

COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 16th February 2010

Time: 10.30 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.

Place: Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present: Councillor L J Oliver (Chairman)

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

Apologies: J D Batchelor, E Kadić, S G M Kindersley, D R Pegram and T Stone

55. MINUTES: 8th DECEMBER 2009

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 8th December 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

56. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths of Councillors

The Chairman reported with sadness the deaths of former Councillor Ray German, who had represented Chatteris from 1981 to 1997, and of Councillor Leslie Sims, the member for Wisbech North. Councillors Tuck and Jenkins paid tribute to Councillor Sims. Members observed a minute's silence in memory of the two Councillors.

Acting Executive Director: Environment Services

The Chairman led members in congratulating John Onslow, who was currently seconded to Cambridgeshire Horizons, on his appointment from April 2010 as Acting Executive Director: Environment Services.

Awards and achievements

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

- At the Local Government Chronicle Awards 2010:
 - The shortlisting of Trading Standards in the Community Involvement category for its Community Alcohol partnership campaign
 - Shortlisting in the Employee Engagement category for work undertaken by Organisational Development and Learning and Internal Communications
- Nomination of the Council together with Northamptonshire County Council and Fujitsu for a Local Government Chronicle eGov award in the category of e-Government excellence: Shared Services
- Councillor Steve Tierney on being one of five Councillors nominated for the On-line Councillor of the Year Award
- The Audit Commission's Organisational Assessment of the County Council, which had found that the Council was performing well and improving most things that matter to local people
- The Ofsted inspection of children's services, which had concluded that the services performed well and had highlighted a number of areas of good performance
- The Council's retention of its position in a list of the top 100 best places to work, as measured by the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, for the third year in a row.

Service developments

The Chairman highlighted a number of recent service developments:

- The reopening of Wisbech Library on 1st February 2010 following a major refit
- Good performance by Cambridgeshire students in A level and GCSE exams last year, with the County ranking 32nd out of almost 140 local authorities for GCSE results and 22nd for A-levels
- The Café at the Bailey Rooms scoring five stars on their recent Scores on the Doors food safety inspection. The Cafés at Castle Court and Shire Hall had also received high ratings
- Accreditation of the Payroll Team by the Payroll Quality Partnership
- A successful partnership bid led by the County Council for funding of up to £1.5 million from the Government's Future Jobs Fund, which would be used to support the creation of 237 temporary jobs in the County
- Proposals being submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government for funding to support the designation of Northstowe as an eco-town.

57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor	Minute	Details
Churchill	66 b) 2)	Governor of Longsands Community College
Gymer	63	Parent of children at Cottenham Village College
Heathcock	General	Member of Cambridge Older People's Enterprise (COPE)
Hutton	66 b) 2)	Governor of St Neots Community College
Jenkins	61; 66 b) 4), 6) and 9)	Lay member of Cambridgeshire Community Services
Johnstone	61	Chairman of Over Day Centre
King	61	Member of The Bramley Line, Wisbech
Lucas	61; 66 b) 4), 6) and 9)	Chairman of Cambridgeshire Community Services
Melton	61	Mother in receipt of social care
Read	General	Member of COPE
Reynolds J	61	Chairman of the East of England Regional Assembly Chairman of Renewables East
van de Ven	61	Member of Committee for Melbourn Library Access Point
Whelan	General	Member of COPE Board member of Cambridge branch of National Autistic Society Parent of child with statement of special educational needs
Wilson G	66 a) 6) 66 b) 5)	Employee of the Environment Agency

The following members declared prejudicial interests under Paragraph 10 of the Code of Conduct and left the Council Chamber whilst the item was discussed:

Councillor	Minute	Details
L W McGuire	66 b) 4)	Wife employed by a home care provider
V McGuire	66 b) 4)	Employed by a home care provider

58. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

59. PETITION

Tom Woodcock, Secretary of the Cambridge and District Trades Council, presented and spoke to a petition calling on the Council to refuse to ratify the budget and asking the Council to demand that central Government make up any budget shortfall that would lead to loss of services, privatisation of services,

worsening of conditions for Council staff or an above average inflation rise in Council Tax.

The Chairman thanked the petitioner and advised that the Leader of the Council would be responding to him in writing. There was no specific debate on the petition but the Council's budget was debated as part of the Integrated Plan, as recorded under Minute 61 below.

60. COUNTY COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

The following motion was proposed by the Cabinet Member for Customer Service and Transformation, Councillor Criswell, and seconded by Councillor Read:

That full Council accept the recommendations set out in the report and resolve to agree and implement the amendments to the Constitution set out in Annexes A and B immediately following the annual Council meeting on 18th May 2010.

The following procedural motion was proposed by Councillor Jenkins and seconded by Councillor Moss-Eccardt:

That the report not be debated at this meeting, but be referred to the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee.

