relocation)

- Councillors Bell and King as the Council's appointees to the Local Access Forum (Minute 95, Report of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 11th July 2006, Item 1, Cambridgeshire Guided Busway, and Item 14, Revised Objectives and Policies for the County Farms Estate)
- Councillors Downes and Hyams as members of Huntingdonshire District Council (Minute 95, Report of the Meetings of Cabinet held on 23rd May 2006 and 13th June 2006, Item 11, Huntingdon to St Ives Bus Priority Measures, and Report of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 11th July 2006, Item 1, Cambridgeshire Guided Busway)
- Councillor Griffiths as a trustee of Jimmy's Nightshelter and a member of the National Board of the English Churches Housing Group (Minute 95, Report of the Meetings of Cabinet held on 23rd May 2006 and 13th June 2006, Item 15, Supporting People: Overview of Future Direction and Confirmation of Contractual Arrangements for 2006/07)
- Councillor Huppert as a governor of St Andrew's Church of England Aided Junior School (Minute 95, Report of the Meetings of Cabinet held on 23rd May 2006 and 13th June 2006, Item 5, Review of Primary Education Provision in East Chesterton) and as a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge (Minute 95, Report of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 11th July 2006, Item 1, Cambridgeshire Guided Busway and Item 6, Cowley Road Park and Ride Relocation)
- Councillor Kent as a governor of Cambridge Regional College (Minute 95, Report of the Meetings of Cabinet held on 23rd May 2006 and 13th June 2006, Item 2, Cambridgeshire Children's Workforce Strategy, 'Better Together'.

The following members declared personal interests under Paragraph 10 of the Code of Conduct. The items to which the interests relate are shown in brackets.

- Councillor Bean as an employee of East Cambridgeshire and Fenland Primary Care Trust (PCT) (Minute 95, Report of the Meetings of Cabinet held on 23rd May 2006 and 13th June 2006, Item 1, Section 28 Transfers of Budget and Responsibility from PCTs to the County Council)
- Councillor Kindersley as a Director of Cambridgeshire Horizons during the past twelve months (Minute 95, Report of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 11th July 2006, Item 1, Cambridgeshire Guided Busway)
- Councillor Smith as her partner owned land in Swavesey relevant to the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway (Minute 95, Report of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 11th July 2006, Item 1, Cambridgeshire Guided Busway).

94. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Council noted that no questions had been received from members of the public.

95. REPORTS OF CABINET MEETINGS

Meetings held on 23rd May 2006 and 13th June 2006

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Walters, moved receipt of the report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 23rd May 2006 and 13th June 2006.

Key decisions for determination

- 1) Section 28 Transfers of Budget and Responsibility from Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) to the County Council

It was proposed by the Lead Member for Community Learning and Development and Adult Social Care, Councillor Yeulett, and seconded by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor J Reynolds,

That the Council approves the transfer of funds under Section 28a of the National Health Service Act 1977 from East Cambridgeshire and Fenland Primary Care Trust (on behalf of the four Primary Care Trusts across Cambridgeshire) to Cambridgeshire County Council.

Councillor Ballard reported that the Labour Group fully supported this proposal, which would reduce duplication in the collection and transfer of information relating to older people in receipt of health and social care services. He welcomed the successful integration of older people's services and suggested that this should be a model for the integration of both services for adults with physical and learning disabilities and services for children and young people.

Councillor Huppert reported that the Liberal Democrats also fully supported the proposal, which would lead to increased efficiency through the better use of IT.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried. [Voting pattern: unanimous.]

- 2) Cambridgeshire Children's Workforce Strategy, 'Better Together'

It was proposed by the Lead Member for Learning, Councillor Lucas, and seconded by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, Councillor Johnstone,

That the Council approves the Children's Workforce Strategy, entitled 'Better Together', for submission as an element of the Children and Young People's Plan.

Councillor Kent reported that the Liberal Democrats supported the Children's Workforce Strategy. She noted that a children-centred workforce would be essential to the delivery of children-centred services. She particularly welcomed the involvement of children and families in the preparation of the Strategy, and the development of a 'climbing frame' of qualifications and options for progression, which would allow professionals greater flexibility in developing their career. However, she noted that the Strategy would be challenging to deliver, and suggested that the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee might wish to keep this under review.

Councillor Sales reported that the Labour Group also welcomed the Strategy. He commented that front-line staff working in children's services needed full support, and it would be essential for the Strategy to deliver this.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried. [Voting pattern: unanimous.]

3) Youth Justice Plan

It was proposed by the Lead Member for Inclusion, Councillor Tuck, and seconded by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, Councillor Johnstone,

That the Council approves the Youth Justice Plan for 2006/07.

In moving the motion, Councillor Tuck noted that successful implementation of the Plan would require the full support of the Council's partners, both in kind and financially.

Councillor Batchelor noted that the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee had considered the Youth Justice Plan at its meeting on 10th July 2006. At the meeting, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services had assured members that preventative services would be a top priority. Councillor Batchelor therefore expressed disappointment that the appendix to the Council report listed a number of preventative activities that it would not be possible to pursue. He expressed concern that without these, the Plan would not be successful, and asked Cabinet to reconsider its decision.

Councillor Broadway shared Councillor Batchelor's concerns, noting that the lack of funding for the Youth Offending Service was affecting its ability to deliver effective services. She asked for as much funding as possible to be put into the Service, since this would benefit the whole community.

Councillor Sales expressed support for the Plan, but also expressed concern about the list of areas in which progress had not been made during 2005/06 because of funding shortfalls. He particularly highlighted mental health assessments, noting that these could be essential in providing effective support to young offenders.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services recognised speakers' concerns but noted that with the limited funding available, 'fire fighting' activities had to be prioritised. She noted that despite its funding difficulties, Cambridgeshire's Youth Offending Service's rating for 2005/06 had risen to 3 out of a possible 5, as compared with 1 in 2004/05. The aim for 2006/07 was to maintain this rating.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried. [Voting pattern: unanimous.]

Key decisions for information

- 4) Waste Disposal Facilities and Council Land South of Cambridge
- 5) Review of Primary Education Provision in East Chesterton: Shirley Community Infant School and St Andrew's Church of England Aided Junior School

Councillor Huppert thanked all those members and officers who had contributed to the review of primary education provision in East Chesterton. He also thanked the staff at St Andrew's for their work during the difficult period leading to the decision to amalgamate, and paid particular tribute to the Clerk to the Governors. He noted that the amalgamation would provide an opportunity to provide high quality education and develop community cohesion, and also to build the new school to high environmental standards.

- 6) Section 31 Agreements: Interim Reviews 2006/07

Councillor Ballard noted that few changes to the existing Section 31 Agreements were proposed. However, he expressed concern that the pooled health and social care budgets for 2006/07 were already under pressure, with cuts to day care, respite care and residential care all being discussed. He emphasised the need to keep in view the original aims of integration, improved customer focus and greater emphasis on preventative services. With regard to the Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES), he called for benchmarking information, to show whether Cambridgeshire's service was cost effective in comparison with those of other local authorities, and also asked to be advised whether more effective stock control had now been implemented.

[Responding, the Lead Member for Community Learning and Development and Adult Social Care, Councillor Yeulett, noted that updates to the Section 31 agreements were necessary because of the structural changes to Cambridgeshire's PCTs. He noted that the ICES contract was currently being retendered and agreed to check details of benchmarking and stock control.](#)

- 7) Shelford Library

Councillor Kenney reported that she and Councillor Orgee welcomed Cabinet's decision to replace Shelford Library with a modern, purpose-built facility.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Powley, also welcomed the decision and expressed the hope that the increase in usage following the opening of the new library in Burwell could be replicated in Great Shelford.

- 8) Office Accommodation Strategy

Councillor Moss-Eccardt welcomed Cabinet's support for the recommendations resulting from the member led review of office accommodation. However, he expressed concern at some of the media

coverage of the review's recommendations, emphasising that the main aim of the Strategy was not to reduce the ratio of desks to officers, but to make more effective use of space and provide a better working environment.

Councillor Sales expressed reservations about the practicalities of officers sharing desks.

Councillor King agreed with Councillor Moss-Eccardt about the aims of the review, and noted that the emphasis should be on providing better ways of working. Touchdown centres would be provided to assist employees in working more flexibly around the County.

Responding, Councillor Powley agreed that the Strategy was a positive document, enabling the Council to respond to changes in working practices and the use of technology. In his view, a ratio of seven desks to ten officers was appropriate, given the alternatives available of greater use of touchdown centres and home working.

9) Financial Outturn Report 2005/06

Councillor Huppert expressed concern that year-end balance had been achieved for the Children and Young People's Services budget only with the use of £505,000 of uncommitted reserves, and commented that this should have been made clear in the report to Council.

Councillor Ballard shared Councillor Huppert's concern and highlighted the number of overspends in Children and Young People's Services, as set out in the appendix to the Council report, particularly the £702,000 overspend on home to school transport. He commented on the growing pressures on Children and Young People's Services and suggested that a fundamental review was needed of the budget for this Office. Councillor Ballard also noted that 2005/06 targets to reduce outstanding debt over six months old had not been met. He noted that a large proportion of outstanding debts related to older people's social care services, and emphasised the importance of pursuing these appropriately.

Councillor Moss-Eccardt expressed concern at the Corporate Services £306,000 overspend on the e-business suite, noting that he had previously commented that the Good Housekeeping Fund was not an appropriate funding source for this type of project.

Responding to Councillor Ballard, the Lead Member for CYPS Resources and Planning, Councillor Pegram, noted that the Office of Children and Young People's Services was statutorily required to provide many of its services, but that spending was monitored closely. With regard to home to school transport, he noted that the overspend was due to increasing fuel and associated bus and taxi costs, and to a number of successful appeals.

Responding to all the speakers, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Powley, noted that he had warned members on a number of occasions during 2005/06 of the financial pressures faced by

the Council, the need for tight financial control and the dangers of over-reliance on one-off sources of funding. He congratulated officers on the discipline shown in bringing the budget in within 0.4% of the £510 million total. With regard to debt levels, he noted that these were kept under close review and that an increasing proportion of debt over six months old was now subject to secondary action. He warned members that the Council's funding position was likely to worsen, with Cambridgeshire expected to be at the Government's funding floor for 2007/08. It would therefore be essential to continue to apply strict financial prudence.

- 10) Educational Provision in Response to the Planned Developments in the Cambridge Southern Fringe
- 11) Huntingdon to St Ives Bus Priority Measures

Councillor Downes noted that the report to Council made no reference to the proposed bus and cycle lanes on Hartford Road, Huntingdon, and asked whether these were still expected to proceed. He noted that the proposals were unpopular with local residents, who were concerned about potential costs and damage to the locality.

Councillor Hyams expressed concern at the proposal to create a cycle lane to the north of Walden Road, Huntingdon, since its use could be difficult to police and could lead to conflict between pedestrians and cyclists in the shopping centre.

Councillor Huppert noted that locally and nationally, there were well co-ordinated lobbying groups representing the views of cyclists. He suggested that the Council could encourage similar groups to represent the views of pedestrians.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor J Reynolds, noted that the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee had prioritised the five proposals that made up the bus priority package, and the report to Cabinet had covered the first four of these schemes; Hartford Road had been placed fifth. Further consultation on the detail of all schemes was still needed.

Other decisions

- 12) Call-In of the Decision by the Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee: Highways Services Contract 2006-2016
- 13) Response to Forty Foot Bank Petitions
- 14) A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton Improvement: Huntingdon Viaduct Study

Councillor Hyams emphasised the need for the improvements to the A14 to be viewed in their entirety and progressed as quickly as possible. He expressed concern at the current delay and suggested that widening of the A428 as an alternative route into Cambridge could be a faster option to implement. With regard to the removal of the Huntingdon viaduct, he suggested that this should not be done until the A14 improvements were complete and their full impact known.

Councillor Dutton suggested that the viaduct should be retained as a local access road, and asked for local residents to be consulted on this before any action was taken.

Councillor Wilson welcomed Cabinet's support for the demolition of the viaduct, noting that it was a visual intrusion on the landscape and a source of noise and pollution for local homes and businesses. Its location on the floodplain meant that it was expensive to maintain, and it was not possible to widen it to accommodate increased traffic flows. He did not support the suggestion that the viaduct should be retained for buses and local traffic following the A14 improvements.

Councillor Huppert agreed that the viaduct was unsightly and should be removed. He agreed that measures were needed to improve traffic flow on the A14, but commented that the aim should not be to increase the number of cars entering Cambridge, which was already highly congested.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor J Reynolds, noted that work to improve the A14 was being delayed pending a decision from the Court of Appeal. He and the Chairman of Cambridgeshire Horizons had written to the Highways Agency urging them to continue to prepare for the forthcoming public inquiry to minimise further delay. The viaduct would not be demolished until the A14 improvements were complete, and so it was essential to progress these as quickly as possible.

15) Supporting People: Overview of Future Direction and Confirmation of Contractual Arrangements for 2006/07

Councillor Hughes commented that it was inappropriate to roll forward contracts of this size, and suggested that they should be fully reviewed to ensure that maximum benefits were being obtained.

Councillor Griffiths commented that Supporting People funding was essential to a range of vulnerable client groups, and a key concern to members; the recent Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee seminar on Supporting People had been exceptionally well attended. She expressed concern that Supporting People funding was reducing and urged that other funding be found to support these client groups.

Responding, the Lead Member for Community Learning and Development and Adult Social Care noted that it had been agreed to extend the contracts to capitalise on the successful work done to date.

16) Safe Employment Post-Bichard

Councillor Williamson highlighted the need for effective training of school governors on safe employment practices. He noted that Ofsted had identified a problem nationally concerning governors' take-up of training and found that Cambridgeshire's take-up, whilst one of the highest, was still low. He asked for an update on this.

[Responding, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services noted that take-up would improve as new governors were recruited. She agreed to write to Councillor Williamson with the latest figures.](#)

17) Cambridgeshire IT Strategy

Councillor Moss-Eccardt welcomed the integration of the Council's IT Strategy with its Office Accommodation and People Strategies, but expressed concern that the IT Strategy was not sufficiently forward-looking or driven by the business needs of the organisation. He also expressed concern that there had been limited member involvement and public scrutiny in the preparation of the Strategy.

Councillor King welcomed the Strategy and noted that Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee would be able to review it if it wished. He commended officers for their innovative approach in finding alternatives to an expensive secondary data centre.

Councillor Wilson welcomed the proposal to introduce converged networks, or voice over internet protocols (VOIP), which would bring telephony and data services together to facilitate flexible working and reduce overall communication costs. He asked the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services when the Council would invest in this technology.

Responding to the speakers, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Powley, noted that both Cambridgeshire's IT Strategy and its work in developing e-government had been commended by central Government. The Council would take advantage of all IT developments beneficial to the delivery of its services. With regard to VOIP, a business case had been prepared and would be developed.

18) Pringle House: Request for Exemption from Normal Competition Requirements under Contract Regulations

19) Environmental Standards for New Buildings

Councillor Reid welcomed the approach agreed by Cabinet following the motion agreed by Council on 16th May 2006 that for each future new school or other building to be built by the Council, the comparative cost of achieving an 'excellent' Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) rating should be calculated and presented as part of the procurement process.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Powley, noted that officers were already taking BREEAM ratings into account. This approach would be further developed through the Council's new Design contracts.

Meeting held on 11th July 2006

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Walters, moved receipt of the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 11th July 2006.

Key decision for determination

1) Cambridgeshire Guided Busway

The Chairman of the Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Harrison, moved receipt of the report of the Committee meeting held on 12th July 2006, when members had considered the Guided Busway proposals.

It was proposed by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor J Reynolds, and seconded by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Walters, that the Council

- i) Accepts the funding arrangements proposed by the Department for Transport (DfT) now that full approval has been confirmed by the DfT;
- ii) Exercises the powers contained in the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway Order 2005 to implement the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway;
- iii) Awards the contract for the construction of the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway to Edmund Nuttall Limited;
- iv) Makes the following changes to the scheme:
 - a) Delete the refuelling facility at St Ives Park and Ride;
 - b) Replace the bridge at Second Drove with an at-grade crossing;
 - c) Provide a vehicular crossing at Middle Fen Drove, Swavesey, and delete the proposed access track;
 - d) Provide an asphalt surface to the bridleway and cycleway from Histon to Cambridge and from Cambridge to Trumpington;
 - e) Provide a pedestrian gap in the guideway at St Audrey's Close, Histon.

In moving the recommendations, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services paid tribute to officers and to the former Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor Johnstone, for their work in bringing the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway project to this point. He emphasised that substantial housing development would be taking place on the Cambridge Southern Fringe, the Cambridge Northern Fringe and in Northstowe. The Guided Busway would be essential in providing effective public transport for these communities, and in the wider Cambridge sub-region. The Council now had the opportunity to shape the future of public transport in Cambridgeshire and to improve the prosperity of the area. The Cabinet Member urged members to support the recommendations.

Scrutiny Committee amendment

The Chairman of the Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Harrison, spoke to the Scrutiny Committee's report. She noted that the Guided Busway project represented a major challenge to the Council, and that it had been appropriate for the Scrutiny Committee to bring a fresh perspective to consideration of the proposals. The Committee's discussions had highlighted a number of ongoing risks and issues, including: a possible overspend on capital construction costs; possible delays to the receipt of Section 106 funding, which would be essential to supplement the DfT grant; the risk of additional Section 106 funding being diverted from other projects in the event of an overspend; the need to ensure long-term viability by ensuring that revenue from access charges was sufficient to meet operating and maintenance costs; the need for high-quality and reliable services to guarantee a good reputation; and the need for effective on-street measures.

On behalf of the Scrutiny Committee, the following two additional recommendations were proposed by Councillor Harrison and seconded by Councillor Harty:

'To add the following to the end of the existing recommendations i) to iv):

- v) Further consideration to be given by the Guided Busway Project Board to the issues raised in the Scrutiny Committee's report and, where appropriate, the risks identified in paragraphs 2 to 5 to be added to the project Risk Register;
- vi) A comprehensive and updated project Risk Register should be regularly reported to Cabinet and to the Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee. The Register should be made public except where confidentiality is essential in relation to individual items.'

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Walters, welcomed the constructive debate at the Scrutiny Committee meeting and the cross-party report that had resulted from it. He accepted the Scrutiny Committee's amendment to the motion. Commenting on some of the issues raised, he noted that the officers had negotiated a good settlement with the DfT, which was based entirely on grant and could be drawn down early if there were any delays to development and the flow of Section 106 funding. Robust risk management arrangements were in place, and the use of Section 106 funding was not expected to exceed 10% of the total that Cambridgeshire Horizons anticipated from development in the Cambridge sub-region. He agreed that it was essential for the revenue budget to cover the costs of operation and maintenance, and for services to be high quality, frequent and reliable; negotiations with the bus operators on these issues were proceeding well.

Other speakers on the amendment highlighted the following issues:

- The need to minimise the level of Section 106 funding diverted from other uses. If more Section 106 funding had to be used on the

Guided Busway, then it was possible that Council Tax payers' money might have to be used to fund other projects from which Section 106 money had been diverted.

- The risk that usage of the Guided Busway would not be as high as expected, and the importance of reliable and speedy journeys to offset this risk. Effective off-road bus priority measures would be essential, as would high quality vehicles.

On being put to the vote, the Scrutiny Committee's amendment was carried. [Voting pattern: unanimous.]

Liberal Democrat amendment

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor Huppert and seconded by Councillor Reid:

'To add the following to the end of the existing recommendations i) to iv):

- v) Council calls on the Cabinet to ensure that, in carrying forward the Guided Busway project:
 - a) Efforts are made to minimise the CO₂ emissions, pollution and noise produced by the guided buses, by setting stringent minimum environmental performance standards, and by putting in place financial incentives (through reduced usage charges) for vehicles that achieve defined environmental performance standards above the minimum requirement;
 - b) The severance of communities is minimised, by preserving all rights of way that cross the Guided Busway, and by providing ample high quality pedestrian and cycle crossings;
 - c) Energetic efforts are made to persuade the Guided Busway operators to devise routes, position bus stops and make ticketing and interchange arrangements that provide the maximum benefit to all the communities along the Guided Busway corridor;
 - d) Local members and residents are fully involved in consultation on the implementation of decisions affecting their communities, including the size and location of car parks, the location and nature of crossing points, and on-road bus priority measures. In respect of on-road bus priority measures, the needs of the Guided Busway project must be balanced against the interests of local residents, pedestrians and cyclists;
 - e) A study is undertaken, without delay, into the practical options and costs for providing in future a continuous off-road Guided Busway between the Cambridge Science Park and Cambridge Railway Station. The study should identify

any short-term actions that are necessary to preserve options, and should take account of potential future development in the Cambridge Airport area.'

In introducing the amendment, Councillor Huppert noted that the Liberal Democrat Group did not support the scheme but, if it was going to proceed, wished to make some constructive suggestions for its implementation. He and other members speaking in support of the amendment noted the following points:

- If the Guided Busway was the only option to meet public transport needs in the Cambridge sub-region, every possible step should be taken to make it effective.
- With regard to recommendation a), it was currently proposed that all vehicles using the Guided Busway meet environmental standard Euro4. However, as all new buses would be required to meet this standard from October 2006, this would not be onerous to the operators. Offering a financial incentive to operators to meet higher environmental standards would not result in increased costs to the Council or building contractor.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Walters, spoke against the amendment. He reported that he had asked officers whether they could guarantee that no part of the amendment would lead to delay or increased costs, and they had not been able to provide a definitive answer. Given the strength of the agreements reached with the DfT and the contractor, he was not willing to support any amendment that could delay the programme or lead to additional costs. However, the Leader of the Council recognised the merit of a number of the suggestions and agreed to give them further consideration, if they would not result in delay or increased costs.

Speaking on behalf of the Labour Group, Councillor Sales noted that Labour would not be supporting the amendment. In their view, recommendations a) to d) were either already in progress or not contentious. However, the Group could not support recommendation e), since any route between the Cambridge Science Park and Cambridge Railway Station that crossed Stourbridge Common would be unacceptable.

Other members speaking against the amendment identified the following issues:

- On recommendation a), the potential trade-off between the environmental standards met by vehicles on the Guided Busway and the experience of passengers would need to be considered. For example, vehicles with air conditioning might meet lower environmental standards than those without but might result in more pleasant journeys, leading to an increase in the numbers of people who chose to take the bus instead of their car.
- Work against a number of the recommendations was already in progress. Under recommendation b), all existing rights of way across

the route of the Guided Busway would be maintained. No objectors to the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway Order had asked for additional crossings. Under recommendation c), the Council was working with operators on routes, the positioning of bus stops and ticketing and interchange arrangements as fully as its powers under the Transport Act 2000 would allow. Under recommendation d), the need for local forums to discuss the implementation of the scheme had already been recognised.

- Changes to the Council's decisions at this late stage could delay or jeopardise the project, and there was no viable alternative to meet the growing public transport needs of the Cambridge sub-region. Specifically on recommendation d), the size and location of the car parks associated with the Guided Busway had been fixed by the Order. Additional car parks would require separate planning applications and funding, slowing the progress of the scheme.

On being put to the vote, the Liberal Democrat amendment was defeated. [Voting pattern: Liberal Democrats in favour, Conservatives and two Labour members against, two Labour members abstained.]

Debate on the main recommendations as amended

Councillor Huppert commented that the Liberal Democrat Group's objection to the scheme had been maintained since the original Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi-Modal Study (CHUMMS). The aims of the scheme had weakened, particularly in relation to Phase 2. The inventor of guided bus did not support the Cambridgeshire scheme, noting that guided bus was intended for use in urban and not rural areas. The costs of the scheme were rising and now stood at £116.2 million. There was a real possibility that final costs could be higher still, meaning that a higher percentage of total costs should be allowed as a risk margin than was currently proposed. The Liberal Democrat Group was concerned as to how any overspend would be met. If greater use was made of Section 106 funding, this funding would have to be diverted from other projects, meaning that Council Tax payers' money could be needed to make up the deficit.

Other members speaking against the recommendations identified the following issues:

- The proposed scheme did not offer a continuous off-road route but a fragmented one, with significant on-road sections in Cambridge that could add to the City's problems of congestion and pollution.
- The Guided Busway would run through the villages of Histon and Impington but as currently proposed, would deliver few benefits to these communities. Residents of Histon welcomed the proposed car park, but wanted to ensure that it was an asset to the village. Effective parking enforcement measures would be essential to prevent overflow parking. Residents were also concerned that the Guided Busway would divert resources from other, more local services such as the Citi 7. Concern had also been expressed that vehicles could run along the Guided Busway more frequently than

currently expected – usage of the guideway in Crawley was 41% higher than had been anticipated – increasing the impact on the amenity of local residents.

Members speaking in support of the recommendations identified the following issues:

- Welcomed the Government’s recognition of the needs of Cambridgeshire and the opportunity to take positive action to address traffic congestion in and around Cambridge in a sustainable manner.
- Welcomed the improvements that the Guided Busway would make to accessibility in the south of the County and highlighted the need for effective links to the route from East Cambridgeshire and Fenland, to enable residents of these areas also to benefit from the scheme.

Council voted on the recommendations in two parts.

Members voted firstly on recommendations i), ii) and iii) and on recommendations v) and vi), the last two being those added through acceptance of the Scrutiny Committee’s amendment. On being put to the vote, these recommendations were carried. [Voting pattern: Conservatives and Labour in favour, Liberal Democrats against. However, Councillor Huppert asked for it to be recorded that the Liberal Democrats supported recommendations v) and vi).]

Members voted secondly on recommendation iv). On being put to the vote, this recommendation was carried. [Voting pattern: unanimous.]

Key decisions for information

2) Medium Term Corporate Plan (MTCP): Approval of 2007/08 –2009/10 Process

Councillor Ballard congratulated officers on the work done to introduce a more robust system of financial planning. He particularly welcomed the proposal to begin to use zero-based budgeting, instead of always basing new budgets on existing budgets with inflationary increases. However, he expressed concern that the report did not refer to Budgetary Advisory Panels in November, and commented that these provided an important opportunity for Opposition and backbench members to be involved constructively in early discussion of the budget.

Councillor Downes welcomed the proposed changes, but noted that Cambridgeshire’s previous approach had already compared favourably with those of many other local authorities, particularly in terms of public consultation. However, he expressed concern that the additional early public consultation in July did not appear yet to be underway. He also commented on the need for greater clarity over when members would be involved in the process.

Councillor Huppert expressed concern that the ‘Approval’ phase of the process was described as taking place in December and January, when the meeting of full Council on the budget would not take place until

February. He and Councillor Downes asked specifically for time to be allowed for scrutiny of Opposition groups' alternative budget proposals, suggesting that there should be a special meeting of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee on the Friday before the February Council meeting. However, he noted that if this meeting took place, it should not prevent members from tabling last-minute amendments at the Council meeting if necessary.

Councillor King welcomed the proposed changes, noting that they would permit earlier engagement of the Scrutiny Committees in the process. He and the Leader of the Council, Councillor Walters, welcomed in principle the suggestion of allowing time for scrutiny of Opposition groups' amendments, but suggested that the detailed arrangements for this be discussed further. It was agreed that flexibility should be retained to allow last-minute amendments to be tabled. The Leader of the Council emphasised that there was no intention to reduce members' involvement in the budget-setting process and confirmed that the November Budget Advisory Panels would still be taking place.

- 3) Invest to Transform Proposals
- 4) Policy for Offering Financial Support for Housing Adaptations following Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) Means Test

Councillor Jenkins welcomed the policy now agreed on offering top-up payments for housing adaptations to people who were required to make a financial contribution towards the cost of their adaptations following a DFG means test. However, he noted that some discretion should be used in applying the policy, to ensure that people who were less well off but proud about asking for help were not penalised.

His comment was accepted by the Lead Member for Community Learning and Development and Adult Social Care, Councillor Yeulett, who noted that this had been discussed at the Service Development Group.

- 5) Food Plan 2006/07
- 6) Cowley Road Park and Ride Relocation

Speaking as one of the local members, Councillor Jenkins expressed support for the relocation of the Park and Ride, but noted that the potential impact on local residents would need to be taken into account. In particular, measures would be needed to limit the use of the end of Butt Lane that led into Impington.

Councillor Williamson noted that Milton residents were also concerned about the possible impact of the relocated Park and Ride. An officer had recently attended a meeting of Milton Parish Council and promised that local residents would be fully consulted. Councillor Williamson emphasised the importance of ensuring that this was followed through.

Councillor Broadway drew attention to the proposed timetable for the relocation and commented that it should not be assumed that the Development Control Committee would grant planning permission.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor J Reynolds, noted that the timetable was based on the need to complete the scheme by 31st March 2008 in order to qualify for £3 million from the Growth Areas Fund.

- 7) School Interim Executive Boards: Delegation to Deputy Chief Executive – Children and Young People’s Services

Other decisions

- 8) People Strategy
- 9) A Rural Strategy for Cambridgeshire
- 10) Local Transport Plan 2001-06 Delivery Report
- 11) Network Service Plan 2006/07

Councillor Huppert noted that £20,000 had been allowed for consultation on Phase 5 of the Cambridge Core Traffic Scheme, but nothing for implementation. He asked officers to ensure that local residents were fully involved in the consultation, since a number were saying that closure of roads was not appropriate but that a number of smaller measures were needed.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor J Reynolds, noted that the current Network Service Plan covered the financial year 2006/07; if it were to be implemented, Phase 5 would need a longer leading time and so no funding for implementation was shown at present.

- 12) Refresh of Corporate Asset Management Plan
- 13) Long-Term Capital Strategy to 2016: Action Plan

Councillor Ballard highlighted the Government’s ‘Building Schools for the Future’ initiative, a national programme intended to improve the condition of the country’s secondary schools through 50% new build, 35% remodelling and 15% refurbishment over a 10-16 year period. Cambridgeshire’s first phase would be for Fenland, where £94 million had been allocated; subsequent phases would address Huntingdonshire and Cambridge City, and then South and East Cambridgeshire. He emphasised the significance of this initiative for the County, which was already facing a very ambitious capital programme.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People’s Services, Councillor Johnstone, noted that this initiative was outside the scope of the current Long-Term Capital Strategy. However, she agreed that it would be a very significant programme, to be delivered through new Local Education Partnerships. She commented on the need for

effective co-ordination with other capital initiatives, especially since the parts of the Cambridge sub-region where most growth would be taking place were covered in the later stages of the Government's programme.

14) Revised Objectives and Policies for the County Farms Estate

Councillor Reid commended the recent review of the County Farms Estate and congratulated officers on the sound financial and environmental management arrangements that the review had identified. He noted that he supported all of the recommendations put forward by the review team. However, he and Councillor Sales had proposed two additional recommendations that had not been accepted by Cabinet. These were intended to counter the current approach to land sales from the Estate, which would mean that the size of the Estate would reduce over time, by suggesting that when income from sales exceeded the target, consideration be given to purchasing new land, particularly to support the Estate's environmental and social objectives, with the aim of maintaining the Estate at around its present size.

Councillor Sales expressed disappointment that the debate at Cabinet had focussed mainly on the second of these recommendations, maintaining the Estate at its present size, rather than on the wider principle of purchasing new land to help the Estate to meet its objectives. He also commented that the review had identified issues relating to investment in maintenance, with Cambridgeshire investing less in the maintenance of its Estate than other comparable local authorities.

Councillor King commended the review and congratulated officers on responding effectively to the changing legislative and financial context. He noted that existing policy stated that new land would not normally be purchased, except where there was a marriage value in relation to existing holdings; however, this did not preclude making purchases, should it be considered appropriate to do so.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Powley, thanked all those who had contributed to the review. He noted that it had been very thorough, beginning with the fundamental issue of whether the Council should retain an Estate at all. He commented that there was no fixed size for the Estate. The current policy on land sales would mean that it would diminish modestly over time. However, Councillor Powley noted that the Council faced an ambitious infrastructure programme, for which a £316 million funding gap had been identified; capital receipts from prudent sales of County Farms land would go some way towards addressing this shortfall.

15) Budget Monitoring 2006/07

Councillor Downes expressed concern that a number of significant spending pressures were already being identified in the 2006/07 budget, particularly for the Learning Disability Partnership and for older people's social care, both of which were services for very vulnerable people.

Councillor Moss-Eccardt asked how the Audit and Accounts Committee could report that the Council's financial controls were adequate, when additional management measures were already needed for the Children and Young People's Services budget in the first quarter of the financial year.

Responding, the Lead Member for CYPS Resources and Planning, Councillor Pegram, noted that the Office of Children and Young People's Services was proposing prudent management actions to manage risk within the financial year.

96. STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2005/06

The Chairman of the Standards Committee, Councillor Orgee, moved receipt of the annual report of the Standards Committee for 2005/06. Council noted the report.

97. AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2005/06

The Chairman of the Audit and Accounts Committee, Councillor Stone, moved receipt of the annual report of the Audit and Accounts Committee for 2005/06. In presenting the report, he particularly highlighted the Committee's work in reviewing the Council's Statement of Internal Control and Strategic Risk Register. He noted that the new Committee had faced a steep learning curve and paid tribute to the achievements of Committee members and the supporting officers and external auditors.

Councillor King congratulated Committee members and officers on a successful first year of operation.

Council noted the report.

98. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

- Councillor Ballard had asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor J Reynolds, about the assistance provided by the Council to schools in preparing Travel Plans and addressing travel issues. The response set out the assistance available to schools and also gave details of how many schools currently had Travel Plans, and how information about Travel Plans could be shared between schools.
- Councillor Sales had asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services about steps being taken to address traffic problems in the Newmarket Road area of Cambridge, and how the impact of Riverside would be monitored. The response noted that officers were investigating ways of reducing delays on Newmarket Road and Coldhams Lane as part of the bus priority programme. A report would be taken to the Cambridge Environment and Traffic Management Area Joint Committee, possibly in January 2007. With regard to the temporary closure of Riverside, traffic counts would be undertaken to assess the impact of the closure, which the Area Joint Committee would consider in determining whether the temporary closure should be made permanent.

Copies of the questions and responses are available from Democratic Services.

99. ORAL QUESTIONS

Three oral questions were asked under Council Procedure Rule 9:

- Councillor Downes asked the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, Councillor Johnstone, about the Department of Health's current consultation on underage sales of tobacco, which was due to end on 2nd October 2006. He asked how, given that the reduction of teenage smoking was a Council priority, it was intended to prepare the Council's response to the consultation, and whether backbench members would have an opportunity to contribute. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services undertook to discuss the Council's response with an appropriate Service Development Group, recognising the tight timescale involved.
- [Councillor Sales, following on from his written question, asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor J Reynolds, for a more satisfactory response about how the impact of the closure of Riverside in Cambridge would be monitored. He also noted that the section of the written response relating to Newmarket Road lacked a timescale for action. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services agreed to provide a fuller response, possibly by arranging a joint meeting with officers.](#)
- Councillor Huppert noted that Portsmouth City Council was introducing extensive 20 mph speed limit zones. He asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services to review Portsmouth's approach and consider whether a similar approach could be taken in Cambridgeshire. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services noted that this issue would be reviewed as part of the wider review of parking by the Director of Highways and Access. He noted that 20 mph speed limits should be appropriate to a specific area and not introduced as a blanket measure.

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

100. MOTIONS

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

101. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

The following changes to Committee memberships were proposed by the Chairman, Councillor Normington, seconded by the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Orgee, and agreed unanimously:

- Councillor Shuter to be appointed as a substitute member of the Audit and Accounts Committee
- Councillor Williamson to be added to the pool of members from which the Service Appeals Committee is drawn

- Councillors Brown and Hyams to be appointed as members of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee, replacing Councillor Dutton and filling the vacancy
- Councillors Kenney and K Reynolds to be appointed as substitute members of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee, replacing Councillors Hardy and Harty
- Councillor Sims to be appointed as a member of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee, replacing Councillor Farrer
- Councillors Curtis, Dutton and Hensley to be appointed as substitute members of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee, replacing Councillors Bradney, Melton and Shuter
- Councillors Butcher, Dutton and Hensley to be appointed as members of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee, replacing Councillors Hyams and Sims and filling the vacancy
- Councillors Ogden, Sims, Smith and West to be appointed as substitute members of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee, replacing Councillors Dutton, Eddy, Turner and King
- Councillor McCraith to be appointed as a member of the Development Control Committee, replacing Councillor Eddy
- Councillor Hyams to be appointed as a substitute member of the Development Control Committee, replacing Councillor McCraith
- Councillor Hughes to be appointed as a substitute member of the Cambridge Environment and Traffic Management Area Joint Committee.

Chairman: