

## **COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES**

**Date:** Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2006

**Time:** 10.30 a.m. – 3.00 p.m.

**Place:** Shire Hall, Cambridge

**Present:** Councillor: S B Normington (Chairman)

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

**Apologies:** Councillors P D Bailey, C M Ballard, B Bean, N Bell, C Carter, G J Heathcock, W G M Hensley, P E Hughes, J L Huppert, K Reynolds, P Sales and M Williamson

### **62. MINUTES: 21<sup>st</sup> FEBRUARY 2006**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **63. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### Resignation of Councillor Toomey

The Chairman reported the resignation of Councillor Toomey. The resulting by-election for the vacant Romsey electoral division would be held on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2006.

#### Director of Education, Libraries and Heritage

The Chairman led members in expressing thanks and appreciation to Andrew Baxter, the Council's Director of Education, Libraries and Heritage, who would be retiring at the end of the month. Councillors Walters and Kent paid tribute to his achievements and it was noted that Councillor Ballard had also wished to endorse these sentiments.

#### Guests

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Year 13 Sociology students from Ramsey Abbey School and Group Captain Beet from RAF Brampton, Wyton and Henlow.

## Beacon Council status

The Chairman led members in congratulating two Council services recently awarded Beacon status by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Delivery of Quality Services through Procurement, and the Recycling in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Partnership, which also involved the District Councils and Peterborough City Council.

## Petition

The Chairman reported that she had received a petition signed by approximately 1,500 adults and children asking members to consider Seal Swimming Ltd's proposal to purchase the Windmill School. As there was no relevant item on the agenda, there could be no discussion of this issue. The Chairman had agreed to allow a representative of the petitioners, Mr Carstairs, to speak at the meeting.

Mr Carstairs presented the petition, noting that he was the founder and owner of Seals Swimming Ltd. The swimming school provided lessons for 1,100 each week at three locations, Green Hedges, the Windmill School and the Grove School. Mr Carstairs asked members to consider his company's proposal to purchase the Windmill School to enable this use of the premises to continue.

Members had no questions on the petition. The Chairman noted that officers would be sending a written response to Mr Carstairs shortly.

## **64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following members declared personal interests under Paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct in relation to Minute 66, Report of the meeting of Cabinet held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2008, Item 8, 'South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework: Consultation on the Submission Draft Documents':

- Councillors Batchelor, Kindersley and McCraith as members of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

The following members declared personal interests under Paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct in relation to Minute 66, Report of the meeting of Cabinet held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2006, Item 12, 'Supporting People Distribution Formula':

- Councillor Griffiths as a Trustee of Jimmy's Night Shelter
- Councillors Jenkins as a consultant working for an organisation that supplied care services.

The following members declared personal interests under Paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct in relation to Minute 66, Report of the meeting of Cabinet held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2006, Item 1, 'NHS Reforms: Ensuring a Patient-Led NHS':

- Councillors Higginson and Williams as members of East Cambridgeshire District Council
- Councillors Butcher, Curtis, Hardy, Harper, King, Melton, Sims, Tuck and Yeulett as members of Fenland District Council
- Councillors Bates, Boddington, Downes, Dutton, Eddy, Harty and Hyams as members of Huntingdonshire District Council

- Councillors Batchelor, Kindersley and McCraith as members of South Cambridgeshire District Council
- Councillor King as the Chairman of the Bowthorpe Centre in Wisbech
- Councillor Johnstone as a Non-Executive Director of the Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Councillor Oliver as a member of the Board of Governors of Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

## 65. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

## 66. REPORTS OF CABINET MEETINGS

### Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2006

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Walters, moved receipt of the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2006.

#### Key decisions for determination

- 1) Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2006-11 and Associated Transport Strategy Issues

It was proposed by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor J Reynolds, and seconded by Councillor West,

That the Council approves the full Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2006-11 (LTP) and its appendices.

Councillor Reynolds noted that the draft LTP had been updated to reflect comments received from Government. Cambridgeshire had received the highest score in the East of England for its draft, and a 17.5% increase in LTP funding. It would be essential to ensure that the County's performance continued to be high, so that the Council received the funding it needed.

Councillor Reid welcomed the addition to the LTP of a Rail Strategy, which had previously been requested by the Liberal Democrat Group, although he suggested that more detail on costs and priorities was still needed. However, he reported that the Liberal Democrats would not be supporting the LTP, because of three main areas of concern: measures to improve accessibility in the north of the County were limited, and these were essential to reduce deprivation and promote economic development; on air quality, the LTP's aim was only to meet the Government's minimum standards, not to exceed them; and the balance of expenditure was considered to be tilted too far in favour of travel by car, with insufficient emphasis on rail, bus, cycling and walking.