Speaking to the motion, Councillor Jenkins explained that he was concerned about the process by which this report had reached Council. In his view, there had not been adequate consultation with all members of Council; insufficient notice had been taken of alternative democratic arrangements in other authorities; and in recommending a single option, the Ad hoc Policy Development Group (PDG) on Political Management Arrangements had exceeded its role. Debating the report at Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee would enable all of the issues to be properly explored.

Other members speaking in support of the motion expressed concern that there were a number of issues that the PDG had not reviewed, or had not reviewed in sufficient depth; deferring this report would enable these issues also to be considered. In particular, it did not appear that the PDG had discussed the suggestion made at the Council meeting held on 23rd June 2009 that oral questions be permitted at the first annual meeting of a new Council.

Members speaking against the motion:

- Noted that all members of Council had been invited to submit their comments and suggestions to the PDG
- Noted that the Liberal Democrat group had chosen not to appoint members to the PDG to take part in its discussions
- Noted that all members had had the opportunity to discuss the proposals within their political groups and that deferring debate of the Council report was unlikely to change the final outcome

- Commented that the PDG had not gone beyond its remit, since its recommendations were now being presented for Council determination.

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

Two amendments to the Council report were proposed. The Chairman advised members that prior notice of the amendments had been given and that, in accordance with the requirements for amendments to the Constitution, a report from the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer on the implications of the amendments had been prepared and circulated.

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor Moss-Eccardt and seconded by Councillor Jenkins:

That the recommendation be amended to add a further bullet point to 4.2 in Appendix 2

- All functions not included in the terms of reference of any other Scrutiny Committee.

[This is to keep the catch-all functionality of the Committee and to avoid things falling through the cracks.]

Speaking in support of the amendment, Councillor Jenkins explained that the intention was to provide absolute clarity as to which was the Scrutiny Committee of 'last resort', should responsibility for an issue be unclear.

Speaking against the amendment, Councillor L W McGuire noted that all of the new Scrutiny Committees would have wider terms of reference, making it easier to allocate cross-cutting issues and making a catch-all provision unnecessary. Councillor Read commented that it would be possible to refine the Committees' terms of reference in future, should this prove essential. The Cabinet Member for Customer Service and Transformation, Councillor Criswell, noted that in the event of genuine uncertainty, it was the role of the Scrutiny Management Group to determine which was the most appropriate Committee.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was rejected. [Voting pattern: most Liberal Democrat members in favour; Conservative, Labour and Green members against; UKIP and three Liberal Democrat members, Chairman and Vice-Chairman abstained.]

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor Moss-Eccardt and seconded by Councillor Jenkins:

To alter Annexe A of Article 11 as follows:

In Clause 1, Replace last sentence with:
'Meeting of PDGs will usually be conducted in an informal manner but will otherwise be convened and conducted in the same way as other Committees of the Authority'.
Delete Clause 11.

Members speaking in support of the amendment:

- Suggested that elected members should conduct their business openly and transparently
- Noted that even if usually conducted in public, PDGs could still go into closed session if necessary
- Noted that public attendance at meetings already conducted in public was not high and so holding PDG meetings in public was unlikely to affect their conduct.

Members speaking against the amendment:

- Noted that it was normal practice for public bodies to hold some meetings in private
- Suggested that holding PDGs in private enabled more frank discussions of a wider range of issues and options to take place, without fear of adverse media coverage
- Urged the Liberal Democrat group to reconsider its policy of non-attendance at PDG meetings.

One member suggested that there was scope to improve the operation of the PDGs, to enable backbench and Opposition members genuinely to contribute to policy development.

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

[Voting pattern: Liberal Democrat, Green and UKIP members in favour; Conservative members against; Labour members and Chairman and Vice-Chairman abstained.]

Members then debated the substantive motion.

Members speaking against the proposals:

- Suggested that the failure to move to an Overview and Scrutiny model meant that Cambridgeshire would not be making best use of the abilities offered by members from all political groups. It was also suggested that an Overview and Scrutiny model would be more efficient and cost-effective, for example reducing the need for use of call-in
- Expressed concern that PDGs were not operating effectively, even within their current remit
- Reiterated concerns that the Political Management Arrangements PDG had not addressed all of the necessary issues.

One member expressed disappointment that the Political Management Arrangements PDG had not supported a suggestion that motions to Council from minority members automatically be seconded by the Chairman of Council, to allow them to be debated.

The Cabinet Member for Customer Service and Transformation, Councillor Criswell, noted that the Political Management Arrangements PDG had been open to the introduction of Overview and Scrutiny Committees in Cambridgeshire, but in discussion had found that this model was not widely supported by members. He also confirmed that the PDG had considered all issues submitted to it by members of the Council.

Members then voted on the substantive motion, which was carried. [Voting pattern: Conservatives in favour, most Liberal Democrat members and the UKIP member against, one Liberal Democrat, Labour and Green members and Chairman and Vice-Chairman abstained.]

61. REPORTS OF CABINET MEETINGS – ITEMS FOR DETERMINATION

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Tuck, moved receipt of the reports of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 15th December 2009 and 26th January 2010.

- a) Council's Integrated Plan (including Priorities, Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2010-2015, Resources and Performance Plan) (26th January 2010, Item 1)

It was moved by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Tuck, and seconded by the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor J Reynolds, that the recommendations on the Integrated Plan as set out in the updated Integrated Plan documents be adopted.

The Leader of the Council drew attention to the following papers informing the debate on the Integrated Plan:

- The report of the meeting of Cabinet held on 26th January 2010
- The Integrated Plan document circulated with the Council agenda
- The reports of the Council's four Scrutiny Committees on the Administration's proposals
- The report of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee on the Liberal Democrat amendment.

Councillors Shuter, Johnstone, Bell and Heathcock respectively moved the receipt of the reports of the two meetings of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee; the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee; the Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee; and the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Tuck opened the debate on the Integrated Plan on behalf of the Cabinet. Councillors Jenkins and Sadiq responded on behalf of the Liberal Democrat and Labour groups respectively.

Councillors Shuter, Johnstone, Bell and Heathcock in their capacity as Chairmen spoke to the reports of the four Scrutiny Committees.

Members then debated Sections 1 to 3 of the Integrated Plan and the Service-specific proposals.

Sections 1 to 3 of the Integrated Plan

The Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor J Reynolds, introduced these sections of the Plan. In relation to page 3 of the introduction from the Leader of the Council, he noted that the figure for efficiency savings over the past year was £18.382 million against a target of £18.3 million.

Councillor Harrison suggested that the introduction to the Plan should be more self-aware and self-critical, listing the challenges and threats facing the Council as well as its achievements. She suggested that the challenges and threats should include the delay to the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway, the uncertainty over the Council's bid to the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) and in-year overspending on adult social care.

Councillor Bourke expressed concern that the Integrated Plan showed a mismatch between strategic objectives and the allocation of funding, for example in relation to the aims of improving the safety of the road network and of developing community transport.

Councillor Sedgwick-Jell commented on the national economic and political situation. He agreed that Cambridgeshire's formula grant settlement had not been favourable, but questioned whether this was likely to improve under any future Government. At a local level, he noted that he would be willing to support a higher Council Tax increase than that proposed, noting that the public if properly consulted might be willing to pay more to avoid cuts to services and jobs.

Responding, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Tuck, noted that Cambridgeshire had been publicly commended by the Audit Commission for its good understanding of what needed to be done. She also suggested that it would have been premature for the introduction to the Plan to include commentary on the Guided Busway or the TIF bid, when both of these issues were still developing.

Children and Young People's Services (CYPS)

Councillor Nethsingha expressed concern that the targeting of services on vulnerable children would lead to reduced resources for universal services such as youth services and those provided by Parent Support Advisers. Reductions to these services could mean that children and young people were not appropriately supported at an early stage, to their detriment and to the increased long-term cost of the Council and its partners.

Councillor Downes expressed concern at the proposal to write off the deficit of St Neots Community College. He noted that the College had made a £1.1 million loss in two years and suggested that if the Council were to write off the resulting deficit of £900,000, this could set a precedent, suggesting to other schools in or entering deficit that the Council might also write off their deficits in due course.

Councillor van de Ven noted that those CYPS Scrutiny Committee members who had taken part in the Director briefings prior to their budget scrutiny meeting had found them very useful. She urged that these be planned well in advance in future years and that all members be encouraged to participate.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor Curtis, and the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor Harty, explained that the aim of the proposals was to focus on safeguarding and the protection of vulnerable children, using a strategic and principled approach to redesign services for the next five years. Whilst cuts to funding were not welcome, it was essential to be realistic and to plan accordingly, working with partners to mitigate the impact of cuts where possible.

The Cabinet Member for Learning commented that writing off the St Neots Community College did not set a precedent, since the circumstances affecting this school, which was in special measures and facing a falling pupil roll, were exceptional.

Environment Services

Following on from a comment made by the Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Downes asked for the Integrated Planning Process (IPP) Standing Sub-Group to be reconvened. He noted that the IPP Standing Sub-Group had previously made recommendations to Cabinet on how to improve the IPP; most of these had been accepted, but there was still scope to improve the process, especially in relation to the clarity of the documentation.

Councillor Bourke reiterated his concerns that cuts to the highways maintenance budget would lead to further deterioration of roads and footpaths. He also expressed concern at cuts to community transport and bus subsidies. He expressed concern at the impact that Cambridgeshire Guided Busway costs might have on other transport schemes. He also suggested that the proposals missed a number of opportunities both to make savings and to address priorities identified by the public.

Councillor G Wilson expressed concern at the proposal to discontinue slurry seal and service dressing, which the budget papers acknowledged would result in road conditions deteriorating much faster than at present. He also expressed concern that it was not clear how the £3 million capital for highways would be allocated and asked whether it was envisaged overall that roads would continue to deteriorate at the same rate as at present, or faster.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor L W McGuire, emphasised that funding reductions were unavoidable. It was not possible to guarantee that road conditions would not deteriorate, but in addition to the £3 million highways capital funding being made available, the Council would continue to lobby Government for further assistance in view of the recent severe weather. The Council would also be reviewing its approaches to winter gritting and to medium-sized safety schemes (the 'October list').

Community and Adult Services

Councillor Carter expressed concern at the proposed cuts to the budget for older people's services and at the direct impact that they could have on service users. She expressed doubt both as to whether service users' short- and long-term needs would be met, and as to whether it would be possible to contain expenditure within budget, given the overspending in the current year.

Councillor Whelan also expressed concern at the risks associated with proposed cuts to adult social care budgets, especially given that the substantial overspend on the older people's pooled budget in the current year had not yet been resolved. She expressed concern at the inequity of the proposals, given that existing care packages would be maintained but that people receiving new packages from April 2010 would receive a 25% reduction to the care offered; and at plans for 'reablement', which would be successful only if people could be offered the necessary support.

Councillor Sedgwick-Jell emphasised the importance of evaluating the knock-on effects of cuts to services; for example, cuts to library services could be detrimental to people's more general health and wellbeing, or could mean that they were less able to search for and find employment. He also suggested that it was not possible to increase efficiency indefinitely; some degree of 'inefficiency' was essential to the flexibility and smooth running of the organisation.

Councillor Williamson also commented on the importance of libraries as focal points for communities, especially in more deprived areas. In relation to different delivery models for library services, he suggested that the anticipated scale of savings may not prove possible, and also emphasised the need to retain democratic accountability.

Councillor Lucas suggested that it was appropriate to review library services to ensure that they were being provided as cost-effectively as possible. However, he urged proper consultation with communities, noting that consultation during the previous libraries review had led to the creation of numerous Library Access Points.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Yeulett, noted that a five-year approach to the budget was being proposed, with most reductions planned for the first two years, to allow for any additional pressures in later years. He noted that options to reduce expenditure were limited: raising eligibility criteria, which was considered undesirable; early intervention, in which the Council was continuing to invest; and reducing the individual offer, which was unavoidable but was being managed through self-directed support and reablement initiatives, to enhance service users' independence and quality of life.

The Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor P Brown, agreed that libraries were a valuable community resource, but suggested that it was appropriate to review the service to ensure that resources were equitably

distributed. A consultants' report on the best model for the future delivery of library services was currently being reviewed.

Corporate Services and Chief Executive's Department

The Cabinet Member for Customer Service and Transformation, Councillor Criswell, and the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor J Reynolds, spoke to this section of the report. They highlighted their intentions to maximise the efficiency of back office functions, the effective use of all of the Council's assets, including people, buildings and IT, and the leanness of the Council's contracts with suppliers for goods and services. Steps were also being taken to ensure that the Council would be able to respond to unforeseen pressures in coming years.

The Cabinet Member for Customer Service and Transformation agreed to review the timing of the Simalto public survey, noting the need to balance the opportunity for early input with the need to have sufficient detail on which to consult. He also noted the importance of capturing feedback from residents in-year.

General Debate

One amendment was proposed under this heading:

Liberal Democrat Group Amendment

The Liberal Democrat amendment was proposed by Councillor Jenkins and seconded by Councillor Downes. Paper copies had been circulated prior to the meeting and the full text is attached as Appendix 1 to the signed copy of the minutes.

Introducing the amendment, Councillor Jenkins explained that its purpose was to align expenditure with stated priorities; to make savings by improving services, not cutting them; and to accept responsibility rather than seeking to blame others.

Members speaking in support of the amendment:

- Noted that choices were available to members and that alternative spending patterns were possible
- Highlighted the intention to invest £13 million over two years in highways and public transport, in line with priorities expressed by the public
- Drew attention to the proposal to include £100,000 per annum in the capital programme to improve disabled access, for example by dropping kerbs
- Highlighted proposals to reinstate spending on youth services and to support Library Access Points

- Noted that detailed justifications could be provided for all of the savings proposed in the amendment. An example was given in relation to home to school transport, on which independent expert advice had been sought; the savings proposed in the amendment were significantly less than the advice had suggested could be achieved
- Commended the Making Cambridgeshire Count initiative but suggested that, especially given its estimated cost, it would be essential to ensure financial payback from it
- Emphasised the importance of retaining long-term vision in relation to issues such as climate change, even in times of financial difficulty.

Members speaking against the amendment:

- Suggested that the proposed spending priorities, especially those relating to the voluntary and community sector, were inconsistent with public priorities as identified by the Simalto survey
- Questioned whether expenditure on project development for the Bramley Line was appropriate, given that this project did not have Department of Transport support or funding
- Suggested that some of the proposed savings were inconsistent with stated objectives; for example, IT savings were unlikely to be compatible with increased use of tele- and video-conferencing
- Suggested that some of the proposed savings were unrealistic; for example, organisational changes resulting from Making Cambridgeshire Count would take time to implement and it was unlikely that the scale of savings proposed could be generated in two years; and there was insufficient data to show that the proposed savings from the highways maintenance contract could be realised. Concern was also expressed that St Neots Community College could not be required to repay £500,000 of its deficit without comprising the education of pupils at the school.

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

Members then spoke on the substantive motion.

Councillor Sadiq called on members to consider the impact of job losses that would result from the proposed budget. He also expressed concern that reductions to budgets for community transport and bus subsidies would reduce people's mobility, making it harder for them to find work.

Councillor Bourke suggested that the current budget proposals could have looked very different, had the Administration addressed challenges and pressures such as those relating to adult social care and primary school places differently.

Councillor Harrison noted that the resources available to the Council via the formula grant had increased. She urged that these be used. She expressed concern that the current prediction for the Council's reserves as at 31st March 2010 had risen by 36%, as compared with the prediction made a year previously.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Economy and the Environment, Councillor Orgee, commented on the need to maintain the Council's reserves in order to meet unexpected pressures in future years, citing expenditure on over-60s' concessionary bus fares and Government proposals for changes to adult social care as examples.

Councillors Downes commented that the £15,000 cost of the SIMALTO consultation appeared to have been wasted as no account had been taken of the results. He welcomed the acknowledgement by the Cabinet Member for Customer Service and Transformation, Councillor Criswell, that the consultation should have taken place earlier.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Yeulett, indicated that many other Counties were experiencing similar overspends on their adult social care budgets, including pooled budgets.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor Curtis, referred to the Government's responsibility for the current cut in Council funding and that whilst regretting the necessity for cuts which would impact on people's lives, it was the Council's responsibility to address the situation, taking a five-year perspective and positioning the Council's services appropriately.

The Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor P Brown, reported on the consultation taking place on Library Access Points and his intention to report back on the review as soon as possible.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor L W McGuire, indicated that the cut in funding for tendered bus services reversed an earlier increase in this budget and expressed the hope that the cut might be reviewed in future years. Referring to the cut in the highways maintenance budget, he advised members that the condition of roads in Cambridgeshire was still in the upper quartile for Highways Authorities. He indicated that the Council would only proceed with the Intelligent Bus Stop Information System if he was satisfied that the technology could meet the Council's requirements.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Tuck, then summed up on the main motion, reminding members that the proposals were for a five-year budget, not for short-term decisions. She agreed to keep the Integrated Plan process and documentation under continuing review and noted that she would be asking the Deputy Leader, Councillor L W McGuire, to lead on this.

Council then voted on the substantive motion and it was resolved:

1. To approve the current sections 1 and 2 of the Integrated Plan, including the strategic objectives, action plan and performance targets, subject to finalising and agreeing all performance indicators, targets and actions in accordance with the process set out in paragraph 3.2 of the Council report
2. To delegate responsibility for agreeing any final change to sections 1 and 2 of the Integrated Plan to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Corporate Director: People, Policy and Law and the Corporate Director: Finance, Property and Performance, as outlined in section 3 of the Council report
3. To approve the following budget recommendations:
 - a) To approve the Service/Directorate cash limits as set out in Table 4.3.1 (page 8 of section 4 (Finance Report) of the Integrated Plan (yellow pages))
 - b) To approve a County Budget Requirement in respect of general expenses applicable to the whole County area of £339,413,961
 - c) To approve a recommended County Precept for Council Tax from District Councils of £228,303,404. (To be received in ten equal instalments in accordance with the “fall-back” provisions of the Local Authorities (Funds) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 1995)
 - d) To approve a Council Tax for each Band of property, based on the number of ‘Band D’ equivalent properties notified to the County Council by the District Councils (217,892.5):

Band	Council Tax	Band	Council Tax
A	£698.52	E	£1,280.62
B	£814.94	F	£1,513.46
C	£931.36	G	£1,746.30
D	£1,047.78	H	£2,095.56

- e) To approve the Prudential Borrowing, Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy as set out in section 4.6 (pages 17-21 of section 4 (Finance Report) of the Integrated Plan (yellow pages))
- f) To note the report of the Corporate Director: Finance, Property and Performance on the levels of reserves and robustness of the estimates as set out in section 4.7 (pages 22-24 of section 4 (Finance Report) of the Integrated Plan (yellow pages))
- g) To approve Capital Payments in 2010-11 up to £137.2m arising from:

- i. Commitments from schemes already approved; and
- ii. The consequences of new starts (for the five years 2010-11 to 2014-15) listed within the Service Appendices, subject to the receipt of appropriate capital resources and confirmation of individual detailed business cases.

[Voting pattern: Conservatives in favour; Liberal Democrat, Labour and Green members against; Chairman and Vice-Chairman abstained.]

62. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

- Councillor Wijzenbeek had asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor L W McGuire, to modify the current traffic calming measures on Fen Road and Green End Road in Cambridge, to reduce the level of speeding and risk of accidents.
- Councillor Jenkins had asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor L W McGuire, about the severity of the recent winter and the specification for repairs set out in the Council's highways contract with WS Atkins.
- Councillor Jenkins had asked the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor J Reynolds, how many employees' contracts the Council had terminated on performance grounds in each of the past five years.
- Councillor Jenkins had asked the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning, Councillor Pegram, about the total value of invoices issued by BAM Nuttall to Cambridgeshire County Council under the terms of the Guided Busway contract, how much the Council had paid against these invoices and how these sums compared to the original sum agreed.

The responses were circulated at the Council meeting and copies are available from Democratic Services.

63. ORAL QUESTIONS

Nine oral questions were asked under Council Procedure Rule 9:

- [Councillor Williamson expressed concern that some Parish Councils had not received the recently published consultation document on the Local Transport Plan, even though the delivery company claimed they had been delivered. He asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor L W McGuire, to ensure that the public were effectively consulted and, in view of this delay, to consider extending the consultation deadline. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Access agreed to find out whether the deadline could be extended and to send a written response.](#)
- Councillor Downes asked the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor Harty, about a County Councillor's recent statement to Cambourne Parish Council on the timings for the planning, construction and opening of a

secondary school at Cambourne. The Cabinet Member for Learning commented that the timings had not yet been confirmed; he agreed to speak to the County Councillor involved and to respond to Councillor Downes.

- Councillor van de Ven recognised that members paid for their lunches on the days of Council meetings but asked the Chairman of the Council, Councillor Oliver, to review the custom of serving wine with the meal, given the importance of the business regularly transacted after lunch. The Chairman of Council agreed to consult all members on this issue.
- Councillor Whelan asked the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Yeulett, how the Council would be responding to new requirements to support adults with autism. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing noted that all relevant services would be reviewed to ensure that resources were applied as necessary.
- Councillor Jenkins asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Tuck, how Cambridgeshire might respond to the pledge made by the Shadow Chancellor, George Osborne, that the Conservatives would allow public services to run co-operatives, should the Party come to power nationally following the General Election. The Leader of the Council confirmed that this would be considered but commented that any new arrangements would need to be appropriate for Cambridgeshire.
- Councillor Bourke asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Tuck, whether she could confirm recent suggestions that the cost of the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway had risen to £161 million, as compared to the £116 million originally projected; whether she could comment on the financial risk to the Council should it not prove possible to recoup the difference from the contractor; and whether the Administration could reconfirm its previous undertaking not to spend any Council Tax payers' money on the Busway. The Leader of the Council noted that an update would be brought to Cabinet shortly.
- [Councillor Gymer asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor L W McGuire, why the Council had not supported a proposed new road crossing associated with a planning application at Cottenham Village College, as supported by local members, the Parish Council and the Village College; and why local members had not been invited to comment on the proposal. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor McGuire, noted that the site did not have a sufficiently serious pedestrian injury record to qualify for the new type of crossing. He agreed to send a written response to Councillor Gymer and to discuss the process with her further if appropriate.](#)
- Councillor D Brown asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor L W McGuire, to assist him in lobbying Stagecoach for the reversal of recent changes to bus services to Burwell, Reach, Swaffham Bulbeck and Swaffham Prior. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Access emphasised that the changes had been made by Stagecoach for commercial reasons. However, he agreed to ask Passenger Transport to contact Stagecoach and, if appropriate, to arrange a meeting between their Managing Director, Councillor Brown and himself.

- Councillor Sadiq asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor L W McGuire, whether the current review of winter maintenance would consider the option of indemnifying members of the public to carry out gritting, as some other local authorities had done. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Access confirmed that this was being considered as part of the review.

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

64. MOTIONS

No motions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10.

65. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

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

- Councillor Downes to replace Councillor Pellew as a member of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee
- Councillors Stone and Williamson to replace Councillors Jenkins and Whelan as substitutes on the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee
- Councillors Carter, Harper and van de Ven to be appointed as substitute members of the Standards Committee
- Councillor Kenney to replace Councillor Melton as a member of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee
- Councillor V McGuire to be appointed to the vacancy on the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee and Councillor P Read to be appointed to the resulting vacancy for a substitute on this Committee.

66. REPORTS OF THE CABINET – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a) Report of the meeting held on 15th December 2009

- 1) Accident Remedies and Traffic Management Programme – Medium-Sized Schemes

Councillor Williamson invited the Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor L W McGuire, and the Team Leader: Road Safety Engineering to visit the A10 Slap Up junction with him, to discuss a possible road safety scheme that could be cheaper than options previously considered.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Access agreed to visit the site, provided that no commitment to a scheme was inferred. He also noted that the process for determining which accident remedy and traffic management schemes should be progressed was to be reviewed, to ensure that it remained fit for purpose.

2) The Hive Project: A Major Project Delivering Low Carbon Economic Enterprise and Growth

Councillor Harrison and the Cabinet Member for Economy and the Environment, Councillor Orgee, who were both members of the Hive Board, commended this worthwhile project.

3) Local Government Shared Services

4) Building Schools for the Future (BSF): Appointment of Selected Bidder

Councillor Downes welcomed the progress being made on Cambridgeshire's first BSF phase. He asked the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor Curtis, to lobby the Shadow Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, Michael Gove, not to use BSF funding for other purposes, should the Conservative Party come to power nationally following the General Election.

The Cabinet Member for Children noted that he would shortly be meeting the Shadow Schools Minister, Nick Gibb, and would be seeking continuing commitment to the BSF programme.

5) A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton Improvement Scheme Draft Orders

Councillor Bourke asked the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor J Reynolds, to seek assurance that an incoming Conservative Government would fund the A14 improvement scheme in full.

Councillor Jenkins emphasised the need for effective noise abatement and pollution control measures to protect residents of Histon and Girton.

The Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor J Reynolds, noted that the A14 improvement scheme was not a County Council responsibility. He also confirmed that representations had already been made to the Highways Agency on the need for noise abatement and pollution control measures.

Councillor Gymer challenged the wording of the report to Council, which suggested that the improvements would benefit villages currently affected by rat-running; a Highways Agency report had suggested that the number of vehicles travelling through Histon would rise, even with the improvements.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor L W McGuire, noted that the report reflected the advice given at Cabinet.

6) Integrated Resources and Performance Report: October 2009

7) Pre-Budget Report and Local Government Finance Settlement

Councillor Downes challenged an assertion made earlier in the meeting that the current economic situation was the result of actions taken by the UK Government; he suggested that the origins of the downturn lay in the sub-prime lending market in the US.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor Curtis, commented that the UK banking crisis had contributed to the current situation.

Councillor Harrison noted that whilst the increase to Cambridgeshire's Formula Grant from 2007/08 to 2010/11 was the third lowest per head for Shire counties, its actual level of Formula Grant was close to the average.

8) County Council Information Technology (IT) Strategy 2009-2012

Councillor G Wilson queried the meaning of two phrases in the Council report, 'agile collaboration by sometimes transient teams' and 'bleeding edge' technologies. He also expressed concern that the Council needed reliable and robust IT systems, not systems involving 'more risk'.

Councillor Williamson reminded members that the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee had carried out a member-led review during 2009 of the Council's use of technology. This had made a number of recommendations relating to management aspects of IT, which Cabinet had accepted. However, the Strategy now presented focussed primarily on technical issues. He asked whether further work would be done to address the review recommendations.

Councillor Jenkins asked why, if the Council's use of IT was intended to drive down costs, this was not reflected in the Integrated Plan proposals.

Responding to Councillor G Wilson, Councillor Clarke noted that 'agile collaboration' involved bringing people together for short periods to work on projects or problems, then disbanding them. The Cabinet Member for Customer Service and Transformation, Councillor Criswell, noted that 'bleeding edge' was used to describe technologies still so new as to be unproven; tested technologies were safer. However, where there was only a limited choice of suppliers, the Council would have to accept some risk.

9) Issues from Scrutiny Committees: Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee Findings regarding the Highways Services Contract and Response

Councillor G Wilson expressed concern that the Scrutiny Committee had not been able to establish whether the Council's highways maintenance contract with WS Atkins offered good value for money, since comparisons had been made only with two other WS Atkins contracts elsewhere, rather than with contracts with other companies.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor L W McGuire, confirmed that this issue had been raised previously. He also noted that

in response to the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations, members were becoming more involved in the management of the contract, with he and Councillor Clarke now sitting on the supervisory board.

b) Report of the meeting held on 26th January 2010

2) Review of Secondary Educational Provision in St Neots

The Chairman of the Council, Councillor Oliver, advised members that the Cabinet's decision relating to the review of secondary educational provision in St Neots had been called in and would be considered by the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee on 18th February 2010.

Councillor Downes explained that the decision had not necessarily been called in because it was considered to be wrong. However, members were concerned that the evidence on which it had been based might have been insufficient.

Councillor Churchill spoke against the call-in and the unsettling effects of further delay on pupils and staff. He suggested that federation of Longsands and St Neots Community Colleges, resulting in two separate schools but with a common purpose, would lead to good educational outcomes for pupils of both schools.

Councillor Harrison emphasised that it was important to ensure that the right decision was taken, not necessarily the quickest one. She suggested that there were lessons to be learned from the earlier federation of Parkside and Coleridge Community Colleges, whilst recognising that local circumstances in St Neots were different.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor Harty, commented that the continuing uncertainty was not helping the two schools and urged that the situation be resolved as soon as possible.

3) Prescribed Alteration to Increase the Size of Willingham Primary School

4) Personal Support (Home-Based) Contract: Exemption from Contract Regulations during the Implementation of Self-Directed Support

Councillor Jenkins noted that the preferred providers' list for home care services currently included 31 providers. He expressed concern that some providers had recently been removed from the list on performance grounds and that replacement providers might be more expensive than their predecessors. He asked how the list would be developed in future.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Yeulett, noted that the Council would be monitoring and working closely with providers to transform adult social care. More information was available on request.

5) Integrated Resources and Performance Report: November 2009

Councillor Jenkins expressed concern at the time delay between the publication of resources and performance reports and their consideration by Council. He asked the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor J Reynolds, to review this. He asked for future Council reports to include an executive summary covering both good and less good performance. He also noted that the Council was forecasting only a small year-end overspend, but that this was primarily because interest rates were so low. He asked the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Yeulett, how confident he was that spending on older people's services would be contained in 2011/12.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Yeulett, noted that the projected overspend for 2010/11 on the £99.7 million pooled budget for older people's services was £4.9 million, of which the Council's liability was £3.3 million. He noted that a recovery plan was in place to recoup £1 million; additional savings of £1 million would be made in Adult Social Care; the remainder would be addressed by Cabinet once the final outturn was known.

The Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor J Reynolds, noted that the Cabinet would strive to bring in a balanced budget at year-end but that the financial context remained volatile, especially in relation to interest rates. He noted that the scope to better align resources and performance reports with Council was limited, given the timetable for their production. However, these reports were publicly available as soon as the relevant Cabinet agenda was published.

6) Phase 3 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

7) Hills Road Bridge Safety Scheme

Councillor Sedgwick-Jell welcomed this innovative scheme and hoped that it would be possible to develop similar schemes in future, despite the Council's financial constraints. His comments were endorsed by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor L W McGuire.

8) Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) Results

Councillor Downes drew attention to continuing inequalities in educational attainment, with Cambridgeshire's gap between schools' highest and lowest value added scores greater than that of any of its statistical neighbours.

Councillor Shepherd noted that whilst Cambridgeshire's overall score of 3 out of 4 for Use of Resources was good, this was not the complete picture. The sub-scores had included a 2 out of 4 for managing resources.

Responding, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Tuck, noted that the Council would continue to strive for excellence; it was hoped that the sub-score of 2 would rise to a 3 at the time of the next assessment.

9) Annual Performance Assessment of Adult Social Care Services for Cambridgeshire and Action Plan

Councillor Jenkins commended the improved assessment of adult social care services as performing 'well', but noted that this still only meant that Cambridgeshire was on a par with many other local authorities. He also expressed concern that financial cuts could limit the Council's ability to maintain or continue to improve performance.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Yeulett, agreed that it would be essential to embed improvements.

10) Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) Inspection of Safeguarding and Services for Looked After Children 2009: Improvement Plan

Councillor Lucas welcomed the Ofsted report and noted that all had a role to play to improve safeguarding and support for looked after children. He urged Councillors to attend the 'Behind the Mask' event arranged for 12th April 2010, an opportunity to meet and learn from looked after children.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor Curtis, also welcomed the findings. He commented that the Council should not be complacent but should be ambitious for its safeguarding and looked after children services.

11) Consultation on Draft National Policy Statements for Major Infrastructure Projects for Energy and Ports

In relation to concerns about the erosion of local democracy relating to planning, Councillor Downes asked the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor Curtis, to raise at his forthcoming meeting with the Shadow Schools Minister concerns about Conservative proposals to move the determination of schools' planning applications from local to central Government. The Cabinet Member for Children agreed to raise this.

12) Quarterly Update Report on Key Partnerships

Following Council's agreement earlier in the meeting to establish five new Scrutiny Committees, Councillor Jenkins suggested that review of key partnerships should be programmed into the forward plans of these Committees. In relation to the Greater Cambridge Partnership, he emphasised the need to allocate partner responsibility for Fenland people of working age who were out of work.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Tuck, welcomed the suggestion that Scrutiny Committees should programme reviews of key partnerships into their work programmes.

Speaking as the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership, the Cabinet Member for Economy and the Environment,

Councillor Orgee, agreed to ensure that responsibility for Fenland people of working age who were out of work was addressed.

Chairman: