

525. INTEGRATED PLAN 2012/13

The covering report dispatched with the main agenda presented the overview of the Council's Integrated Plan. The Plan was included as a separate document Appendix 1 and been made available as a hard copy at a Members Seminar on Wednesday 25th January and electronically on the Council's website the same day. The Integrated Plan document covered the period 2012/13 in detail and 2013/14 through to 2016/17 in outline. The paper was designed to take Cabinet through the key issues within the Integrated Plan prior to formal recommendation by Cabinet for Council decision in February.

Attention was drawn to a list of changes since the publication of the draft Integrated Plan document (attached as appendix 1 to these minutes) as well as the additional papers circulated electronically in advance of the meeting and as part of a fourth despatch in relation to:

- Treasury Management Strategy Statement
- Changes to Section 7: proposal 6 Cambridgeshire School Response to Demographic Pressures, proposal 8 Adult Social Care and proposal 14 Continued Commitment to Waste PFI Budget requiring new insertions to page 261, 275 and 323.
- Replacement pages 387-389 to Section 8 as a result of the insertion of an Additional Community Impact Assessment regarding the Restructure of Growth and Infrastructure Directorate (now Strategy and Development)

The changes represented by the above would be reflected in a revised document to be available before the full Council meeting.

Before discussing the Plan, the Leader asked and received confirmation that all Members of Cabinet had read and were fully aware and understood all the relevant documents, especially the community impact assessments at section 8 of the document.

Three non-Cabinet members spoke on this item:

- Councillor Bourke, the Liberal Democrat Group Leader, reported that his Group supported the decision to reverse the Council's five year Council tax freeze policy and capital programme proposals for investing in Chesterton Station and Highways maintenance. However he questioned the Council's ability to manage large scale capital projects. He also highlighted that Wisbech was badly served by the budget and that consideration should be given to reopening the Wisbech rail line with help from capital monies which could help solve problems of teacher recruitment. He also made reference to the Chisholm cycle trail, that if it was completed, would link Addenbrooke's Hospital, the science park and two stations. In response, the Leader of the Council highlighted that Wisbech would be a beneficiary of both the Superfast Broadband project and the proposal to increase Highways Maintenance spend. Other Cabinet members cited the considerable investment undertaken as part of the Building Schools for the Future Programme

which was also an example of a very large, well managed Council project. Councillor Bourke expressed incredulosity that the Administration was setting aside £100k for additional Members allowances even before the membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel (which was to undertake a further review of the scheme), had been agreed. He questioned whether a 17.5% increase in basic allowances was appropriate at a time when council employees were subject to a wage freeze and when services were being cut. In response, the Leader of the Council explained that the £100k had been placed in the budget last year and was simply being carried forward. He made it clear that the final decision on agreeing increases to Members allowances would be for Full Council, following the receipt of a report following the independent review.

- Councillor Nethsingha the Liberal Democrat opposition spokesperson for Resources highlighted the missed opportunities and lack of funding in the Plan to reduce climate change, through cutting carbon emissions. She considered there had been a missed opportunity to take advantage of government grants to invest in solar power to generate income, as well as helping support the local green technology industry. In response the Leader indicated that the Council continued to seek to reduce its own carbon emissions and that this was already embedded in most council activities. Other members pointed to the investment activities of the Community Energy Fund.
- Councillor Brook-Gordon whilst welcoming the budget provision for prevention of domestic violence, criticised the “scatter gun approach” adopted, when targeted intervention was the way to stop repeat incidents. She suggested consultation should be undertaken with experts in the field who could provide appropriate guidance. She also highlighted her belief that there was unnecessary budget / staff resources allocated on preventing trafficking and female genital mutilation, which she considered was not a large scale problem in Cambridgeshire, compared to say London.
- Councillor Downes the Liberal Democrat spokesperson for Education and Learning made reference to proposals in 2013-14 for a review to reduce the County Council’s involvement in Cromwell museum governance arrangements, expressing his added support to Councillor Lucas’s already expressed views of the importance of ensuring the continuation of a valuable asset, which was very important in terms of local Cambridgeshire history. In response to this, it was explained that the proposals would involve a full consultation exercise as the aim was to seek alternative governance arrangements, not close down the Museum. Councillor Downes also made reference to the substantial level of funding to be lost to the County Council in the forthcoming year (3.1m was quoted of which an £800k loss was attributable to CYPs) as a result of supporting Central Government’s School Academies programme. As 40 schools in the County had benefited from increased central government spend as part of the programme, he considered that it was only appropriate that there should be a net transfer of resources from the least vulnerable to the most vulnerable, and was seeking that the academies should invest a proportion of their windfall payments in their local communities.
- Councillor Shepherd the Liberal Democrat Health Spokesman highlighted the continued problems with the adult social care budget which had continued to

overspend in the last 3-4 years and had only been balanced in the current year through the application of reserves. She questioned the strategic management approach of the service, in terms of the background of difficulties of top slicing health services and the major restructuring of health care services being undertaken. In response to this point, Councillor Curtis later highlighted that the service had in fact made savings through the re-ablement programme and current changes being proposed including the development of social networks which would make the service fit for purpose. Councillor Shepherd also highlighted that she saw no evidence to show that joined up thinking was taking place in terms of accessing community transport and addressing the huge inequalities still prevalent in some parts of the County. She considered, when referencing the previous report's debate which made reference to £12 per head for community passenger transport, that this amount could be seen as a bargain if it kept people out of hospital beds. In response she was assured that a great deal of work was being undertaken with partners and the independent sector to ensure it was a budget that the County Council could meet and to help ensure a better understanding of the pressures and the action that could be taken to address them.

- Councillor Tierney expressed his concerns that Cabinet having recently accepted interim proposals from overview and scrutiny to increase budget provision to combat domestic violence was, in the same Plan, now proposing a net cut of a children's play worker at a women's refuge and requested that the cut should be reversed. In response, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services indicated that the post was the subject of time limited funding and it had been made clear to the refuge in January 2011 that the funding needed to be looked at. Repeated requests from management for details of what the post involved had not received any response. An offer of an additional 3 months funding had been made to give time to search for alternative funding sources.

The Leader went through each section of the Integrated Plan and with Cabinet Members support highlighted the key issues, including those within their portfolio area. These included:

- That developing Cambridgeshire's economy, helping people live independent and healthy lives and supporting and protecting the vulnerable were at the heart of the County Council's spending plans for 2012/13.
- That the Cabinet had listened to the public and as a result of the consultation exercise and taking account into account the public's preferences, had produced proposals to increase spending in adult social care, provide more school places, increased investment for improving roads, transport and superfast broadband which would help boost business and encourage further house-building. In addition, no libraries were proposed for closure.
- £630 million of capital investment over the next five years to ensure Cambridgeshire was open for business and to support prosperity, jobs, education and economic growth

The capital budget proposals included:

- An increase on last year of £6.4 million for Adult Social Care to protect the most vulnerable in society taking it to a total spend of £188.5 million

- An extra £90 million over five years to improve the road network, increase safety and keep Cambridgeshire moving – resulting in a total of £33 million to be spent in the forthcoming Municipal year.
- £77 million in Children’s services mainly to provide additional school places.
- £20 million investment in superfast broadband,
- £26 million for vital transport measures such as Chesterton Station (subject to the rail franchise) and £29 million for a new link road to solve the Ely level crossing problem.

Extra money would also be spent on:

- Securing library services and transforming them to provide a twenty first century service.
- Providing an additional £100,000 for support to carers and a further increase in funding for the voluntary and community organisations such as the Care Network, to support volunteering.
- Protecting school crossing patrols.
- Promoting cycle training in schools – so it would be free at the point of use.
- Continuing the U project to help year 11 pupils progress into education, employment or training.

Other Initiatives highlighted included:

- There would be improved joint working with district councils to achieve improved recycling rates for waste
- Housing stock would be better insulated to reduce carbon emissions in line with existing embedded green policies
- The partnership approach to reducing the numbers of children in local authority care through the Looked after Children Placement Strategy and saving £2m without having to change thresholds.
- £1m being put into a parenting programme to reduce significant costs that would otherwise arise later as a result of family breakdown.
- Commissioning a new school for helping support the needs of children diagnosed as being autistic
- Being one of the first authorities to move to the new Children Social Care Unit model as proposed by the Munro report.
- Increasing the preventative and early intervention work to help people remain independent longer, with the investment in re-ablement being central to this.

As already set out in the previous report the plans to reduce subsidised bus services would be phased over three years to be accompanied by a £1.5 million investment in targeted local transport schemes to make sure where possible, alternative options were available before subsidised services were reduced.

The Leader highlighted that the Council was already a very lean organisation in comparison with other councils and had achieved £50 million savings last year for which tribute was paid to all staff, especially to the LGSS Director of Finance, the Chief Executive and his management team. The savings achieved resulted from working smarter and through greater working with partners, such as sharing services with Northamptonshire County Council an example being the £9.5m saving expected to be made in sharing IT services over a number of years. Another example was the new proposals coming forward to share services with Norwich City Council which was included as a separate confidential report later on the agenda.

The Leader of the Council highlighted that residents had indicated in response to a public consultation that they would be prepared to pay more in council tax to preserve essential services. Cabinet had listened to the public and were proposing a Council Tax rise of 2.95 per cent which was a brave decision to ensure extra investment could be made in vital front line services. As a result, this meant having to reject the one off payment offered by Central Government to councils to freeze Council Tax for the forthcoming year. It was explained that taking this one-off payment would have led to the Council having to make further savings in the 2012/13 budget and would have resulted in an even greater increase in council tax in future years, as the one off payment was not added to the base budget. The so called "Pickles Promise" was a good offer designed for high spending councils but not for councils such as Cambridgeshire, who already had a history of low council tax rises. If the Council were to take the money on offer from Government, it would leave the authority with a multi-million hole in its budget that would grow larger, to around £30 million over the next five years.

He explained that there came a point where if low taxation was followed to its ultimate conclusion, the County Council could not provide the services the people of Cambridgeshire expected. The proposed rise would still mean that Cambridgeshire would have one of the lowest Council Tax rates in the country. It was therefore proposed to raise Council Tax by 2.95 per cent (equating to a Council Tax Band D household paying £30.87 a year more) to protect vital front line services as supported by residents and to avoid a multi-million funding gap in the future. (estimated at £30m)

The Council meeting was therefore being asked to back the £848 million budget and make £43 million savings following Central Government's cuts to the Council's revenue grant of almost 25 per cent over the last two years. The proposals also confirmed the planned reduction of up to 154 full time equivalent posts from the County Council as announced to employees in November.

It was resolved to:

- 1) Consider the Integrated Plan (Appendix 1 of the report), including supporting Budget, Community Impact Assessments, Consultation Responses and other material, in the light of all planning activities undertaken to date.

- 2) Identify any final amendments and changes Cabinet wishes to make to the Integrated Plan, prior to submission to Council as were provided orally at the meeting and set out in appendix 1 to these minutes.
- 3) Delegate responsibility for agreeing any further alterations to the Integrated Plan and Budget to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the LGSS Director of Finance.
- 4) Recommend to Council the following:
 - a. That approval is given to the Service/Directorate cash limits as set out in Section 3, Table 3.2, page 58 of the Integrated Plan.
 - b. That approval is given to a total County Budget Requirement in respect of general expenses applicable to the whole County area of £848,201,000 as set out in Section 3, Table 4.1, page 62 of the Integrated Plan.
 - c. That approval is given to a recommended County Precept for Council Tax from District Councils of £240,483,000 (to be received in ten equal instalments in accordance with the fall-back provisions of the Local Authorities (Funds) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 1995), as set out in Section 3, Table 4.1, page 62 of the Integrated Plan.
 - d. That approval is given to 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 (222,948), as set out in Section 3, Table 4.2, page 63 of the Integrated Plan:

A	£719.10
B	£838.95
C	£958.80
D	£1,078.65
E	£1,318.35
F	£1,558.05
G	£1,797.75
H	£2,157.30
 - e. That approval is given to the Prudential Borrowing, Prudential Indicators as set out in Section 3, Table 7.3, page 71 of the Integrated Plan.
 - f. That approval is given to the Treasury Management Strategy as set out in brief in Section 3, page 72 of the and Section 4 of the Integrated Plan.
 - g. That approval is given to the report of the LGSS Director of Finance on the levels of reserves and robustness of the estimates as set out in Section 3, page 76 of the Integrated Plan.

- h. That approval be given to Capital Payments in 2012/13 up to £146.7m arising from:
- i. Commitments from schemes already approved; and
 - ii. The consequences of new starts (for the five years 2011/12 to 2015/16) shown in summary in Section 3, Table 6.3, page 69 of the Integrated Plan.
 - iii. Approving the schedule of charges set out in Section 11.
- 5) Approving the priorities and aspirations set out in Section 1 and 2 of the Integrated Plan.
- 6) Authorising the LGSS Director of Finance, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make technical revisions to the Integrated Plan, including the foregoing recommendations 4a to 4h to the County Council, so as to take into account any changes deemed appropriate, including updated information on District Council Tax Base and Collection Funds, and specific grants and any changes required to the formal recommendations to the Council meeting as a result of legislation changes.

Appendix 1

INTEGRATED PLAN

Since the production of the integrated plan the following amendments have been suggested. The adjustments in the first instance will only have an effect in the 2012/13 financial year and the implications for funding in future years will form part of the considerations supporting the 2013/14 Plan

Item	Action	Impact £000
CREDS savings proposal	Remove saving	118
Bikeability scheme	Increase spending	10
Extra support for voluntary sector	Increase spending	30
New carers support scheme	Increase spending	100
U project	Remove saving	55
Total		313
Reduce Pressures and Development Reserve balance		-313
Total		0

The necessary adjustments will be made to the full Integrated Plan documentation submitted to Council.