Councillor McGuire expressed disappointment that the Liberal Democrat Group would not be supporting the LTP and noted that all members had had the opportunity to propose changes when it had been discussed at the Transport and Delivery Service Development Group. Councillor

Walters expressed concern that the Liberal Democrats were not proposing an alternative to the LTP in its current form. He also noted that whilst it was appropriate to focus on alternative forms of transport in urban areas, but noted that in rural areas many people relied on cars to travel to work.

Councillor King called for a bypass for Wisbech to be included in the LTP. He noted that there were two options for a route, either to the north or the west; both options should be kept open and explored. Councillor King also thanked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services and officers for their consideration of the reopening of the March to Wisbech railway line.

Councillor Powley called for a southern bypass for Ely to be included in the LTP. Since his earlier representations on this, the need for a bypass had continued to grow, with the time that the rail crossing was closed increasing, the volumes of traffic using the road route increasing, and the number of accidents at the underpass rising. Councillor Broadway asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services to lobby the East of England Regional Assembly to include this bypass in their list of regional priorities.

Councillors Broadway and Batchelor expressed concern that the recent decision to reduce the budget for 2006/07 for the provision of bus services by £253,000 would limit the aspirations set out in the Public Transport and Accessibility Strategies. Councillor Batchelor asked for priority to be given to those rural areas that had already been identified as being poorly served by public transport, which included nine areas to the north of the County and the villages between Balsham and Haverhill.

Councillor Downes and Hyams asked the Council to lobby the Highways Agency to speed up improvements to the A14, especially since the public inquiry was now not expected to start for another two years.

Councillor Jenkins commented on the importance of communities in Cambridgeshire that were neither cities nor market towns. The routes between these communities could be important travel arteries, even if they were classified only as B roads.

Councillor Higginson called for progress in the development of a transport interchange at Ely railway station; combined with a new railway station at Soham, this could make a significant contribution to reducing road traffic.

Councillor Tuck welcomed the inclusion in the LTP of an A141/A605 roundabout. She noted that bus services were not viable in very rural areas and welcomed the review commissioned from the voluntary sector to consider the alternative of community transport.

Councillor Melton welcomed the LTP but commented on the need for particular focus on the north of the County, where investment in infrastructure was needed to promote economic growth.

Responding to the speakers, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services welcomed members' comments. The Council would continue to lobby EERA on regional priorities and the Highways Agency on improvements to the A14. The Cabinet Member highlighted the substantial spending proposals linked to the LTP over the next five years, which included spending to improve bus services, cycling and walking, as well as road improvements.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried. [Voting pattern: Conservatives in favour, Liberal Democrats against, one abstention. No Labour members were present.]

2) NHS Reforms: Ensuring a Patient-Led NHS

Debate on this item took place under item 1 of the report of the meeting of Cabinet held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2006.

3) Proposed Amendments to and Adoption of the Draft Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Supplementary Planning Document, 'The Design and Location of Major Waste Management Facilities'

It was proposed by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor J Reynolds, and seconded by Councillor Dutton,

That the Council approves the proposed amendments to the Supplementary Planning Document.

Councillor Reid welcomed the Supplementary Planning Document and congratulated all those who had been involved in its preparation. A number of other members also welcomed the Document, but raised issues as set out below.

Councillor Kent emphasised the need to involve the public through effective consultation and expressed concern that this had not taken place in recent weeks with regard to a possible new Household Waste Recycling Centre and waste transfer station in her division. She asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services to consider how public involvement could be improved.

Councillor Lucas expressed concerns at shortcomings in the relationship between Government guidance on waste management and the Council's Waste Local Plan, and in the available guidance on the management of hazardous waste.

Councillor Bates suggested that in future, minerals and waste planning issues should be addressed in separate plans, recognising that waste treatments would progress increasingly beyond the traditional landfilling of former mineral quarries. Councillor Broadway endorsed this suggestion but noted that it was currently a statutory requirement for local authorities to produce a combined Minerals and Waste Plan. She reported that the Development Control Committee had considered the Document in detail and had supported it.

Councillor Higginson reported the concern of the owner of Lancaster Way Business Park in Ely at the proposal to locate a waste facility close to the entrance to the Business Park. The owner's concerns included possible traffic congestion and inappropriate appearance, especially since some of the units on the Park were used for food preparation.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor J Reynolds, welcomed members' support. He noted that once agreed, the Supplementary Planning Document would provide a sound basis on which to work with and to reassure the public. Detailed site issues would also be pursued through the usual planning processes.

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

#### Key decisions for information

##### 4) Secondary Educational Provision to Serve Northstowe

Councillor Downes welcomed the outline proposals for secondary education at Northstowe, including the proposal to co-locate the college and 16+ provision. He emphasised the need for innovative design of school buildings. He asked what provision would be made for children living in Northstowe who had special educational needs.

Responding, the Lead Member for CYPS Resources and Planning, Councillor Pegram, noted that the intention was to provide inclusive arrangements within the schools at Northstowe. Children requiring additional support would be able to attend existing special schools in the vicinity.

##### 5) Review of Primary Educational Provision in East Chesterton: Shirley Community Infant School and St Andrew's Church of England Aided Junior School

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, Councillor Johnstone, noted that the local community supported a single school in East Chesterton for all children of primary school age. It would be challenging to bring the currently split sites together. The cross-party support for doing this was therefore welcome.

##### 6) Allocation of Grant Aid to Voluntary Organisations

Councillor Downes welcomed the progress in giving voluntary organisations greater stability in their funding. He emphasised the essential role these organisations played in providing services and expressed concern that it had not been possible to increase the Council's grants even by inflation.

## Other decisions

### 7) Strategic Risk Register

Councillor Stone welcomed the progress in developing the Strategic Risk Register since the previous year, including the development of a prioritised list of risks. He also welcomed the embedding of the Register in Council processes and the involvement of Internal Audit in auditing this work.

Councillor Broadway questioned whether the list of risks was in fact in strict priority order, since, if it was, delivery of the growth agenda and the Waste Private Finance Initiative would be expected to be at the top, since they were both high risk and critical.

### 8) South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework: Consultation on the Submission Draft Documents

### 9) Budget Monitoring 2005/06

Councillors Broadway and Moss-Eccardt asked why the Office of Children and Young People's Services proposed to make use of £472,000 from reserves for its 2005/06 budget, at the same time as a £600,000 underspend was forecast. Councillor Downes expressed concern that the Council's financial position was very difficult and drew particular attention to the significant use being made by the Office of Children and Young People's Services in 2005/06 of one-off sources of funding.

[Responding, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Powley, noted that he shared members' concern that the Council's position for 2005/06 was very tight and would rely significantly on one-off sources of funding. He also noted that the Council had benefited considerably from low interest rates during 2005/06, which had kept debt charges low. Continuing tight financial control across all budgets would be essential. He agreed to ask the Deputy Chief Executive – Children and Young People's Services to send a written response to the question from Councillors Broadway and Moss-Eccardt.](#)

Councillor Hyams welcomed the current member investigation into some of the Council's trading accounts. He asked the members conducting the investigation to consider whether it was in the Council's best interests to have so many trading accounts, or whether it would be more efficient to purchase some of these services from the private sector.

Responding, Councillor Pegram confirmed that the investigation led by himself and Councillor Powley was continuing, but that it was too early to make any comments at this stage.

### 10) Top 30 Performance Monitoring for 2006/07 and Performance Monitoring for Quarter 3 of 2005/06

Councillor Lucas commended the good performance by schools as reflected by Best Value performance indicators 40 and 41, and thanked

the support given by Royal Air Force personnel to the schools close to their bases.

11) Schools Distribution Formula

Councillor Downes welcomed the adoption of a distribution formula based on activity-led resourcing, but expressed concern that the same approach was not being adopted by Government in its distribution of central funding. He asked lead members to emphasise to Government the need for clarity in demonstrating how funding was generated centrally and distributed locally.

Councillor Kent welcomed the steps to fund small secondary schools, since the previous formula had resulted in ongoing deficits for these schools. She asked officers to review these deficits and work with schools to ensure that they did not recur in future.

Responding, the Lead Member for CYPS Resources and Planning noted that there was continuing consultation by Government on the use of activity-led resourcing. With regard to deficits, members and officers were aware of the seriousness of these and were working together to improve schools' positions.

12) Supporting People Distribution Formula

Councillors Bates, Griffiths and Jenkins all expressed support for the Council's representations to Government on the reductions to the Supporting People grant. Councillor Bates expressed serious concern that the reductions were inappropriate, given that more people were living longer, needing more support to live at home, and that Cambridgeshire was an area of rapid population growth. Councillor Griffiths emphasised the particular importance of Supporting People funding to services for homeless people, including hostels and support into tenancies. Councillor Jenkins highlighted the need for a co-operative approach between Supporting People partners to the introduction of efficiency measures and the managed withdrawal of funding.

The Lead Member for Community Learning and Development and Adult Social Care, Councillor Yeulett, welcomed members' comments and agreed that increases were needed to this grant, not cuts. The Council and its Supporting People partners would continue to lobby Government on this issue.

13) Petitions

a) Ramsey Forty Foot

Councillors Downes, Higginson and Moss-Eccardt expressed the concerns of the Liberal Democrat Group about the safety of this road. Councillor Downes emphasised the need for driver education, to encourage safe driving, as well as physical road safety measures. Councillor Moss-Eccardt asked whether the engineering knowledge gained from improving the safety of this road could be transferred also to improve Sixteen Foot, a similar stretch of road.



Councillors Harper and Ogden suggested that the most effective way of improving the safety of this road would be by installing speed cameras, possibly those that timed drivers' speeds along the length of the road.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor J Reynolds, noted that officers were currently investigating a range of options to improve the safety of Ramsey Forty Foot and would be bringing a report to Cabinet shortly. However, he noted that there were 47 miles of similar roads elsewhere in the County and that it would be important to provide improvements equitably.

b) Richmond Fellowship Employment Training

Councillor Griffiths noted that the group of people who had brought this petition to Cabinet all suffered from mental illness. They had benefited from the opportunity to participate directly in local democracy and were intending to form a campaign group to pursue their case further.

The Lead Member for Community Learning and Development and Adult Social Care, Councillor Yeulett, noted that a written response had been sent to the petitioners. He would be happy to discuss further how their case could be taken forwards.

Part 2 Exempt Report

14) Option Agreement on Land at Fordham

**Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2006**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Walters, moved receipt of the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2006.

Key decision

1) NHS Reforms: Ensuring a Patient-Led NHS

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

That the County Council should support separate Primary Care Trusts for the two areas covered by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council.

The Leader of the Council drew attention to the consultation document published by the Strategic Health Authority, 'Consultation on new PCT arrangements in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire', and to the report circulated separately from the Chief Executive, which provided additional information on the options for Cambridgeshire and feedback from the consultation to date. He noted that the Cabinet had initially expressed support for a single PCT for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, but had reconvened at the request of Peterborough City Council and had then supported two separate PCTs. On both occasions, the vote had been

finely balanced. The Leader noted that he personally supported two separate PCTs, but would be giving Conservative members a free vote. Councillor Broadway confirmed that Liberal Democrat members were also being given a free vote.

Members noted as a correction to the reports of the Cabinet meetings on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2006 and 20<sup>th</sup> March 2006 that at the first meeting, Councillor Huppert had stated that it would be important for PCTs to fit in with other services being provided within the same social care boundaries. He had reiterated this view at the second meeting and had stated his support for separate PCTs for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor Bates and seconded by Councillor Brown:

That the County Council should support separate Primary Care Trusts for the three areas covered by Huntingdonshire District Council, Peterborough City Council, and Cambridgeshire County Council (excluding Huntingdonshire).

Members speaking in support of the amendment made the following comments:

- Huntingdonshire PCT was performing well and it was therefore unnecessary to change the arrangements for this area. Its strong performance included:
  - Financial balance
  - An appropriate balance between primary and secondary care, including effective work to limit delayed discharges
  - Effective partnership working, which had led to a range of successful initiatives with the County Council, District Council and Registered Social Landlords; and effective involvement in the Local Strategic Partnership.
- The main consideration should be to serve the best interests of the people of the area. If the PCT were to be merged with others in the County, there was a risk that service standards would drop.
- Many Huntingdonshire residents were proud of their PCT's achievements and also supported its retention.

Members speaking against the amendment made the following comments:

- PCTs needed to be large enough to be economically viable. Following the national reorganisation, Huntingdonshire would be too small a PCT to stand alone.
- It was likely to be a waste of the County Council's representation to support an option that was not being made available by Government.
- Cambridgeshire's work to integrate children and young people's services was being taken forward on a County-wide basis and would assist partnership working with all District Councils. It would not be helpful to have Huntingdonshire PCT and District Council working with the County Council on a different basis.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was defeated. [Voting pattern: 13 votes in favour, 33 against and 6 abstentions.]

During the debate on the main motion, the following general comments were made:

- The NHS would benefit from a period of stability instead of constant restructuring; the Government should plan NHS structures to be durable over the longer term.
- Concern was expressed that the national proposals to restructure PCTs were being made in response to the financial difficulties of the NHS, including significant overspending by some PCTs.
- Both options on which the Government was consulting would result in larger organisations, making decision-making more remote from local people and accountability more difficult. Some members expressed concern that the restructuring would be a further step towards regionalisation.
- The changes were being proposed on the basis that savings would be invested in cancer screening and palliative care. However, no independent assessment had been made of the realism of the savings envisaged.

Members speaking in support of separate PCTs for the two areas covered by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council made the following comments:

- Coterminous PCT and local authority boundaries would make the delivery of integrated health and social care services easier. Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council were at different stages with their integration of health and social care services, and the creation of a single PCT covering both authorities would mean a period of instability and disruption to the progress already made.
- Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council also had different eligibility criteria and charging regimes for older people's services, which it would be very difficult to draw together; any levelling out would be likely to mean increased costs for Cambridgeshire, with implications for other parts of the County Council's budget.

Members speaking in support of a single PCT for the areas covered by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council made the following comments:

- It would be possible to achieve greater economies of scale by having a single PCT for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, since a larger organisation would have greater purchasing power. Examples of best practice, including those from Huntingdonshire, should be adopted County-wide. Over time, it would be possible to overcome differences between Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's eligibility criteria and charging policies, to the benefit of all residents.
- A single PCT for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough would make it possible to share the different skills and expertise currently available in the two areas.
- A single PCT would make service provision to residents in the north

of the County, in places such as Whittlesey, easier. These residents currently received social care from Cambridgeshire County Council and health care through the Peterborough PCTs.

Members then voted on the original motion, which was carried. [Voting pattern: 38 votes in favour, 13 against and 1 abstention.]

#### **67. THANKS TO CATERING STAFF**

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, Councillor Johnstone, whose portfolio included Cambridgeshire Catering Services, led members in thanking the catering staff for their efforts in providing the members' lunch, particularly on this day of industrial action.

#### **68. WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

One written question had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 9:

- Councillor Bell had asked the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Powley, about the Council's expenditure on consultants, following on from an earlier written question submitted to the meeting of Council held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2005. The response provided further clarification on the Council's expenditure on consultants, explaining that the budget code for 'consultancy and hired services' included expenditure on temporary staff and on business and technical contractors who delivered specific services and projects for the Council. Excluding this expenditure, the Council's expenditure on consultants for 2004/05 had been approximately £4.9 million.

Copies of the question and response are available from Democratic Services.

#### **69. ORAL QUESTIONS**

Three oral questions were asked under Council Procedure Rule 9:

- Councillor Kindersley asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services, Councillor J Reynolds, about the Government's introduction of new concessionary bus fares. He expressed concern that this had been mismanaged, causing concern to vulnerable residents and in some cases meaning that people had to pay more than previously. He asked what steps the Council would be taking to address this. The Cabinet Member shared Councillor Kindersley's concerns, noting that the Council would continue to lobby Government to ensure that they were aware of the difficulties arising and of the need for more effective involvement of local authorities and bus operators.
- Councillor Downes asked the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, Councillor Johnstone, about the implications for Cambridgeshire of the Education White Paper, in particular the proposals relating to competition between schools. The Cabinet Member noted that the White Paper and the associated Education Bill included a number of positive measures, but that some, such as that relating to choice of school, applied more to urban than to predominantly rural authorities such as Cambridgeshire. The Council would use the measures as creatively as possible to provide high-quality education for all children. On competition

between schools, the Cabinet Member noted that Cambridgeshire had a history of good relations between a range of providers. It was hoped that this would continue.

- Councillor Jenkins asked the Lead Member for Community Learning and Development and Adult Social Care, Councillor Yeulett, to confirm that the proposed increase in hourly rates paid to independent sector providers of domiciliary care had now been implemented. He also asked whether any part of the increase had been passed on in the salaries of domiciliary care workers. The Lead Member agreed to provide a written response to these questions.

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

## **70. 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 Downes asked whether with the proposed restructuring of Police Authorities, the current headquarters at Hinchingsbrooke Park might become surplus to requirements and, if so, whether any consideration had been given to linking this with Huntingdonshire District Council's requirement for new offices. Responding, Councillor Bates noted that the Cambridgeshire Police Authority was due to discuss its response to the restructuring proposals at a meeting to be held on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2006. Discussions about property assets would follow on from any restructuring but would be unlikely to be to a timescale to assist Huntingdonshire District Council.
- Councillor Curtis expressed concern that the proposed restructuring of Police Authorities would be a step towards regionalisation and would come at a bad time for Cambridgeshire, whose services and responsiveness to communities were currently improving. He asked members of the Police Authority to oppose the restructuring proposals at their meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2006.

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

There were no questions relating to the Fire Authority.

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

## **71. MOTIONS**

One motion had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10. The following was proposed by Councillor Reid and seconded by Councillor Downes:

This Council recognises the need for an effective road transport network. However, it believes there is a need to reduce the damage to communities and village character caused by vehicles travelling at high speed and by heavy goods vehicles. It therefore calls on the Cabinet to review its speed limit policy with a view to facilitating the introduction of more extensive and lower speed limits within built-up areas. It also calls on the Cabinet to review its policy on heavy goods vehicle restrictions with a view to increasing the number of such restrictions where there would be community benefit.

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor McGuire and seconded by Councillor Eddy:

This Council has long recognised the need for an effective road transport network that includes measures to reduce the damage to communities and village character caused by vehicles travelling at inappropriate speeds and by heavy commercial vehicles. It therefore asks that the Cabinet continue to review its speed limit policy particularly in view of the imminent issue of revised guidance for speed limits by the Department of Transport.

It further asks that the Cabinet continue to monitor and maintain the good progress already achieved against the Best Value review action plan in regard to Heavy Commercial Vehicles (HCVs). In making this request the Council acknowledges the significant progress made towards developing an advisory route network for the HCV community following the appointment of the HCV Route Manager.

Members speaking in support of the main motion made the following comments:

- Called for a review of the Council's policy on speed limits to be carried out with a view to introducing more extensive and lower speed limits in built-up areas.
- Commented on the need for greater focus on the safety and amenity of communities, and the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, rather than on the interests of motorists.
- Noted that reducing vehicle speed from 35 mph to 30 mph halved the likelihood of a person being killed in the event of an accident. Reduced vehicle speed also reduced tyre noise.
- Challenged the existing policy that speed limits should be self-enforcing through physical measures. Most people were law-abiding and would observe speed limits even if they were not self-enforcing.
- Noted that other counties, including neighbouring Suffolk, had blanket 30 mph speed limits for built-up areas.
- Called for increased restrictions to HCVs in built-up areas, since residents suffered from the noise resulting from HCV movements. This was the case during the day but particularly so at night, meaning that night-time HCV restrictions might be appropriate.
- Noted that problems with HCVs were intensifying. Numbers of HCVs were increasing and heavier vehicles would now be coming to the UK from continental Europe. Increasing use was being made of satellite navigation systems, which could direct HCV drivers to cut through smaller villages rather than to keep to A roads.
- Commented that further work could be done to develop an HCV advisory

route network, but that given their commercial considerations, operators were unlikely to observe this without more formal restrictions.

- Noted that reductions to speed limits and restrictions to HCV movements in built-up areas were strongly supported by Parish Councils and residents in many parts of the County. Communities should be treated equitably.
- Commented that village frameworks should not necessarily be used to define boundaries for traffic management measures, since these were planning boundaries and could be very tightly drawn. In many cases it would be appropriate to introduce measures further outside village boundaries.

Members speaking in support of the amendment made the following comments:

- Emphasised that the current policy of reducing speed limits from 40 mph to 30 mph in built-up areas only where this could be self-enforcing was realistic. The Police had made it clear that they did not have the resources to enforce speed limits in built-up areas. It would be contrary to effective partnership working to introduce limits that were not self-enforcing and therefore did not have the support of the Police.
- Noted that under the existing policy, measures to enforce speed limits were discussed with local communities on a case-by-case basis, to ensure that speed limits were observed. However, hard enforcement measures were expensive and it would not be unhelpful falsely to raise communities' expectations as to the number of schemes that could be introduced.
- Noted that the Council now employed an HCV Manager, whose role it was to liaise with commercial operators to reach agreement over the routes to be used by HCVs. However, HCVs would continue to need access to service sites in villages and rural areas, even if the access roads had not been constructed for this purpose.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was carried. [Voting pattern: Conservatives in favour, Liberal Democrats against. No Labour members were present.]

The motion as amended was then put to the vote and was carried. [Voting pattern: unanimous.]

## **72. 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 Normington, seconded by the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Orgee, and agreed unanimously:

- Councillor Kenney to be appointed to the pool of members from which the Staff Appeals Committee is drawn
- Councillor Brown to replace Councillor Hyams as a member of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee.

Chairman: