

## **COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES**

**Date:** Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2004

**Time:** 10.30 a.m. – 3.50 p.m.

**Place:** Shire Hall, Cambridge

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

Councillors: P D Bailey, C M Ballard, C C Barker, R S G Barnwell, 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, 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, I C Kidman, S J E King, M L Leeke, V H Lucas, A R Mair, R B Martlew, L W McGuire, 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, 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:** Councillors I C Bates, A C Kent and C E Shaw

### **234. MINUTES: 27<sup>th</sup> JULY 2004**

The minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2004 were approved as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of the word 'not' after the word 'would' in the final sentence of Minute 226 (5) on the report of the Cabinet meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2004 relating to the Cambridge information signing system. The minutes were signed by the Chairman.

### **235. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **Death of Former Councillors**

The Chairman announced with sadness the deaths of Robert James, who had represented Comberton for the Conservative Party from 1964 to 1993 and had been Chairman and Leader of the Council, and Roy Topley, who had represented Peterborough North for the Labour Party from 1981 to 1993. Members observed a minute's silence in their memory.

#### **Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group**

The Chairman advised that Councillor J L Huppert had replaced Councillor S V Brinton as Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group. The Chairman and Councillors J L Huppert, J K Walters and I C Kidman all paid tribute to Councillor Brinton and thanked her for her contribution to the work of the Council as Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group.

## Awards and achievements

The Chairman led members in congratulating:

- Head teachers, staff and governors of the County's primary schools for the excellent results achieved in the tests taken by 11-year-olds in the summer.
- The Environment and Transport Directorate for their receipt of an award from the British Horse Society as the local authority most active in opening up equestrian routes.
- Dr Philip Saunders, the Council's Deputy County Archivist, and the County Records Office for their contributions to the recently published Dictionary of National Biography
- Paul Faupel, the Council's Health and Safety Advisor, on his appointment as the first President of the International Network of Safety and Health Practitioner Organisations.

## **236. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors C Carter, J E Coston, H J Fitch, S A Giles, G J Heathcock, J D Jones, L W McGuire, S B Normington, L J Oliver, D R Pegram, R C Speechley, A B Stenner and P L Stroude declared personal interests under Paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct as members of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority in relation to the debate on fire sprinklers recorded under Minute 241. Councillor L W McGuire also advised that he was a member of the Local Government Association's Fire Sprinklers Network. Councillor S V Brinton declared a personal interest under Paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct in relation to the same item as a Governor of Mayfield Primary School.

Councillor J L Huppert declared a personal interest under Paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct in relation to item 4 on the Cabinet report of 7<sup>th</sup> September 2004 under Minute 237, the Cambridge historic centre pedestrian zone cycling restriction, as a Fellow of Trinity College, a member of Trinity College and Cambridge University Student Unions and a member of the Cambridge Cycling Campaign. Councillor A J Bowen declared a personal interest under Paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct in relation to the same item as a member of the Cambridge Cycling Campaign.

## **237. REPORTS OF THE CABINET – 7<sup>th</sup> AND 28<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2004**

- a) The Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, moved receipt of the report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 7<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> September 2004.

### Key decision for determination

- 1) Public Library Standards Report

The Lead Member for Lifelong Learning, Councillor V H Lucas, moved the following, which was seconded by the Lead Member for Education Resources, Councillor F H Yeulett:

That Council adopts the Public Library Standards Report for subsequent publication in libraries and on the website, as the Council's statement of progress against the national library standards, in the context of the library service's position within the authority.

Councillor C M Ballard expressed concern about a number of areas of ongoing poor performance, including investment in the book stock, particularly adult fiction; opening hours; and the proportion of buildings that were in poor condition or unfit for use. He also expressed concern that the investment resulting from the Council's review of its revenue investment strategy would now be spread across four years instead of three, making improvements even harder to realise, and this at a time when library standards nationally were rising.

Councillor J Broadway echoed Councillor Ballard's concerns about performance and investment, noting that there were a number of key standards that the Council was not meeting or against which it was performing poorly. These included the standards for opening hours, the percentage of libraries open for 45 hours a week (for which the Council's performance was only 25% against a target of 100%) and library visitor levels.

Councillor H J Fitch commented that there were some positive developments within the service, including the development of the new library at Burwell and the work being done to establish and develop Local Access Points (LAPs) in communities in which the conventional libraries had been closed. He asked whether visits to LAPs were included in the Council's figures for library visits that it returned to the DCMS. Councillor J A P Eddy suggested that the library service should study the LAPs to see what lessons could be learned for the delivery of library services, particularly in rural areas. Councillor A J Bowen noted that the Education, Libraries and Heritage Scrutiny Committee had recommended its successor Committee under the new Council to undertake a review of LAPs, particularly the involvement of local communities.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, reminded members of the Council's difficult financial position, with the ceiling on the Council's grant holding back £11 million in the current financial year and the threat of capping making it necessary to keep Council Tax increases in low single figures. He therefore argued that the proposals for libraries were as good as the Council's financial position would allow. He noted that figures for library visits were falling nationally and that additionally, contact with the service over the telephone and internet was not included in visitor figures.

The Lead Member for Lifelong Learning, Councillor V H Lucas, reminded members that the Council had received an 'excellent' rating from the DCMS the previous year for its Public Library Position Statement, meaning that it was not required to produce a full report in the current year. The Council was currently meeting 18 of the 26 standards, missing a further four by 5% or less. He noted that the service was working closely with local members and local communities to develop existing LAPs and to learn lessons from them. Visitor figures for LAPs could not be included in the Council's returns to the DCMS, but book loans did count. In future years, performance reports would be produced for LAPs, making it possible to learn from them even more effectively.

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

[Voting pattern: Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups in favour;  
Labour Group against.]

### Key decisions for information

#### 2) Cambridgeshire Guided Busway – Delivery Strategy

Councillor A A Reid welcomed the proposed procurement process for the guided busway and its maintenance and operation. However, he expressed concern at the proposed £3 million of risk expenditure that was being made on the assumption that the scheme would proceed, when the outcome of the public inquiry was not yet known. He asked whether, if the scheme were not to proceed, the Government would reimburse the £2 million of Section 106 money so that it could be used on other projects. He also expressed concern that this expenditure might give the impression that the Council did not take public consultation and its outcomes sufficiently seriously.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, reported that she had received legal advice that, as the public inquiry into the scheme was currently in progress, she should not say anything that might jeopardise its outcome. She undertook to send Councillor Reid a written response to his question.

#### 3) East of England Regional Assembly Request for Advice on Regional Planning Guidance

### Other decisions

#### 4) Cambridge Historic Centre Pedestrian Zone – Cycling Restriction

Councillor J L Huppert, who had been Chairman of the Cambridge City Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee at the time that it had considered this issue, and was now its Vice-Chairman, reported that the Committee was keen to promote access to the city centre for non-car traffic and in particular to find ways of enabling cyclists to travel northbound through the city. One option to achieve this was to allow two-way cycling along Trinity Street, as it was largely a wide street with relatively light traffic. Consultation on this option had shown that it was supported and the Committee had therefore been disappointed at the Cabinet's decision not to proceed with the proposal. However, the Committee welcomed the Cabinet's willingness to consider alternative options.

Councillor A J Bowen, one of the local members, expressed the hope that an acceptable solution could be found, which would also reduce unauthorised cycling along Sidney Street. He emphasised that the key would be to enforce successfully whichever scheme was chosen.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport noted that the difficulties on Trinity Street reflected the wider challenges of effecting access to the historic city centre. She shared the speakers'

hope that a solution could be found which would allow safe access to pedestrians and cyclists and would not expose the Council to the risk of legal action.

- 5) Beacon Council Application
- 6) Primary Education Provision in Cambourne

The Chairman of the Education, Libraries and Heritage Scrutiny Committee, Councillor J L Gluza, reported that the Committee had called in the Cabinet's decision relating to the second primary school in Cambourne and in particular whether, on the basis of local consultation, it should be an ecumenical or an LEA community school. The Committee had considered the issue on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2004. Its comments would be reported to Cabinet on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2004 and included a number of recommendations to clarify the procedure for future similar consultations.

A number of members spoke in favour of making the second primary school in Cambourne an ecumenical school, feeling that this would increase parental choice of educational provision, whilst others supported the provision of an LEA school, feeling that this would be less divisive.

Other points raised during the debate included:

- The importance that should be attached to the local community's views in determining whether the school should be an ecumenical or LEA school
- The importance of clarifying the procedure for consultation on possible ecumenical schools and in particular the role of LEA officers
- The importance of the school's admissions policy, if it were to be an ecumenical school, in ensuring that it served its immediate community effectively
- The need to promote sustainable patterns of travel to school and the relevance of both location and admissions criteria to achieving these
- The location of two existing ecumenical schools in villages close to Cambourne
- The relative costs to the Council of an LEA and an ecumenical school
- The fact that the promoters of the ecumenical school had not yet definitely been able to secure funding
- The possibility of a third primary school in Cambourne being needed, which would enable the nature of provision to be revisited in due course
- The need for all newly built schools to incorporate low-cost disability equipment as a matter of course, to enable them to take all children with mainstream disabilities.

Responding to the speakers, the Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage, Councillor R Wilkinson, emphasised that it would be essential for the new primary school to open in Cambourne in September 2005. The proposal that it should be an ecumenical school had been put forward by the churches, who had run the consultation with the support of the LEA. Approximately a third of the existing schools in the County were ecumenical schools and there were typically good

relationships between ecumenical and LEA schools. Funding for a second LEA primary school at Cambourne was available in the Council's capital programme if needed. If the school were to be ecumenical, it would be funded by the DfES, releasing this funding for use elsewhere. However, the Cabinet Member emphasised that this would be a consequence of, and not a reason for, making the school ecumenical. He also emphasised that if the school were to be ecumenical, it would still receive LEA support, challenge and monitoring; the key difference would be its governance arrangements, which would involve specific members of the community.

7) Second Local Public Service Agreement

Councillor P D Bailey expressed concern that shortages in youth provision in Littleport and across the County were causing serious difficulties. The Council's under-investment in these services meant that it was unable to contribute effectively to partnership working and was a false economy, leading to greater costs on the longer term for policing and addressing vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

Responding, the Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, shared Councillor Bailey's concerns but noted that increasing the funding of the Youth Service would mean reductions to funding of other services.

Other matters

8) Budget Monitoring 2004/05

Councillor J L Huppert expressed concern at the overspends already being projected for 2004/05, although he noted that the position in Social Services was not yet as severe as it had been in 2003/04.

9) Delegations from Cabinet to Cabinet Members and Officers

10) Performance on the Council's Top 30 Key Performance Indicators for the First Quarter of 2004/05

Councillor S V Brinton emphasised the need for clarity in reports prepared for Council. She and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, noted that the target to reduce the numbers of people killed or seriously injured was a rolling target, covering a twelve-month period and updated at the end of each quarter. Performance at the end of October 2004 was likely to be worse than performance at the end of October 2003 had been, due largely to the worse weather between August and October 2004 as compared with the same quarter in the preceding year.

Councillor J Broadway noted that the report described progress against only seventeen indicators and asked about the others in the 'top 30'.

Councillor P J Downes drew attention to the need to improve performance in reducing the number of first-time young offenders and emphasised that this should be a high priority in the next budget round.

Responding to Councillor Broadway, the Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, explained that some indicators were reported only annually, meaning that information was not available at this stage. Responding to Councillor Downes, he noted that there had been a recent increase in the number of first-time young offenders, as the police had been asked to take a firmer approach than previously; time would now be needed for the situation to stabilise.

## **238. MOTIONS**

By leave of the Council, the Chairman agreed that the two motions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10 be brought forward in the meeting, to allow interested members to attend for the debate.

### Motion submitted by Councillor C M Ballard

The following motion was proposed by Councillor C M Ballard and seconded by Councillor J M Tuck:

'This Council notes with serious concern the Government's cash limiting of its contributions to District Councils' Disabled Facility Grants. District Councils, Primary Care Trusts and the County Council in Cambridgeshire all view the prospect of shortfalls in funding in this area with alarm. Housing improvements form an integral part of the circle of care, designed to help older people as well as disabled adults and children to stay in their homes, where they belong, rather than become a liability on scarce and expensive residential and hospital provision.

The Government's capping of its contributions is now at 60% up to a pre-determined and cash-limited sum. The pressure on District Council budgets as a result of this funding change is intense. Some District Councils within Cambridgeshire have provided significant additional resources for 2004/05 and still are unable to keep up with the demand for adaptations and home improvements. This inability to meet demand will impact on the quality of life of some of our most vulnerable residents and on the County Council's ability to develop its preventative agenda in conjunction with its District Council and health partners.

This Council is also concerned about the cap on individual Disabled Facility Grants at £25,000. This can create significant problems for disabled adults and older people on low income who are expected to meet significant loan liabilities. The problem is even more acute for the families of children with disabilities, whose requirements for adaptations can easily exceed £100,000. Families rarely have access to resources to cover the difference and, if local authorities' policies allow them to provide greater assistance, there will therefore be serious consequences for their authorities' budgets. If the funding cannot be found, a disabled child may need unnecessary residential care or, at the least, the quality of their life and that of their families will continue to be undermined.

In addition to these changes to Disabled Facility Grants, this Council is also very concerned about the Housing Corporation's decision to withdraw discrete funding for aids and adaptations from Registered Social Landlords from April 2004. This has significantly reduced

Registered Social Landlords' capacity to assist their tenants and has already had a significant impact in the County.

The Cabinet will be receiving a detailed report on these issues at its meeting on 26th October 2004. This Council agrees that, following consideration of this report, representations be made to the Ministerial Committee reviewing the Government's decisions, that these changes be reversed. Support for the representations should also be sought from Cambridgeshire's five District Councils and four Primary Care Trusts.'

Councillor T J Bear spoke in support of the motion, noting that the Government seemed to be unaware that cuts to preventative services could lead to significantly increased costs in other areas.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

[Voting pattern: unanimous.]

#### Motion submitted by Councillor J L Huppert

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

'This Council notes with regret the recent fire at Mayfield Primary School, the cost of replacement buildings, the loss of records and pupils' work, and the disturbance to pupils' education.

This Council further notes the advice from the Chief Fire Officer that sprinklers would contain such fires at source, and his call for sprinklers to be installed in schools.

This Council calls upon the Cabinet to install sprinklers in all newly built schools, including the rebuilt Mayfield School and the proposed school at Cambourne.

This Council further calls upon the Cabinet to review fire risk in existing schools, and to install sprinklers in those with particular fire risk.'

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor L W McGuire and seconded by Councillor J A P Eddy:

To replace the third and fourth paragraphs of Councillor Huppert's motion and to add a new fifth paragraph, so that the motion would read as follows:

'This Council notes with regret the recent fire at Mayfield Primary School, the cost of replacement buildings, the loss of records and pupils' work, and the disturbance to pupils' education.

This Council further notes the advice from the Chief Fire Officer that sprinklers would contain such fires at source, and his call for sprinklers to be installed in schools.

This Council calls upon the Cabinet, in continuing to give consideration to the installation of sprinklers in all new-build and rebuild schools, to take into account the latest information available relating to cost benefit, including consequential costs, technology and the advice available from such bodies as the Fire Service and the Local Government Association (LGA). The Council further calls upon the Cabinet to give this same consideration to the rebuilding of Mayfield School.

This Council also calls upon the Cabinet to introduce a programme of fire risk assessment for all LEA schools and to give consideration to how identified risks might be managed.

This Council further calls upon the Cabinet to work with the LGA and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority to lobby H.M. Government to fund the installation of sprinklers in all new school builds and rebuilds. In particular, the Government should be persuaded to include sprinklers in the design criteria for its 'Building Schools for the Future' programme.'

The following issues were discussed during the debate:

- The incidence of fires in schools, including those caused by arson, and the resultant costs, in terms of damage to property, disruption to pupils' education and costs to the Fire Service.
- The need to assess risks objectively, working with the Fire Service, and to balance risk with cost. Levels of risk varied, depending on, for example, whether pupils had special needs, whether buildings included sleeping accommodation, and the construction of buildings, particularly whether they were compartmentalised to contain fire and stop it from spreading
- The usefulness of fire sprinklers in preventing fire from spreading and in containing fire, smoke and water damage
- The cost of installing fire sprinklers in school buildings. It was noted that it was cheaper to fit them in new buildings than to fit them retrospectively
- Possible sources of funding for the installation of fire sprinklers
- The payback on the installation of sprinklers, including possible reductions to insurance premiums and excesses
- Previous and ongoing consideration of the Council's policy on fire sprinklers by the Resources Service Development Group.

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

[Voting pattern: Conservative Group in favour; Liberal Democrat and Labour Groups against.]

Members then voted on the substantive motion as amended and it was carried.

[Voting pattern: unanimous.]

## **239. REPORT OF THE CABINET – 12<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2004**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, moved receipt of the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2004.

### Key decision for determination

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, moved the following, which was seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor J E Reynolds:

That Council

- a) Approves the structure set out in the appendix to the Council report;
- b) Agrees that the membership of the Appointments Committee be changed to read 'Councillor J E Reynolds or his nominated substitute (who shall be a member of the Cabinet)';
- c) Delegates authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Head of Human Resources and the Chairman of the Appointments Committee, to appoint recruitment consultants to undertake a search and selection process to identify candidates for externally advertised Management College posts arising from the 'Reshaping for Excellence' programme;
- d) Authorises the Lead Member for Children's Services Development to approve on behalf of the Council the third multi-agency consultation paper, 'Improving the Well-Being of Children and Young People: The Way Forward', following discussion at the next meeting of the Children's Services Development Working Group;
- e) Requests the Internal Political Management Working Party to consider the impact of 'Reshaping for Excellence' on the Council's constitutional and governance arrangements, and to prepare recommendations for change in time for implementation with the new Council in 2005.

The Chairman of the Policy Scrutiny and Audit Committee, Councillor P J Downes, moved receipt of the report of the meeting of the Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2004. He drew attention to a number of issues considered by the Committee, including concern that improved customer service should be the driving force for change, and not cost savings; the most appropriate location for Development Control within the new structures; and the need to ensure that the integration of children's services did not focus excessively on children's social services to the detriment of the Council's responsibilities for education.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, introduced the proposals. He thanked the Policy Scrutiny and Audit Committee for its constructive debate. He confirmed that service improvements and not savings were the primary motivation for change and confirmed that all of the other issues raised by the Committee were being addressed.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor J L Huppert, reported that his Group recognised the need for change and supported the proposals, but wished to register a number of concerns. These included concerns about the timing of the change, which would mean the outgoing Council committing the new Council to the new arrangements; the cost of the changes; the pace of change; and the connections between senior management and Heads of

Service posts. The Council's political management arrangements would also need to be reviewed to ensure that they fitted well with the new officer structures.

Councillor C M Ballard reported that the Labour Group was broadly supportive of the proposals, whilst recognising that there was still much work to be done. He commended the work done by officers to consult both internally and with partners. He noted that his Group's main concerns related to the Office of Children's and Young People's Services and the way in which education and social services would be drawn together, although the proposal to have three thematic Directors and three area Directors was now accepted, given that this was felt by partners to be important. The Group also had some concerns that the Office of Environment and Community Services would draw together too many disparate services and wished to emphasise that the roles of the Directors of Adult Support Services and Community Learning and Development would be central.

Members debated the recommendations under a number of headings.

#### *Vision and objectives*

Councillor P J Downes emphasised the importance of achieving effective cultural change at middle management and junior levels, as these were the staff who had most contact with customers. He also emphasised the importance of focussing on the quality and quantity of services, as these were of far greater importance to residents than the Council's internal structures.

#### *Business case*

Councillor J L Huppert accepted that the business case had had to be prepared on the basis on a number of assumptions. However, he expressed concern that the case assumed that only three additional Head of Service posts would be required; if more were needed, this would have a significant impact on savings. The business case also excluded possible redundancy costs for the Directors of Social Services and Education, Libraries and Heritage. Councillor Huppert welcomed the fact that the business case made clear the likely impact of the reshaping on the Pension Fund and the probable resultant increase in the Council's employer contribution, which would reduce the overall savings.

Responding, the Leader of the Council noted that detailed work had not yet been done on Heads of Service posts and invited suggestions of alternative numbers. With regard to the Directors of Social Services and Education, Libraries and Heritage, he noted that Government was considering financial compensation to local authorities for any redundancies or early retirements at this level resulting from the requirement to create a new Director of Children's Services post. The Leader confirmed that the business case included worst-case calculations for the possible impact on the Pension Fund.

#### *Senior management structure*

Councillor I C Kidman expressed some concern about the proposed flat management structure for the Office of Children and Young People's Services; the lack of pivotal posts might make it difficult to develop clear leadership.

Councillors P A E Read and J A P Eddy expressed concern that Development Control should be located at arm's length from other Council departments, but that Highways Development Control should not be separate from the main team.

Councillor J L Huppert thanked the Leader for incorporating a number of the suggestions made by the Liberal Democrat Group, including the raising of the profile of Environment.

Responding, the Leader of the Council noted that the Chief Executive had led extensive consultation on the proposals and that they had been revised a number of times to reflect the suggestions received.

### *Implementation*

Councillor P J Downes commented that the Policy Scrutiny and Audit Committee had been concerned that the report to Cabinet had included a schedule of risks and risk owners, but no key to explain what the risk gradings meant. He asked whether Cabinet had properly considered the risks associated with the proposals.

Responding, the Leader of the Council and the Lead Member for Vulnerable Adults confirmed that the Cabinet had asked a number of questions on the risks involved and had been satisfied with the answers received; and that the risk gradings were based on a standard approach.

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

[Voting pattern: unanimous.]

## **240. WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

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

- Councillor J E Coston had asked the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor J K Walters, about the role of social enterprise within the Council's procurement strategy. The response explained that whilst social enterprises and other voluntary and community organisations were not specifically identified in the Council's procurement strategy, the importance of their contribution to the delivery of services across the County was recognised. It was confirmed that the procurement strategy had recently been updated to take into account relevant guidance, including the National Procurement Strategy for Local Authorities.
- Councillor G J Heathcock had asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, whether in view of the recent fire at Mayfield School in Cambridge he would review the Council's policy on the installation of fire sprinklers in public buildings. The response explained the Council's existing policy on fire sprinklers and noted that this would be subject to further review at the November meeting of the Resources SDG.
- Councillor I C Kidman had asked the Lead Member for Strategic Planning, Councillor J E Reynolds, about securing appropriate standards of

accessibility in domestic properties to be built at Northstowe. The response set out the Council's policy on access to its own buildings and Structure Plan and forthcoming Regional Spatial Strategy policies requiring new developments to take account of community requirements.

- Councillor I C Kidman had asked the Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage, Councillor R Wilkinson, about the advice being given to schools on the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. The response explained that schools had last been briefed in detail in 2002. These briefings would now be supplemented with materials relating specifically to Part 3 of the Act.

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

## **241. ORAL QUESTIONS**

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

- Councillor S V Brinton asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, about the Council's response to the petition presented at the July meeting concerning a sound barrier for the A14. The Leader of the Council commented that he thought this issue had been discussed by the Area Joint Committee. He agreed to ask Democratic Services to follow up the response to the petitioner.
- Councillor M L Leeke asked the Lead Member for Strategic Planning, Councillor J E Reynolds, when work on the replacement Cutter Ferry bridge in Cambridge would start and be completed. The Lead Member for Strategic Planning, Councillor J E Reynolds, noted that work was scheduled to start in November and to be completed early in the new year.
- Councillor J L Huppert asked the Chairman of the Council, Councillor R Driver, how he was contributing to Local Democracy Week. The Chairman noted that he had just returned from a visit to China to promote local democracy and would be giving a lecture to Chinese students.

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

## **242. QUESTIONS ON POLICE AND FIRE AUTHORITY ISSUES**

Members were invited to ask questions and comment on issues relating to the Cambridgeshire Police Authority and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority. It was noted that all County Council members had been designated by the Police Authority to answer questions on its behalf.

### Report of the Chairman of the Cambridgeshire Police Authority

- Councillor T J Bear asked about the level of service provided to the people and Parish Council of Linton, given that the village was paying approximately £220,000 to the Police Authority in the current year. Responding, Councillor J M Tuck suggested that this be raised at a local consultation group meeting. Councillor J Broadway noted that local crime figures were available on the internet.

- Councillor J L Huppert asked about the steps being taken to improve the Constabulary's detection rates. Responding, Councillors J M Tuck and J Broadway explained that Cambridgeshire's apparently poor performance was due in part to over-recording of crimes. Detection rates in key areas targeted by the Government such as burglary, vehicle crime and robbery were good.
- Councillor P A E Read commented on the need to address anti-social behaviour and petty crime amongst young people, to discourage them from progressing to more serious offences as they grew older. Responding, Councillors J M Tuck and J Broadway accepted this, but emphasised the need for the Constabulary to prioritise its activities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Councillor J M Tuck also drew attention to the work done by the local Crime and Disorder Partnerships.
- Councillor S J E King commented on the disparity between the crime figures recorded by the Constabulary and the findings of the British Crime Survey, which suggested that rates were much higher. He also emphasised that the Constabulary should accept its lead responsibility for tackling crime.
- Councillor R L Clarke expressed his concern about the way in which community officers funded by Huntingdonshire District Council were regarded within the Constabulary.

#### Report of the Chairman of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

It was noted that a revised report from the Chairman had been circulated, replacing the version sent out with the agenda. No questions were asked.

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

### **243. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The following changes to Committee memberships and appointments to outside bodies were proposed by the Chairman, Councillor R Driver, seconded by the Vice-Chairman, Councillor S B Normington, and agreed unanimously:

- Councillor R B Martlew to replace Councillor T J Bear as a member of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee and Social Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee
- Councillor J L Huppert to replace Councillor S V Brinton as a substitute member of the Education, Libraries and Heritage Scrutiny Committee and a member of the Scrutiny Management Committee
- Councillor J L Huppert to replace Councillor S V Brinton as one of the Council's representatives on the Local Government Association and the County Councils Network.

Chairman: