

## **COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES**

**Date:** Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2004

**Time:** 10.30 a.m. – 4.15 p.m.

**Place:** Shire Hall, Cambridge

**Present:** Councillor: R Driver (Chairman)

Councillors: P D Bailey, C M Ballard, I C Bates, T J Bear, B S Bhalla, A J Bowen, S V Brinton, J Broadway, C Carter, R L Clarke, J E Coston, P J Downes, J A P Eddy, M Farrar, H J Fitch, S A Giles, J L Gluza, P D Gooden, A Hansard, B Hardy, G F Harper, V A Hearne-Casapieri, G J Heathcock, W G M Hensley, J L Huppert, S F Johnstone, J D Jones, A C Kent, I C Kidman, S J Kime, S J E King, M L Leeke, V H Lucas, A R Mair, R B Martlew, A K Melton, A S Milton, S B Normington, M K Ogden, L J Oliver, A G Orgee, D R Pegram, J A Powley, P A E Read, A A Reid, J E Reynolds, C E Shaw, P W Silby, R C Speechley, A B Stenner, P L Stroude, J M Tuck, J K Walters, R Wilkinson, L J Wilson and F H Yeulett

**Apologies:** Councillor L W McGuire

### **180. MINUTES: 17<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2003**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **181. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### Death of Former Councillor

The Chairman announced with sadness the death of Neil Payne, a member of the former Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely County Council, who had represented the Wisbech Isle West division from 1972 to 1974. Members observed a minute's silence in his memory.

#### Assistant Director in Social Services, and Head of Human Resources

Members noted that Graham Wrycroft, Assistant Director in Social Services, would shortly be leaving the Council. The Chairman and Cabinet Member for Social Services paid tribute to his achievements during his time with the Council. The Chairman reported that Jon Sparkes, Head of Human Resources, would also be leaving shortly and thanked him for his hard work during his time with the Council. Members wished both officers well for the future.

#### Hereward Hall

The Chairman reported that he had recently opened Hereward Hall, the Council's new offices in March. He thanked all those staff who had been involved in the building project for their efforts.

## Congratulations

The Chairman led members in offering congratulations on the following achievements:

- The accreditation of ten libraries and learning centres to the Matrix Standard, a national quality standard for information, advice and guidance for learning and work
- The singling out of six Cambridgeshire primary schools in the annual report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools for being particularly successful or making significant improvement
- The recommendation of Camlearn, the Council's project for electronic learning, as a showcase for the Community Grids for Learning project
- The securing of additional Government funds for the development of the Trading Standards Ask Cedric project
- The securing of over £20 million additional funding from Government for local authorities in the Cambridge Sub-Region to help deliver infrastructure in support of the Structure Plan.

## **182. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors M Farrar, J D Jones, A R Mair and S J E King declared personal interests under paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct in item 8 under Minute 183a as members of the Shire Hall Club Management Committee.

Councillor G J Heathcock declared personal interests in item 2 under Minute 183b (Guided Bus – Proposals for Transport and Works Act Submission) as a member of RailFuture and CAST-IRON, and in item 3 under Minute 183b (Integration of Older People's Services – Feedback from Consultation and Next Steps) as a Trustee of Age Concern Cambridgeshire and a Trustee of the Cambridge Hot Meals Service.

## **183. REPORTS OF THE CABINET**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, moved receipt of the reports of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 6<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> January 2004.

### **a) Report of the meeting of Cabinet held on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2004**

#### Key decisions for information

- 1) Waste Management Private Finance Initiative
- 2) Transport Infrastructure
- 3) Market Town Transport Strategies – Huntingdon and Godmanchester; Wisbech

#### Other decisions

- 4) Best Value Review of Highways Maintenance and Network Management

Councillor J A P Eddy asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, what was being done to minimise

the theft of road signs, which was not only costly to the Council but also the cause of potential serious danger to road users. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport reported that the Council was working with the police to address this issue. Stolen signs were replaced with steel versions, which were heavier and harder to carry away.

Councillor J E Coston expressed concern at the poor condition of roads in many of the County's villages and reported that she would be giving the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport a list of those causing particular concern in her ward. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport explained that highway maintenance had until recently been focussed on improving the condition of principal roads, with considerable success. Attention was now being turned to non-principal roads.

5) Persistent Complainants Policy

Councillor S V Brinton and the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, welcomed the introduction of a Council policy on managing persistent complainants. Both emphasised that the Council would continue to investigate genuine complaints fully. This policy would help members and officers to manage those few situations in which further work on an individual's complaint would not be fruitful.

6) Annual Adoption and Permanence Report April 2002 - March 2003

7) Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel on Foster Care: Final Report

The members of the Panel, Councillors C M Ballard, S V Brinton and P L Stroude, thanked the Panel's co-optees, a former foster carer and a young person leaving foster care, for their contribution to the review. The members drew attention to the Panel's findings and recommendations. They welcomed the proposal in the 2004/05 budget to increase payments to foster carers of children of all ages to the rates recommended by the Fostering Network. However, they noted that a reduction in the number of in-house carers was leading to increasing dependence on independent fostering agency placements, which were much more expensive and would account for 25% of the Social Services overspend in 2003/04. Panel members therefore emphasised the need also to invest in advertising activities to recruit new carers and in support for existing carers. They also commented on the importance of applying Council policies on support for fostered children consistently throughout the County.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, welcomed the Panel's report and emphasised his commitment to recruiting and retaining in-house foster carers.

8) Shire Hall Club

Councillor M Farrar, a member of the Shire Hall Club Management Committee, explained some of the circumstances leading to the Cabinet's decision to authorise the Director of Resources to take debt recovery action leading to the winding up of the Club. He noted that the

Policy Scrutiny and Audit Committee (PSAC) had called in the decision and expressed concern that, by the time of the PSAC meeting, the Club Management Committee had put forward an alternative, five-year recovery plan, which had not been considered. He also noted that the County Council held the Club's premises on a long lease at a peppercorn rent and suggested that, if this lease were renegotiated, it could be an asset more valuable than the debt currently owed.

Councillor P J Downes, the Chairman of PSAC, noted that the Committee would be reporting its comments to the meeting of Cabinet on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2004. These included emphasis on the importance of continuing to provide a recreational facility for officers and members, but did not include a request for Cabinet to reconsider its decision.

Councillor S J E King, Chairman of the Club Management Committee, expressed sadness at the decision which would lead to the Club being wound up and recognised the importance of continuing to provide a facility. Councillor J D Jones, another member of the Management Committee, reported that she would be sending her comments to the Cabinet in writing.

Responding to Councillor Farrar, the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor J K Walters, explained that the lease for the Club's premises would have had to be renegotiated irrespective of the Club's position, because the Management Committee's constitution had changed. He emphasised that the Cabinet decision to wind up the Club had not been taken lightly and that the provision of a recreational facility would continue.

#### Other matters

- 9) Bus Service Changes in the Shepreth and Meldreth Areas and Public Transport Service Pressures

Councillor A S Milton expressed serious concern at the withdrawal of commercial bus services from the Shepreth and Meldreth areas and the Council's inability to subsidise replacement services. For many people, trains from these villages were not a practical alternative, as they were difficult to access and offered a less flexible and less frequent service.

- 10) Comprehensive Performance Assessment: Refreshed Score for 2003
- 11) Performance on Local Public Service Agreement (PSA) and Key Performance Indicators for the Second Quarter of 2003/04

Councillors I C Kidman and C M Ballard asked the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, about Social Services targets that were unlikely to be met, particularly those relating to older people's services. The Cabinet Member for Social Services stated that many targets for adults' services would be met, but the ambitious targets for children's services, particularly those linked to educational attainment, were unlikely to be achieved. These would be reviewed jointly with Education. He asked Councillor Ballard to provide him with a list of the targets to which he had referred, to which he would respond in detail.

Councillor P J Downes expressed concern at the suggestion that the Council had signed up to unrealistic targets for schools performance, noting that targets that were not achievable could be demotivating. The Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage, Councillor R Wilkinson, noted that new PSA targets would be negotiated to ensure that they were challenging but achievable.

Councillor J L Huppert expressed disappointment that, of a possible £9 million PSA Reward Grant, the Council was likely to receive only £2.2-3.5 million. He and Councillor S V Brinton asked whether the Council was certain to receive at least £2.2 million. The Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor J K Walters, emphasised that PSA targets were not ordinary targets, but were intended to be stretching. Their achievement was by no means certain and his best estimate of the reward grant was around £2 million. He undertook to send a written response to the members' question.

## **b) Report of the meeting of Cabinet held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2004**

### Key decisions for determination

#### 1) County Council Budget 2004/05

The Chairman reported that the Council was still awaiting the decision of the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on whether to issue an Order reconfirming his Direction on a minimum schools budget for Cambridgeshire. The Chairman therefore deferred consideration of the County Council Budget 2004/05 and the related reports from the Scrutiny Committees to 17<sup>th</sup> February 2004, the likely date of a reconvened Council meeting.

#### 2) Guided Bus – Proposals for Transport and Works Act Submission

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, moved the following recommendation, which was seconded by the Lead Member for Strategic Planning, Councillor J E Reynolds:

That the Council:

- i) Approves a Transport and Works Act (TWA) application for the guided bus scheme, the proposals for which were outlined in the officers' report to Cabinet, to be submitted to Government on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2004, and delegates to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport the authority to finalise the detailed TWA application in consultation with the Director of Environment and Transport;
- ii) Agrees to delegate to the Huntingdonshire, South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Environment and Transport Area Joint Committees the responsibility for approving the detail of the on-road sections in accordance with the broad specification in the officers' report.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport and other members thanked the Council's officers and consultants for their hard work in preparing the proposals.

A number of members spoke in support of the recommendation:

- Noting that the scheme would provide high quality, frequent public transport between Cambridge and Huntingdon, reducing car journeys and thereby reducing noise and air pollution, congestion and accidents on the A14 and in Cambridge
- Emphasising the importance of welcoming Government investment in transport infrastructure in Cambridgeshire, given the context of the existing deficit and pressures of future growth
- Emphasising that light or heavy rail schemes were not viable alternatives, as they did not have the support of the Government or the Strategic Rail Authority
- Welcoming the proposal that the on-street sections of the route be developed through the Environment and Transport Area Joint Committees, making use of their members' local knowledge
- Noting that a number of measures were proposed to aid on-street running in Cambridge, including new bus lanes and bus priority measures, local authority parking enforcement and on-street ticketing and smartcards to reduce bus dwell times.

A number of members spoke against the proposals:

- Noting the recent statement in the House of Lords which suggested that the £65 million from Government would comprise a £32.5 million grant and authorised borrowing of £32.5 million. Concern was expressed that, whilst the present Government was offering an assurance that all of the Council's borrowing costs would be met, there appeared to be no guarantee that this assurance would be recognised by future Governments
- Expressing concern that a disproportionate element of developers' Section 106 contributions might be used to fund the scheme, reducing investment in other essential infrastructure
- Expressing concern at the environmental impact
- Expressing concern that the envisaged journey time from Huntingdon to Cambridge by guided bus was only four minutes less than that for a journey by ordinary bus and would not be sufficient for people to change their mode of transport
- Noting that, whilst the Council's public consultation on the scheme had shown good levels of support for guided bus, it had not offered respondents the opportunity to comment on light or heavy rail alternatives. CAST-IRON's membership of 700 showed that there was strong support for rail options, which had not received the same funding as guided bus to be developed
- Expressing concern at the layout and cost of the on-road routes into Cambridge, which were few and narrow, and the lack of alternative routes for buses in the event of these being obstructed
- Emphasising that it would be essential to pursue the second stage of the scheme, which would route guided buses along the railway line through Chesterton to Cambridge station

- Expressing concern that the construction of a guideway, instead of a flat track, would make it more difficult to convert the route to rail use should this prove desirable in future
- Expressing concern that the use of the Cambridge to St Ives railway line for guided bus could make it more difficult to construct an east-west rail link, when this proposal was finding increasing support
- Emphasising the need to take a wider perspective of transport needs, particularly in the context of the recent Government report on development in the London to Stansted corridor, which envisaged this extending as far as Peterborough, and proposals for future housing developments closer to Cambridge than the new settlement at Northstowe.

Some local members raised issues specific to their wards:

- Councillor I C Bates, the member for Houghton and Wyton, expressed concern that the scheme would lead to a reduction in bus services to Fenstanton
- Councillor S V Brinton, the member for Castle, reported residents' continuing concerns at the practical difficulties of routeing buses along Histon Road
- Councillor J E Coston reported that she had received representations from residents in Waterbeach expressing concern at the impact of the scheme on roads and cycleways leading into Cambridge
- Councillor P D Gooden reported that whilst the Parish Councils of Histon and Impington had reservations about the scheme, he had not received many representations from residents, and recognised that doing nothing was not an option. If the scheme proceeded, he would be committed to minimising the detrimental impact of development
- Councillor J L Huppert, the member for East Chesterton, reported concerns about the widening of Milton Road and the difficulties that buses would have in passing around Mitchams Corner. He also expressed concern at the impact of possible delay to the construction of Chesterton station
- Councillor A C Kent, the member for Trumpington, welcomed the proposal to extend the route south of Cambridge to Addenbrooke's and the Trumpington Park and Ride, particularly in the context of planned development in this area. However, she asked that consideration be given to running guided buses along the planned major new road, rather than constructing a separate route, to minimise the environmental impact.
- Councillor P W Silby, the member for West Huntingdonshire, suggested that the scheme would be more accessible to residents of her ward if the route were extended to a Park and Ride site located to the west of the A1
- Councillor R Wilkinson, the member for Huntingdon North, emphasised the need for the on-street running sections in Huntingdon to be considered in the wider context of the development of transport infrastructure in the town.

Responding to the points made,

- The Lead Member for Environment, Councillor L J Oliver, reported that considerable work on the environmental impact of the scheme

- and proposed mitigation measures had already been done. The environmental benefits in reducing car journeys would be significant
- The Lead Member for Strategic Planning, Councillor J Reynolds, drew attention to the infrastructure deficit already identified and noted that needs would intensify with future development. It was therefore essential to work constructively with Government to continue to attract investment into the region
  - The Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor J K Walters, noted that the Government's intention was to fund all major schemes on the basis proposed for guided bus, namely 50% grant and 50% authorised borrowing. The Council was therefore likely also to have to accept this for other major schemes it was promoting. However, the Parliamentary answer on the guided bus scheme had specifically stated that the proportion of grant to authorised borrowing for this scheme would not be settled until final approval was given. The Leader also emphasised that any approved borrowing would be revenue neutral, as the Government would pay both the capital repayment instalments and the interest charges through the Council's Formula Spending Share (FSS)
  - The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, emphasised that rail alternatives were neither financially viable nor desirable, as they would not offer the same access to Cambridge city centre. She highlighted the Government's 'agreed contribution' of £65 million and urged members to vote for the recommendation to enable the guided bus scheme to progress.

On being put to the vote, the recommendation was approved.

[Voting pattern: Conservative and most Labour members in favour, most Liberal Democrat members against, four abstentions. A recorded vote was requested, the details of which are attached at Appendix A.]

### 3) Integration of Older People's Services – Feedback from Consultation and Next Steps

The Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, moved the following recommendation, which was seconded by the Lead Member for Vulnerable Adults, Councillor D R Pegram:

That the Council:

- i) Agrees to proceed with the integration of older people's services from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004, subject to completion of negotiations on the detailed Section 31 agreement;
- ii) Delegates to the Cabinet Member for Social Services the authority to approve and sign the proposed Section 31 agreement in consultation with the Director of Social Services;
- iii) Approves the proposed transfer of staff from the Council to Primary Care Trusts and authorises the Head of Human Resources to proceed with the necessary Transfer of Undertaking Protection of Employment (TUPE) transfer process.



All members who spoke indicated that they supported the principle of integration. However, a number of concerns were raised, including:

- Concerns at the lack of involvement by backbench members in the democratic arrangements for developing the proposals, including the Children and Adults Member Working Party – The involvement of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee was welcomed, but felt to be too late in the process. The Cabinet Member for Social Services was particularly asked to take into account the comments that the Scrutiny Committee would be making at its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2004
- The very tight timescale for integration from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004, especially as negotiations on the Section 31 agreement were not yet complete – It was suggested that it might be appropriate to defer integration to enable further preparatory work to be carried out
- The challenge of managing and overcoming cultural differences between Social Services and the PCTs
- The challenge of drawing together health services, which were provided free of charge, and social care, for which charges were made
- The need for a robust financial management framework, particularly to involve the Council in the in-year management of pooled budgets and to address any overspends that might occur
- The need for governance arrangements to reflect members' continuing statutory responsibility for transferred services. The proposal to include four County Councillors on the Partnership Board was welcomed
- The suggestion that the unions did not fully support staff transfer, as reported to the Children and Adults Member Working Party and Cabinet, but would welcome further consideration of secondment options. The Working Party was asked to consider this further
- The fact that formal staff consultation on TUPE would not begin until after this meeting, with its decisions likely to curtail the options available
- The tight timescale for sorting out pension arrangements for transferring staff who wished to remain in the Local Government Pension Scheme
- The need for early and ongoing reviews of the partnership arrangements
- The need for effective management arrangements for services that were not transferred, particularly for older people with physical disabilities.

Responding to the comments, the Lead Member for Vulnerable Adults, Councillor D R Pegram, stated that the four PCTs would be admitted to the Local Government Pension Scheme with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004, enabling transferring staff to remain in the Scheme if they wished. He emphasised that accountability under the new arrangements would be ensured through the terms of the Section 31 agreement.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, emphasised the importance of the integration to improving older people's services. He accepted that there were a number of challenges to be addressed, but noted that integration on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004 would be a first

step and that work would continue over the coming months.

On being put to the vote, the recommendation was approved.

[Voting pattern: unanimous.]

#### Key decisions for information

##### 4) Local Authority Parking Enforcement in Cambridge

Councillor J L Huppert welcomed the application to Government to introduce local authority parking enforcement in Cambridge. He sought and received confirmation from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, that the contractor would be paid on the basis of staff employed and not fines collected.

##### 5) Review of Formula for Funding Schools in Cambridgeshire

Councillor A C Kent noted that the shortage of transitional funding for 2004/05, which would mean deferring the introduction of Activity Led Resourcing until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005, was due not only to levels of Government funding for Cambridgeshire but also to local decisions about the amount of income to be raised.

Councillor P J Downes emphasised that this review was long overdue, but expressed concern that transitional funding might also not be available in 2005/06.

#### Other matters

##### 6) Social Services Budgetary Control Inquiry

Councillor J L Huppert welcomed the report of the Lead Member for Social Services, Councillor D R Pegram. However, he expressed concern that it did not identify the role of members, particularly the Cabinet Member for Social Services, in maintaining financial control. The role of Internal Audit and its investigations and that of the Policy Scrutiny and Audit Committee (PSAC) were also not mentioned. He and Councillor S V Brinton asked Councillor J A Powley to re-consider his position as Cabinet Member for Social Services in light of the inquiry's findings.

The Liberal Democrat Spokesman for Social Services, Councillor R B Martlew, reported that he had been willing to meet with Councillor Pegram to contribute to the inquiry but that, due to misunderstandings, this had not occurred. He highlighted a number of questions that he felt the inquiry had failed to ask, including whether demographic, inflationary and unavoidable statutory pressures had been properly understood; why financial trends had not been adequately taken into account; and whether software difficulties genuinely explained many of the problems.

The Chairman of PSAC, Councillor P J Downes, reported that the Committee had considered Councillor Pegram's report the previous week. Whilst the Committee had accepted the difficulties of predicting

demographic growth, it had been very concerned by a number of the issues raised and would be inviting the Cabinet Member for Social Services to discuss these at a future meeting.

Councillor C M Ballard welcomed the clarity of the report and its courage in identifying shortcomings. However, he challenged the suggestion that the budgetary pressures were largely due to demographic growth and emphasised the importance of shifting the strategic focus of spending from reactive to preventative services to help prevent overspending in future.

Councillor S J E King emphasised the importance of moving forward and of ensuring that progress against the action plan resulting from the inquiry was rigorously monitored by Cabinet and PSAC.

Responding to the speakers, the Lead Member for Vulnerable Adults, Councillor D R Pegram, stated that he was confident that, if his recommendations were implemented to schedule, unexpected overspends would not occur in future. The Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, emphasised his commitment to implementing the recommendations and stated that he would be pleased to discuss them with PSAC.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, congratulated Councillor Pegram on his report and endorsed his recommendations for achieving more effective financial management. However, he suggested that neither the agreed budget for 2003/04 nor the alternative proposed by the Liberal Democrat Group would have been sufficient to meet the very severe pressures arising during the year.

- 7) Annual Audit Management Letter 2002/03
- 8) Delegations by Cabinet to Individual Cabinet Members and Officers

#### **184. WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

Members noted that eight written questions had been submitted under Rule 9 of the Council Procedure Rules:

- Councillor J E Coston had asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone and the Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage, Councillor R Wilkinson, about the actions being taken by the Council to ensure compliance with the Ragwort Control Act 2003. The response set out the Council's policies for controlling ragwort on highway verges, school premises and County Farms.
- Councillor M L Leeke had asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport when the Cutter Ferry bridge in Cambridge was likely to be re-opened for pedestrians and cyclists. The response explained that the severity of the structural defect to the existing bridge made replacement unavoidable. The time needed for design, procurement and manufacture meant that work was not expected to begin on site for at least six months.

- Councillor G J Heathcock had asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport when the Council's street lighting policy had last been reviewed and whether it should be updated. The response stated that the policy had last been updated in September 2003 and, with this most recent revision, was considered to provide an appropriate standard of lighting for housing estate roads.
- Councillor J L Huppert had asked the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor J K Walters, about staffing numbers in the Resources Directorate and Chief Executive's Department for 2002/03, 2003/04 and projected for 2004/05. The response set out these figures by category in the Budget Book, with a commentary to explain significant variations.
- Councillor J L Huppert had asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport to outline the current position on the proposed station at Chesterton in Cambridge. The response explained that funding for and the precise location of the station were closely linked to the master plan currently being developed for the Chesterton Sidings site. However, if funding were forthcoming, it was envisaged that the station could be delivered by 2008.
- Councillor J L Huppert had asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport about provision in the draft revenue budget for 2004/05 for bridge maintenance works. The response stated the sum budgeted, £189,000, and the implications of this for maintenance of the bridge stock.
- Councillor J L Huppert had asked the Cabinet Member for Resources about his proposals for producing a Council response to the Local Government Association's consultation on the Balance of Funding proposals. The response stated that, given the tight timescale, individual political groups would be asked to send their comments, but a Council response would not be prepared.
- Councillor J L Huppert had asked Councillor S B Normington, the Chairman of the Standards Committee, about the recent ruling by the Standards Board for England and Wales that members of the Freemasons should declare their membership in the register of members' interests. The response stated that this ruling and the consequent requirement for affected members to update their declarations of interests would be brought to all members' attention.

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

## **185. ORAL QUESTIONS**

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

- Councillor G J Heathcock asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, for information on the changes to bus services in Cambridge expected to be introduced from May 2004. She agreed to respond in writing.
- Councillor J L Huppert asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport if she was aware of the petition in circulation seeking the prompt

reopening of Cutter Ferry Bridge in Cambridge. She replied that she was aware of the petition, but emphasised the need both to replace the bridge appropriately and to balance this request with others from other communities.

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

## 186. MOTIONS

One motion had been submitted under Rule 10 of the Council Procedure Rules.

### Motion from Councillor J A P Eddy

Councillor J A P Eddy proposed the following, which was seconded by Councillor A R Mair:

‘This Council regrets both the failure of HM Government to fully fund Cambridgeshire in accordance with the Formula Spending Share (FSS), and the Secretary of State for Education’s peremptory instruction to Cambridgeshire to pass on to schools a level of funding it has not received. Therefore, this Council calls on Government Ministers to deal constructively and fairly with Cambridgeshire’s appeal.’

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor J L Huppert and seconded by Councillor S V Brinton:

To add:

‘Additionally, in view of the unfairness of Council Tax, particularly for those on low fixed incomes, this Council calls on the Government to replace Council Tax with a tax based on ability to pay, such as Local Income Tax’.

The following issues were raised during the debate on the motion and the amendment:

- The importance of allowing decision-making to take place locally, without undue intervention from central Government
- Whether it was timely to submit the motion to Government now, given the negotiations currently taking place on the Direction
- The challenge of identifying a method of local taxation that was based on income and ability to pay, took into account regional variations in prosperity and was cheap to collect
- The national debate currently taking place on the future of local government funding and the opportunities to contribute to this.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was defeated.

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

Members then voted on the substantive motion, which was carried.

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

#### **187. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES**

The following membership changes were proposed by the Chairman of Council, Councillor R Driver, seconded by the Vice-Chairman, Councillor S B Normington, and agreed:

- Councillor T J Bear to replace Councillor S V Brinton on the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee and Social Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee
- Councillor S V Brinton to replace Councillor T J Bear as a substitute members on the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee and Social Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee
- Councillor A B Stenner to replace Councillor J A P Eddy on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Fire Authority.

[Voting pattern: unanimous]

#### **188. ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING**

The Chairman then adjourned the meeting. He advised that it would be reconvened on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2004 at 10.30 a.m., when it would consider the deferred item on the Council Budget for 2004/05, including the reports from the Council's Scrutiny Committees.

Chairman: