

COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 30th March 2004

Time: 10.30 a.m. – 3.15 p.m.

Place: Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present: Councillor: R Driver (Chairman)

Councillors: C M Ballard, I C Bates, T J Bear, A J Bowen, 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, W G M Hensley, J L Huppert, S F Johnstone, J D Jones, A C Kent, I C Kidman, S J Kime, S J E King, M L Leeke, V H Lucas, A R Mair, R B Martlew, L W McGuire, A K Melton, A S Milton, S B Normington, M K Ogden, L J Oliver, 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 P D Bailey, R S G Barnwell, B S Bhalla, S V Brinton, G J Heathcock and A G Orgee

192. MINUTES: 10th AND 17th FEBRUARY 2004

The minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 10th and 17th February 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

193. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Death of Former Councillor

The Chairman announced with sadness the death of Vivienne Alford, who had represented the Newnham division in Cambridge from 1985 to 1989. Members observed a minute's silence in her memory.

Appointments

The Chairman reported that Matthew Rowe, Head of Finance, and Mary Scott, Head of Policy and Review, would both shortly be leaving the Council. He led members in thanking them both for their contributions during their time with the Council and wishing them well for their future careers.

The Chairman welcomed to the Council the new Head of Human Resources, Martin Williams, who had started work the previous day.

Members noted that Sir David Trippier had been appointed as Chairman of the Cambridgeshire Infrastructure Partnership. John Onslow, Assistant Director (Planning), had been seconded to the Partnership as Acting Director for six months. His role would be covered by Matthew Lugg and Matthew Lugg's by Bob Menzies.

Integration of older people's services

The Chairman and the Cabinet Member for Social Services paid tribute to those Social Services staff who would be transferring to the Primary Care Trusts on 1st April 2004 as part of the integration of older people's services and wished them well for their future career.

Awards and achievements

The Chairman led members in congratulating Democratic and Legal Services, who had recently been awarded Investors in People status, and the Legal Section, which had received Lexcel accreditation.

Members noted that the Council had received £2.2 million from the Department of Transport to fund the repair of local roads damaged by drought in 2003.

194. 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 C M Ballard as the Deputy Chairman of the Friends of Kettle's Yard and one of the Council's representatives to the Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service (Minute 195, item 4) and as a relative of his was in receipt of occupational therapy services (Minute 195, item 12)
- Councillor A J Bowen as a Trustee of Youth Action Cambridgeshire (Minute 195, item 4)
- Councillor J Broadway as a Trustee of the Cambridge and County Folk Museum (Minute 195, item 4)
- Councillor J E Coston as a member of Milton Parish Council (Minute 195, item 4)
- Councillor M Farrar as the Chairman of Stapleford Parish Council (Minute 199)
- Councillor S F Johnstone as a non-executive director of Addenbrooke's NHS Trust (Minute 198)
- Councillor I C Kidman as a Trustee of Camread (Minute 195, item 4)
- Councillor S J E King as a Trustee of the Wisbech and Fenland Museum, a Trustee of the Cambridge Alcohol Advisory Service and a Trustee of the Fenland Citizens Advice Bureau (Minute 195, item 4)
- Councillor R Wilkinson as the Chairman of the Oxmoor Opportunities Board (Minute 195, item 3).

195. REPORT OF THE CABINET

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, moved receipt of the report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 11th February and 2nd March 2004.

Key decision for determination

- 1) 'Prospects' (Corporate Plan) and Policy Frameworks

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 approves 'Prospects' (the Corporate Plan) and the Policy Frameworks for 2004-08.

Councillors J L Huppert and A C Kent commented on the discrepancy between the aspirations set out in 'Prospects' and the levels of resources available to realise them. Councillor Huppert also expressed concern that the shortened version of 'Prospects' had already been distributed to all households in Cambridgeshire, pre-empting the Council's decision on the full document.

Councillors I C Kidman and J D Jones reported that the Labour Group did not support 'Prospects' because, in their view, it did not reflect the reality of pressures on services and cuts to spending.

Responding to these speakers, the Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, and other Conservative members highlighted the Council's positive achievements, including its 'good' Comprehensive Performance Assessment rating and the two stars awarded to Social Services three years running by the Social Services Inspectorate. Councillor Walters drew attention to the limitations to Government funding for Cambridgeshire and emphasised the need for the Council to live within its means. Responding to Councillor Huppert, Councillor Walters noted that the shortened version of 'Prospects' had been circulated at the same time as the Council Tax bills, as this had been most cost-effective. All members had been invited to comment on the draft.

Members also had the opportunity to comment on each of the Policy Frameworks individually:

- Adult Services Strategic Plan
- Children's and Young People's Strategic Plan
- Community Strategies
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategies
- Implementing Electronic Government
- Local Agenda 21
- Local Transport Plan
- Public Library Position Statement
- Single Education Plan
- Structure Plan
- Supporting People Strategic Plan
- Waste Management

- Youth Justice Plan

In providing services for young people, Councillor J D Jones commented on the need for investment in preventative as well as punitive measures. She highlighted in particular the need to fund detached youth workers. Other members echoed her views and emphasised the need for provision in rural as well as urban areas. Some members commented on parents' responsibility for young people and the need to involve them appropriately in initiatives.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage, Councillor R Wilkinson, recognised the need for the services but commented that additional funding was needed from Government. Further investment in the Youth Service at present would mean diverting resources from other budgets.

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

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

Key decisions for information

- 2) Update to Cambridgeshire Section 48 Scheme

Councillor A J Bowen asked whether the review of the Scheme would help to clarify the total number of teachers employed by the Local Education Authority.

- 3) Oxmoor Opportunities Programme Single Regeneration Budget: Draft Delivery Plan 2004/05 for Neighbourhood Management

- 4) Grants to Voluntary Organisations

Councillor C M Ballard commented that the Council's grants to voluntary organisations had not in recent years been increased in line with inflation, reducing some organisations' grants by 30% in real terms. The Goodnight Agency, which had provided respite services for parents of autistic children, had had to cease operating. Councillor A J Bowen noted that Youth Action Cambridgeshire was having severe difficulty in raising sufficient funding for core activities and would shortly be meeting to decide whether it should continue to operate. Councillor R Wilkinson asked the Council to reconsider its funding for the Red Hen Project in Cambridge should additional resources become available.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, recognised that it had not been possible to increase grants in line with inflation, but emphasised that it was necessary for the Council to take account of its own financial position when making grants. He also reminded members that the Council was currently reviewing its policy on grants to voluntary organisations and would be making increasing use of service level agreements.

5) Statutory Plans

a) Trading Standards Service Delivery Plans

Responding to a query from Councillor R L Clarke, the Lead Member for Community and Economic Development, Councillor A K Melton, confirmed that Trading Standards had been given new responsibilities for regulating the movement of animals following the outbreak of foot and mouth disease. He also confirmed that Trading Standards worked with the Police Authority to enforce vehicle weight restrictions.

b) Youth Justice Plan

6) Historical Resource and Cultural Centre

Councillor P D Gooden, the local member for Histon, expressed concern at possible changes to the development proposals for the Cambridge Northern Fringe, including the possible alternative location of the Historical Resource and Cultural Centre (HRCC) at a site adjacent to Cambridge station. Changes would be contrary to the plans already approved by South Cambridgeshire District Council for mixed development on this land. Councillor Gooden sought assurance that the proposed move of the HRCC was not because the need to use Section 106 contributions from developers for guided bus had meant that insufficient funds were available from this source for the HRCC.

Councillor M Farrar welcomed the possible relocation of the HRCC to the station site, which would be more readily accessible by public transport than the site on the Northern Fringe. He emphasised the need for the records storage accommodation to be secure.

Councillors J L Gluza and A J Bowen reported that the Education, Libraries and Heritage Scrutiny Committee had supported the alternative site, but had emphasised the need for the financing of the scheme to be closely reviewed.

The Lead Member for Lifelong Learning, Councillor V H Lucas, recognised the need both for sustainable development on the Northern Fringe and for an accessible and secure HRCC. Responding to a query from Councillor A A Reid and correcting the Council report, the Cabinet Member for Education, Libraries and Heritage, Councillor R Wilkinson, confirmed that the consortium bidding to develop the site adjacent to Cambridge station did not currently own this land. He noted that no decision had yet been made as to which site should be used.

Other decisions

7) Heritage Services – The Way Forwards

Councillor I C Kidman emphasised the need for a clear Arts policy that could be used to develop services and attract external funding, including Section 106 monies. He paid tribute to the work already being done by officers on a very limited budget. Councillor Kidman also gave notice of

a future written question about the discontinuation of the County Council's grants to the Fitzwilliam Museum and Kettle's Yard.

The Lead Member for Lifelong Learning, Councillor V H Lucas, explained that the new strategy agreed by Cabinet for Heritage Services was intended to bring together existing policies on Archives, Archaeology, Arts and Museums, to enable a more coherent case for additional funding to be made.

- 8) Cambridgeshire's Second Local Public Service Agreement 2004-07: Improvement Priorities
- 9) Comprehensive Equalities Policy

Councillor A J Bowen noted that the school of which he was a Governor, like many others, had recently spent considerable time developing its equalities policy. He asked whether schools would be required to review their policies now that the policy adopted by Cabinet was being recommended as a best practice approach.

Other matters

- 10) Shire Hall Club: Call-In of Cabinet Decision – Report of the Policy Scrutiny and Audit Committee
- 11) Budget Monitoring 2003/04

Councillor J L Huppert suggested that the effect of the £5.1 million overspend in Social Services on the Council Tax increase and budgets for other services could jeopardise the performance of those services. Councillor A C Kent noted that whilst the Council spent over the Formula Spending Share (FSS) on Social Services, it was spending £100 less per pupil than the national average on Education.

Responding, the Leader of the Council, Councillor J K Walters, emphasised that Cambridgeshire's problems were reflected nationally, where many local authorities were having to set Social Services budgets considerably over the FSS and also were overspending on essential services.

- 12) Monitoring of the Recommendations of the Joint Review of Social Services

Councillor C M Ballard drew attention to the Inspectors' recommendations to invest in preventative services for older people and reduce eligibility criteria, to help reduce dependence on acute services, hospital admissions and delayed transfers of care. Councillors J D Jones and R B Martlew suggested that the situation would be improved if more services were provided in-house, rather than increasing reliance being placed on the independent sector.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, and Lead Member for Vulnerable Adults, Councillor D R Pegram, accepted that there was still scope for improvement but emphasised that

considerable progress had already been made in the delivery of residential and domiciliary care and of supporting services such as occupational therapy. The Commission for Social Care Inspection had approved the Council's action plan prepared in response to the Joint Review. Progress against this would be monitored quarterly by the Cabinet. The integration of older people's services would provide further opportunities for improvement.

- 13) Delegation of Budgets to Nursery Schools in Cambridgeshire
- 14) Integration of Older People's Services – Report of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee

Councillors R B Martlew, P D Gooden and J D Jones expressed support for the integration of services but concern at the speed with which it had taken place. They suggested that it would have been preferable initially to second Social Services staff, rather than transferring them to the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) on 1st April 2004. Councillor Martlew also expressed concern at the status of transferred staff should the employing PCT decide to withdraw from the integration agreement. Councillor Gooden also expressed concern at the apparently incorrect advice given to the South Cambridgeshire Health and Social Care Scrutiny Panel on charging arrangements following the integration and the limited opportunities for the Panels to be involved in the process.

The Chairman of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee, Councillor J M Tuck, reported that the Committee had supported the principle of integration but had sought assurance that a number of issues were being resolved, particularly the contributions by all four PCTs to pooled budgets. Councillor C M Ballard identified three further issues: the challenge of drawing together social care services, which were charged for, and health services, which were provided free of charge; the need to integrate IT systems and share information effectively; and the need for local members to continue to have access to the information necessary for their casework.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, reported that three of the four PCTs had now signed integration agreements. He would be signing the agreements for the County Council later that day and the fourth PCT would be signing the following day. He emphasised that the integration had not been carried out in haste but had been prepared for over a number of years. The Lead Member for Vulnerable Adults, Councillor D R Pegram, emphasised that support staff as well as frontline staff would be transferring to the PCTs.

- 15) Progress Report on the Development of Children's Services

196. GUIDED BUS: TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT SUBMISSION

At the beginning of this item, the Chairman reported that two petitions had been received.

The first contained 112 signatures and called on the Council to withdraw its Transport and Works Act application because of the level of subsidy that would

be required to operate the busway. Mr Tim Phillips attended the meeting, spoke in support of the petition and answered members' questions.

The second contained 52 signatures and petitioned the Council to stop the guided bus from going through the lakes area between Swavesey and St Ives. Dr Alex Rogers attended the meeting, spoke in support of the petition and answered members' questions.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, moved the following, which was seconded by Councillor I C Kidman:

That the resolution of the Council passed at the meeting of the Council held on 16th September 2003 approving the application for a Transport and Works Act Order, as now applied for, be and is by this resolution confirmed.

Councillor A A Reid argued that the case for guided bus had not yet been convincingly made. The relative environmental impacts of bus and rail on the city of Cambridge had not been compared. The public had been given no systematic opportunity to express a preference for either bus or rail. The costs of the scheme appeared to be escalating, with part of the funding now to be a Government loan and part Section 106 money, and no confirmation from bus operators that they would be willing to run services without subsidies. Councillor Reid called for these issues to be addressed before the TWA application was approved.

Councillor P W Silby asked for consideration to be given to feeding into the route from the west side of the A1 and not just the east side, as currently proposed.

A vote was taken and the motion was carried with 37 votes in favour, 13 against and 2 abstentions.

[Voting pattern: Conservative and most Labour members in favour; most Liberal Democrat members against]

197. REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 27th JANUARY 2004

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Management Committee, Councillor L W McGuire, moved the report of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Committee held on 27th January 2004 and the recommendations it contained. These were seconded by Councillor J M Tuck.

Council resolved unanimously to agree:

- i) The scrutiny work programme for 2004/05 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report to Council;
- ii) That the Scrutiny Management Committee be authorised to approve:
 - a) the appointment of an Ad hoc Scrutiny Panel, including the review topic and terms of reference of the review;

- b) the membership of the Panel, comprising up to five members as nominated by the Chairman of the Committee and Opposition Group Leaders and up to three co-opted members and that the Panel elects its own Chairman at its first meeting from amongst the Panel membership.

198. COUNCIL CONSTITUTION: ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SCRUTINY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The Chairman of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee, Councillor J M Tuck, proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution to alter the arrangements for health and social care scrutiny. These were seconded by Councillor P L Stroude.

It was resolved unanimously:

To approve the amendments to the Council's Constitution as set out in Appendix 1 to the report to Council for implementation after annual Council on 25th May 2004, including the dissolution of the four Area Health and Social Care Scrutiny Panels, subject to the deletion of the first sentence of the paragraph headed 'Eligibility' on page 14 of the report and to the deletion of the word 'also' in the second sentence.

199. PERIODIC ELECTORAL REVIEW OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE

The Chairman of the Periodic Electoral Review Working Party, Councillor G F Harper, moved the following recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor M L Leeke:

That the Council approves the County Council's response to the Boundary Committee for England's draft recommendations on the periodic electoral review of Cambridgeshire, as set out in the amended Appendix A to the report tabled at the meeting.

Members made the following general comments:

- Suggested that it would have been more effective for the Boundary Committee to review County Council ward boundaries before District Council ward boundaries, rather than vice versa, as the County review had been constrained by the pressure to achieve co-terminosity with the smaller District wards, which varied in size.
- Expressed concern that, in making its proposals, the Boundary Committee appeared to have placed greater emphasis on the size of wards than on its other criteria such as the interests and identities of local communities.
- Expressed concern that the creation of wards that did not reflect the patterns of local communities could discourage people from voting.
- Expressed concern that multi-member wards could be difficult to operate effectively, as members of the public might choose always to contact the most prominent member, resulting in uneven distribution of workloads, or to contact all members for their ward, resulting in duplication of effort. It could also be difficult for County Councillors in multi-member wards to liaise effectively with all of the relevant District Councillors.

A number of local members also commented on proposals relating to their areas:

- Councillor J A Powley expressed concern that the proposals for Soham were not supported locally, as the division of Soham and the linking of Wicken with Soham South for District Council purposes and with Soham North for County Council purposes was confusing and did not reflect the pattern of the local community.
- Councillor J Broadway expressed concern at the proposal to link Fordham with Soham South and to dissociate Fordham from the small villages with which it was currently linked.
- Councillors A Hansard and S A Giles objected to the proposals for St Neots, Eynesbury, Eaton Socon, Eaton Ford and Priory Park. They expressed regret at the loss of the historical name of Eynesbury and at the creation of wards that would span the river, rather than being demarcated by this natural boundary, and would not reflect local communities. However, Councillor R L Clarke spoke in support of proposals for Little Paxton and the surrounding area on the basis that they would achieve co-terminosity with District Council boundaries.
- Councillor L W McGuire spoke in support of the County Council's proposal to retain the historic name of Norman Cross in the north of Huntingdonshire.
- Councillor S F Johnstone expressed concern at the proposal to link Swavesey and Fen Drayton with Papworth, from which they were separated by the A14 and with which they had no particular affinity. She also expressed concern that, even with the removal of Swavesey and Fen Drayton, the Willingham ward would be larger than average from the outset and would expand rapidly with the development of Northstowe. Councillor I C Bates suggested that, because of the extent of new development proposed for Cambridgeshire, the Boundary Committee should be asked to carry out an early review of the new arrangements.
- Councillor M Farrar spoke against the Boundary Committee's proposal for a single two-member ward covering Sawston, the Shelfords, Stapleford, Harston and Hauxton and in support of the Council's alternative proposal for two single-member wards.
- Councillor P D Gooden spoke against the Boundary Committee's proposal to link Cottenham and Rampton with Histon and Impington in a two-member ward, but welcomed the County Council's request that, if this were to be done, the ward be known as Histon and Cottenham.

A vote was taken and the motion was carried.

[Voting pattern: Most members in favour; four against; four abstentions]

200. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

201. ORAL QUESTIONS

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

- Councillor R L Clarke asked the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Councillor J A Powley, about the regulation of residential homes. Councillor Powley explained that whilst this was important to the County Council, regulatory responsibility lay with the Commission for Social Care Inspection.
- Councillor J L Huppert asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor S F Johnstone, about Newcastle City Council's invitation of tenders for hybrid electric buses, Stagecoach's proposal to take a hybrid electric bus on tour around the UK and the potential for such buses to be used in Cambridge. Councillor S F Johnstone responded that she was aware of the proposals and would welcome an opportunity for Cambridgeshire members to inspect the bus. She understood that the vehicle in question was too large for use in Cambridge but welcomed the work being done to develop low-emission vehicles.
- Councillor J D Jones asked the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor J K Walters, about changes to office accommodation in Shire Hall, including the closure of the reading room, the relocation of the Corporate Knowledge Team and changes to accommodation for the Director and Assistant Directors in Resources. Councillor Walters responded that these were operational matters for officers to manage. Alternative provision would be made for people who had previously used the reading room. He agreed to send a written response on the cost of the changes being made.
- Councillor C M Ballard asked the Cabinet Member for Resources about progress against the recommendations made by the member led review of welfare benefits take-up. Councillor Walters responded that funding was needed to develop this work and that it was hoped to attract Government funding for this.

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

202. 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.

Report of the Chairman of the Cambridgeshire Police Authority

- Councillor J L Huppert asked the Chairman of the Police Authority, Councillor J E Reynolds, about career development opportunities for Community Beat Managers that would enable them to continue in their community role. Councillor Reynolds agreed to ask the Chief Constable to send a written response as this was an operational issue.

Report of the Chairman of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

- Councillor A S Milton asked the Chairman of the Fire Authority, Councillor L W McGuire, about the fitting of fire sprinklers in public buildings, particularly given the recent decision not to fit them at the prison being newly built in Peterborough. Councillor McGuire noted that the decision regarding the prison had been taken by the Home Office. However, he commented on the

importance of fitting sprinklers in public buildings and hoped that the County Council would do this in its own properties when appropriate.

- Councillor R L Clarke asked the Chairman of the Fire Authority about the future of the fire station in St Neots. Councillor McGuire confirmed that there were no proposals to close the station in St Neots, but noted that consideration was being given to providing more modern accommodation in collaboration with the Ambulance Service.

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

203. MOTIONS

No motions had been submitted under Rule 10 of the Council Procedure Rules.

204. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

No Committee membership changes were proposed.

Chairman: