

COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 17th March 2009
Time: 10.30 a.m. – 2.55 p.m.
Place: Shire Hall, Cambridge
Present: Councillor: A G Orgee (Chairman)

Councillors C M Ballard, J D Batchelor, I C Bates, N Bell, B Boddington, K Bourke, M Bradney, J Broadway, P Brown, C Carter, K Churchill, S Criswell, M Curtis, P J Downes, J Dutton, R Farrer, S A Giles, G Griffiths, G F Harper, N Harrison, D Harty, W G M Hensley, S Higginson, P E Hughes, P Humphrey, W Hunt, J L Huppert, C Hyams, J D Jenkins, E Kadić, G Kenney, A C Kent, S G M Kindersley, S J E King, V H Lucas, D McCraith, L W McGuire, A K Melton, R Moss-Eccardt, S B Normington, M K Ogden, L J Oliver, D R Pegram, J A Powley, P Read, A A Reid, J E Reynolds, K Reynolds, P Sales, M Shuter, L Sims, M Smith, T Stone, R Turner, J K Walters, J West, F Whelan, K Wilkins, H Williams, M Williamson, L J Wilson and F H Yeulett

Apologies: Councillors B Bean, G Heathcock, S Johnstone and J M Tuck

295. MINUTES: 12th FEBRUARY 2009

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 12th February 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

296. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Corporate Leadership Team restructuring

The Chairman reminded members that the new structure for Corporate Leadership Team would come into effect in April. Details of existing staff who had been appointed or assimilated into the new structure had been placed around the Council Chamber. The Chairman led members in recording the Council's thanks to Mike Parsons, the current Deputy Chief Executive for Corporate Services, who would be leaving the Council in April, and in wishing him well for the future.

Awards and achievements

The Chairman led members in offering congratulations to all those whose work had contributed to the following awards and achievements:

- The Audit Commission's recent Comprehensive Performance Assessment rating of the Council as a three-star authority that was performing well
- Recognition of the Council's g2g card in the 'Best Government-Funded Prepaid Category' in the Paybefore Awards

- Beacon Status for ‘cutting red tape: delivering real economic and social benefit through better local regulation’
- The Customer Service Excellence Standard for Highway Services.

Youth Leisure Awards

The Chairman reported that he had attended the Young People’s Oskars in Littleport the previous Friday and commended all those who had been involved.

Councillor Johnstone

The Chairman led the Council in sending good wishes to Councillor Johnstone during her current illness.

297. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor	Minute	Details
Bradney	305 (3)	Governor of Cottenham Village College
Curtis	305 (3)	Governor of Sir Harry Smith Community College
	305 (8)	Trustee of Age Concern Cambridgeshire
Giles	305 (10)	Provider of supported lodgings and of emergency accommodation for looked after children
Hunt	305 (13) and (14)	East Cambridgeshire District Councillor and member of the Ely Masterplan Working Group
Huppert	305 (14)	Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge and Fellow-Elect of Clare College, Cambridge
Hyams	305 (1)	Huntingdonshire District Council representative on the Recycling in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (RECAP) Partnership
Jenkins	305 (8) and (16)	Lay member of Cambridgeshire Community Services
Kent	305 (3)	Governor of Cambridge Regional College
Lucas	305 (3)	Governor of Long Road Sixth Form College
	305 (8) and (16)	Chairman of Cambridgeshire Community Services
McGuire	305 (3)	Governor of Yaxley schools
Melton	305 (8)	Family members in receipt of social care
Powley	305 (3)	Governor of Soham Village College
Whelan	305 (2)	Parent of one current and one prospective pupil of Comberton Village College
Williams	305 (8)	Trustee of Age Concern Cambridgeshire
Wilson	305 (2)	Governor of Comberton Village College

298. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

One member of the public attended the meeting to ask a question:

- Mr Andrew Moody, a Community Governor at Great Gidding Primary School, asked the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor Harty, about the recent notification that new build accommodation for the school would not be proceeding as planned. He asked why this was the case and what budget the Council had set aside to maintain the existing premises in future, given that no investment in maintenance had been made over the past seven years.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor Harty, explained that a number of factors meant that it was no longer possible to proceed with the new build accommodation, which would have cost £4 million. He apologised for the way in which the news had been communicated and noted that he would be attending a meeting later that day with the Headteacher and Governors. The Council was committed to maintaining the school and the meeting would begin a consultative process to develop a scheme for inclusion in the 2011/12 capital programme.

A transcript of the question and response is available from Democratic Services.

299. REPORTS OF CABINET MEETING – ITEMS FOR DETERMINATION

Members noted that the report of the meeting of Cabinet held on 24th February 2009 contained no items for determination.

300. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

- Councillor Jenkins had asked the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Performance, People, Policy and Law, Councillor J Reynolds, about new jobs proposed in the Council's budget for 2009/10.

The response was circulated at the Council meeting and copies are available from Democratic Services.

301. ORAL QUESTIONS

Fifteen oral questions were asked under Council Procedure Rule 9:

- Councillor Stone asked the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways, Councillor Bradney, about the hiatus in work to replace the pavement on North Fen Road in Hinxton. He referred to earlier discussions about funding for this work and asked whether the Council would pay the £15,000 needed for it to be completed. The Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways agreed to send a written response.
- Councillor Bourke asked the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways, Councillor Bradney, what plans were in place to make structural repairs to roads across the County necessitated by the recent bad weather, and whether the County Council would be making any additional funding

available. Responding, the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways drew attention to financial provision in the Integrated Plan and work already underway. He also noted that the Council was lobbying regional and central Government for additional funding to help meet the exceptional level of need.

- Councillor Williamson asked the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Scrutiny Liaison Member, Councillor McGuire, about the review of Scrutiny being carried out by the Cabinet Member for Customer Service, Transformation and Special Projects. He also urged that current and former Chairmen of Scrutiny Committees be involved in the review. Responding, the Deputy Leader confirmed that the Cabinet Member for Customer Service, Transformation and Special Projects was carrying out a review. Members from all groups would be consulted and any proposals for change would be brought to Council in due course.
- Councillor Jenkins asked the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor Curtis, about recent changes to the mechanism and level of funding for Homestart. He emphasised the importance of this organisation in helping to deliver the Council's strategic objectives and asked for it to be funded from the base budget in future. Responding, the Cabinet Member for Children explained that the introduction of children's centres had affected the distribution of funding to a number of voluntary organisations. He could not commit to including funding in the base budget in future, but would continue to work with these organisations to ensure that the Council's objectives were delivered.
- Councillor Hyams asked the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways, Councillor Bradney, for an update on problems with the connecting road bridge between Huntingdon and Godmanchester. The Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways confirmed that the bridge was under review and that solutions would be taken forward in consultation with local members.
- Councillor Sales asked the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways, Councillor Bradney, to cycle along River Lane in Cambridge to determine whether this road was of an acceptable standard. The Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways confirmed that he had cycled along it and agreed that improvement work was needed.
- Councillor Huppert asked the Deputy Leader, Councillor McGuire, to advise of the total redundancy and associated costs to the Council of removing three officers from Corporate Leadership Team as part of the current restructuring. The Deputy Leader agreed to send a written response.
- Councillor Whelan asked the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways, Councillor Bradney, to reconsider Grantchester Parish Council's request for an interactive speed sign, which had been submitted prior to the recent discussion of policy at the Growth and Environment Policy Development Group. The Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways agreed to discuss this with Councillor Whelan, but noted that it would be important to be mindful of the possibility of setting of a precedent.

- Councillor Harper asked the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways, Councillor Bradney, when work to install interactive speed cameras on Forty Foot Bank would start and be completed. The Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways reported that some engineering problems had been encountered; these were being addressed and a revised programme of works would be shared with local members shortly. In response to a supplementary question, he confirmed the Council's commitment to addressing speeding and accidents on all of the County's roads, including those in Fenland.
- Councillor Ballard drew attention to a recent serious assault on an unlit footpath in his division. He asked the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways, Councillor Bradney, whether the County Council's current street lighting budget could be used to address safety concerns on footpaths and whether this issue would be addressed through the forthcoming Streetlighting Private Finance Initiative (PFI). The Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways reported that the Cambridge Community Safety Partnership would be working together to install lighting on the footpath in question. More widely, funding was used to reduce night-time accidents, street crime and the fear of crime.
- Councillor Moss-Eccardt asked the Deputy Leader, Councillor McGuire, for an assurance that none of the Council's suppliers were using an illegal blacklisting agency to categorise sub-contractors, or, if they were, to cancel the Council's contracts with them. Responding, the Deputy Leader undertook to discuss this matter with officers and to ensure that the Council was fulfilling its public duty.
- Councillor Dutton asked the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways, Councillor Bradney, to carry out a survey of the A141 Hartford roundabout, with a view to installing traffic lights to ease congestion at this junction. The Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways agreed that there was a problem at this junction and undertook to work with local members to find a solution.
- Councillor Kindersley drew attention to local concerns about the proposal from the University of Cambridge to demolish the bridge between Barton and Haslingfield. He asked the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways, Councillor Bradney, to arrange a summit for stakeholders to enable this proposal to be discussed. The Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways agreed to discuss the suggestion of a summit with officers and to ensure that proper information-sharing took place.
- Councillor Downes asked the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Performance, People, Policy and Law, Councillor J Reynolds, whether the Council intended to adopt the proposal made by the Conservative Party nationally that unlimited ward funding be devolved to Councillors; and if so, made some suggestions for spending in his area. The Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Performance, People, Policy and Law declined to comment on national proposals and reminded members that the County Council's spending proposals were set out in its Integrated Plan.

- Councillor Griffiths asked the Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Yeulett, for an update on the delay to the reopening of the Cambridge Central Library. She suggested that records from the previous refitting in 1974 could be used to inform the current work. Responding, the Cabinet Member for Communities reminded members that a number of construction issues had arisen during the course of this project; the Council would continue to work with the contractors to reopen the Library as soon as possible.

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

302. 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 Moss-Eccardt asked when the signs on the A14 giving casualty figures would be updated.
- Councillor Batchelor asked whether the proceeds from the sale of police houses and stations in Linton and Melbourn would be directly reinvested in policing for these villages.
- Councillor Kindersley welcomed the recent Operation Anglia, which had resulted in 111 people being apprehended in one day for a variety of motoring offences, and asked for such operations to be repeated frequently and more widely.
- Councillor McCraith sought assurance that with the sale of the police station in Melbourn, there would be no reduction to the police service for the village.

Responding, the Chairman of the Police Authority, Councillor Walters, noted that:

- The signs on the A14 were primarily the responsibility of the Highways Agency.
- He also welcomed the success of Operation Anglia and hoped that such operations would continue, but this would be an operational decision.
- The sale of the police stations in Linton and Melbourn was linked to the wider sale of police houses to a registered social landlord (RSL). A police presence would be maintained in both villages and the RSL had agreed that the stations be retained for an extra year after the sale to enable consultations with the local community on the nature and location of this presence to take place.

Report of the Chairman of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

There were no questions on this report.

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

303. MOTIONS

No motions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10.

304. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

The following change to Committee membership was proposed by the Chairman, Councillor Orgee, seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor McGuire, and agreed unanimously:

- Councillor Oliver to fill the vacancy for a substitute member on the Joint Development Control Committee for the Cambridge Fringes.

305. REPORT OF THE CABINET – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor McGuire, moved receipt of the report of the meeting of Cabinet held on 24th February 2009.

- 1) Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste Development Scheme and the Recycling in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (RECAP) Partnership Waste Design Guide

Councillor Reid asked for the County's Waste and Recycling Strategy to be reviewed in light of the Council's adoption of carbon reduction as a key aim. He expressed concern that no calculation had been made to date of the carbon emissions resulting from the transportation of waste around the County, and suggested that more localised composting of green waste in particular could help to reduce carbon emissions.

Councillor Jenkins called for greater attention to be paid to reduction and reuse of waste, alongside recycling, especially the reuse of garden waste on site instead of this being collected for centralised treatment.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for the Economy, Environment and Climate Change, Councillor Brown, noted that Climate Change officers were working closely with Waste and Recycling colleagues and agreed to pursue these suggestions.

- 2) Extension of School Age Range: Comberton Village College
- 3) Cambridge Area 14-19 Partnership Review of Post-16 Transport Arrangements

Councillor Kindersley welcomed the proposal to add St Neots schools to those available to students living in Gamlingay, but expressed concern that the choice of schools in Bedfordshire as well as Cambridgeshire and the continuing bar on schools in Cambridge could be frustrating for some.

Councillor Powley noted that the Fenland Flyer bus service, which enabled students living in Fenland and East Cambridgeshire to attend post-16 courses in Cambridge, was currently funded by the Learning and Skills Council to 2011. He urged for funding for the service to be continued beyond this date.

Councillor Broadway endorsed Councillor Powley's comment. She also asked for clear explanations to be given to parents and students living in the Ditton Lodge area of catchment areas and eligibility for subsidised transport, since their proximity to the Suffolk border meant that these could be confusing.

Councillor Downes welcomed the changes but asked the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor Harty, to ensure that there was equity of provision for students taking both A-levels and vocational courses. He also commented that the changes were likely to mean that more students travelled greater distances, and asked whether the additional cost of this had been calculated and covered.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Learning acknowledged that this was a complex issue, which would require continued close working between partners. He noted that it was not possible to give any guarantees at present about the continuation of specific services.

- 4) Lease to Fenland Area Community Enterprise Trust (FACET) of Marwick Centre, March

Councillors West and Yeulett welcomed the Cabinet's recent decision on the lease of the Marwick Centre to FACET. The Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Pegram, thanked members for their support.

- 5) Strategic Risk Register

Councillor Batchelor asked the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor Curtis, what was causing the increase in the needs of children and young people, which had been added to the Strategic Risk Register as a new risk.

Councillors Jenkins and Moss-Eccardt expressed concern that Cabinet did not appear to have considered any mitigating actions to address the risks identified in the Register. Councillor Moss-Eccardt suggested that there should be a complementary list of risks previously identified that had now materialised.

Councillor Jenkins asked whether there were more or fewer high risks in this version of the Register than in the previous version. He expressed concern that two risks were high – 'likely to occur at some time under normal circumstances' – and also suggested that risks relating to the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway should not have been downgraded to the departmental risk register.

Councillor Downes suggested that composite risks such as 5 and 6 combined too many separate factors, hindering efforts to mitigate against them. Councillor Reid suggested specifically that risks relating to Pensions should be treated separately, given the range of issues beyond the Council's control, such as fluctuations in the stock market, increasing longevity and Government legislation. Councillor Reid asked whether the highlighting of some text in the Register had particular relevance.

Councillor Harrison commented that risk 16 on climate change did not make it clear whether the aim was to stabilise or reduce emissions. She suggested that to assist in mitigating against this risk, a number of the Council's major projects should be reviewed in the context of what was now known about climate change and emissions. These projects should include the Waste and Streetlighting PFIs and the Transport Innovation Fund proposals.

Councillor Sales suggested that the risks relating to safeguarding children were significantly understated, since it was impossible to prevent child protection issues from arising, or to ensure perfect communications between agencies. Councillor Hughes suggested that safeguarding issues relating to vulnerable adults should also be given a higher risk rating. Councillor Read commented that it was the role of everyone in society to ensure that vulnerable children were protected, not only Social Services and its partner agencies.

Councillor Ballard suggested that the entry in the Strategic Risk Register on Building Schools for the Future did not adequately reflect the severity of the risks identified in the programme's own risk register.

Responding to Councillor Batchelor, the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor Curtis, explained that there were expected to be increasing numbers of children in need as a result both of the recession and of the national debate about safeguarding. He agreed to discuss the risk rating of safeguarding with Children and Young People's Services Spokes.

Responding to the other speakers, the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Performance, People, Policy and Law, Councillor J Reynolds, reminded members that the Audit and Accounts Committee had considered the Register prior to Cabinet. He provided assurance that there were processes in place to ensure that the risks identified were appropriately managed. On Pensions specifically, he reminded members that it was the role of the Pensions Committee to monitor and manage the Council's pensions scheme.

6) Integrated Finance and Performance Report: December 2008

Councillor Huppert commented on the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment rating as a three-star authority, which was improving well. Placed in the national context of all Shire counties, he considered that this was average performance: 17 out of a total of 34 authorities were doing better either on the star rating or the direction of travel, or both. He called for more honest publicity of the Council's relative performance.

Councillor Jenkins commented on the Council's forecast outturn for year-end, noting that many services would be overspent and that this overspending would be offset only by factors outside the Council's control, relating to lower interest rates and lower PFI expenses than had been anticipated. He expressed concern at the time lag in information, which meant that the March meeting of Council was considering December's finance and performance report. He also called for more honest publicity relating to the Council's situation, for example to make it clear that additional funds for services in 2009/10 would largely be to meet the costs of inflation, rather than to deliver additional services.

Councillor Harrison called for more open reporting of areas of poor and worsening performance. She also noted that the underspend on debt charges had been anticipated for some time and expressed disappointment that this had not been reinvested in services during the year, for example, on highways maintenance works which had been suspended mid-year because funding had run out.

Councillor Moss-Eccardt highlighted three particular areas of concern, staff sickness, the increasing use of Legal Services as shown by increasing levels of income, and rising levels of debt.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor Curtis, and the Cabinet Member for the Economy, Environment and Climate Change urged members to celebrate success and to recognise the achievement of staff in improving performance. The Cabinet Member for Children reminded members that Cambridgeshire had been shown to be the most improved County Council in the country.

The Deputy Leader, Councillor McGuire, also urged members to recognise the improvements made. On the time lag in bringing finance and performance reports to Council, he noted that the introduction of the new performance management system, CorVu, would help to ensure that all members had access to up-to-date information.

7) Environment and Community Services (ECS) Scrutiny Committee Member-Led Review of Services Promoting the Wellbeing of People Aged 50 and Over, and the Response

Councillor Hughes welcomed the valuable work being done to support older people but expressed concern that the relatively high eligibility criteria for services meant that people who used them would receive less benefit from them than would be the case if the thresholds were lower.

Councillor Ballard suggested that there should be greater refinement in the categorisations of older people. He accepted that it was appropriate for people aged 50-plus to begin to plan for an active and healthy retirement. There should then be two more categories, the healthy elderly and the frail elderly. It was the latter who required the most intensive support. He also noted that it was not yet proven that overall increases in life expectancy were being accompanied by longer periods of high-quality, healthy life or rather meant prolonged periods of frailty and illness, with associated higher costs of care.

Councillor Harrison questioned whether it was appropriate to define older age as starting from 50, given the scarcity of resources and high levels of need for services for more frail older people.

Councillor Jenkins expressed concern that although generally, Scrutiny in the Council worked well, the Council's response to this report had been lukewarm.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Pegram, emphasised that the Cabinet had welcomed the report. The Scrutiny Committee's recommendations would be taken forward and developed into an action plan, in consultation with older people. The aim should be to promote active and healthy lifestyles throughout life to ensure that as people grew older, they retained their wellbeing and independence.

8) Older People's Strategy

Councillor Jenkins asked what the seven dimensions of independence valued by older people were, as only six were listed. [It was confirmed later in the meeting that the seventh was 'getting out and about'.]

Councillor Ballard expressed concern at the European Court ruling that employers could force employees to retire at 65. He asked the Council to consider how it could continue to give opportunities to older people. He also noted that consultation with the healthy elderly did not represent the frail elderly. There would continue to be a need for residential care once older people reached the stage that they could no longer cope independently overnight. Councillor Ballard urged partners to develop the action plan to support the Strategy and to take this forward as soon as possible.

Councillor Sales asked how the Older People's Strategy related to existing plans and strategies both of the Council and of its partners.

Councillor Hughes noted that it was possible to identify by the age of five those people who would age well and those who would age badly. She urged for better use to be made of this information, to enable people to be supported earlier. She called for the valuable role of older people in society to be recognised and older people not to be viewed as a problem.

Councillor Melton highlighted the difficult resourcing decisions that would lie ahead as the County's population increased and aged and the demand for older people's services grew. Councillor Ogden expressed concern at the increasing costs of healthcare in old age and emphasised the importance of healthy and active lifestyles.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Pegram, emphasised that the aim was not necessarily to provide cheaper services, but to promote a better quality of life. He noted that the Strategy had been informed by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and linked with the existing strategies of the Council and its partners. The action plan to support the Strategy would be developed and would continue to evolve over time.

9) Single Equality Strategy 2009-12

Councillor Jenkins noted that the Strategy was described as draft and incomplete, and asked when it would be completed and published. He also suggested that reference be added to the role of internal minority networks within the Council as partners to delivery of the Strategy.

Councillor Ballard suggested that poverty should be added as a seventh strand of diversity, since deprivation was a key issue affecting many children, not only those from ethnic minorities.

Councillor Hyams suggested that an action should be added to the action plan concerning sign language, given its importance in communicating with deaf people.

Councillor Moss-Eccardt suggested that reports proposing service changes should be linked to equality impact assessments, and asked when this might be introduced.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Yeulett, welcomed members' comments about inclusiveness. He noted that the Council had already achieved Level 3 of the Equality Standard and would now be working towards Level 4. The Strategy would be updated to take account of the Single Equality Bill, which was expected in the summer.

10) Introduction of the New National Framework Contracts for Children's Services

Councillor Griffiths requested an explanation of these changes. Responding, the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor Curtis, explained that the overarching framework contract set the context within which individual contracts to meet individual children's needs were commissioned. The framework contract had been updated at a national level. The changes were expected to benefit children and young people by enabling the Council to commission a wider range of services.

11) Consultation on Primary Authority Guidance

12) City Centre Management: Love Cambridge Partnership

Councillor Bourke welcomed the Council's participation in the Love Cambridge Partnership. He asked the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways, Councillor Bradney, through the Partnership to pursue the reinstatement of a Park and Ride bus stop on Northampton Street, the removal of which had affected the trade of nearby businesses.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways suggested that this issue would more appropriately be pursued with Stagecoach via the Love Cambridge Partnership Board.

13) Consultation Response to the Draft Planning Policy Statement on Eco-Towns and Associated Documents

Councillor Stone welcomed the response of the Cabinet and officers to these documents. He noted that the deadline for the consultation on the draft Planning Policy Statement had now been extended to 30th April 2009. He sought confirmation that further written representations would be sent from Cabinet, and also urged members to write individually both on the draft Planning Policy Statement and on the site assessment for Hanley Grange.

Councillor Williamson asked the Council to continue to oppose the selection of Waterbeach as a site for an eco-town. He noted that the barracks at Waterbeach were still actively used and that the extent of military investment in the site meant that closing these down so that the land could be used for housing was likely to be prohibitively expensive.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways, Councillor Bradney, confirmed that there had been no change to his view that neither Hanley Grange nor Waterbeach were suitable locations for an eco-town. He would confirm to Councillor Stone whether further written representations had been sent.

14) Regional Funding Allocation for Transport

Councillor Powley expressed disappointment that the Ely southern bypass had been identified as a smaller scheme addressing more localised issues, which was not suitable for regional transport funding. He noted that the scheme was practically and economically justified: many other settlements along the A412 were already bypassed; the level crossing at Ely was already closed 50% of the time; and this was set to increase as the railway line was used increasingly for freight as well as passenger trains. He urged the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways, Councillor Bradney, to continue to lobby for funding for this scheme.

Councillor Hunt echoed these views, noting that the impact of congestion on neighbouring communities was likely to worsen over time. He also noted that it was estimated that the Ely southern bypass would cost £20 million, not making this a small scheme.

Councillor Bell noted that the Challenge Fund set up for smaller schemes such as the Ely southern bypass would total £44 million, with a cap on bids of £20 million. It had been reported at the East Cambridgeshire Area Joint Committee that the Ely southern bypass would cost as much as £27 million. Councillor Bell suggested that it was no longer realistic to pursue this scheme given its cost and that funding was unlikely to be available for it. He suggested that it would be preferable to consider radical alternatives that could attract regional funding, such as a dedicated freight rail route that would bypass the junction at Ely.

Councillor Williamson welcomed the allocation of funding for a railway station at Chesterton, but expressed concern that this did not remove the need for an enlarged car park at the station at Waterbeach. He asked

the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways to encourage Network Rail and First Capital Connect to get the Waterbeach project underway.

Councillor Huppert welcomed the funding for Chesterton station but expressed concern that this should not be allowed to slip beyond 2012, given that the Local Transport Plan for 2004-11 had anticipated that this would be open by 2008.

Councillor Reid welcomed the funding for Chesterton station. He reminded members that proposals for use of the £465 million from the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) had included funding for this station, which would now be released. He suggested that the TIF funding should instead be used to reduce carbon emissions from transport in the Cambridge sub-region, for example by encouraging modal shift to rail or earlier switching from car to bus at more outlying Park and Rides. He proposed a study to take this suggestion forward.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways, Councillor Bradney, agreed that the Ely southern bypass was much needed and confirmed that he would lobby for this to be taken forward. He welcomed the funding for Chesterton station, noting that alternative uses for the TIF funding would be discussed through the Joint Transport Forum.

15) Issues Arising from Scrutiny Committees

A) Cambridge Central Area Bus Stop Capacity Strategy – Comments Regarding the Adequacy of the Decision-Making Process, following the Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee's Consideration of the Call-In of Cabinet's Decision of 15th January 2009

Following on from discussion at the Scrutiny Committee meeting, Councillor Moss-Eccardt expressed concern that comments from local people should be considered by Cabinet in all instances, not only when matters were important or urgent.

B) Cambridge Central Area Bus Stop Capacity Strategy – Comments Regarding the Maid's Causeway Bus-Stop Proposal, following the Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee's Consideration of the Call-In of Cabinet's Decision of 15th January 2009

Councillor Griffiths reminded members that the Scrutiny Committee had been sympathetic to local residents' views and had recommended that Cabinet consider these further, particularly in the context of officers' work to minimise the impact of a bus stop in this Conservation Area and listed setting. She expressed concern that Cabinet did not appear to have taken notice of the Committee's concerns. She also expressed concern that a ward Councillor who had written to officers suggesting alternative locations for a bus stop had not received a response for a month, and that his request for a site visit had been refused. She asked the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways how this matter would now be taken forward.

Responding to both speakers, the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways agreed that local comments should be taken into account by Cabinet in all cases. He noted that he had not been aware of the correspondence relating to Maid's Causeway and agreed to ensure that a site visit took place, which he would attend if possible.

16) Serious Case Review Executive Summary and Action Plan: Child A

Councillor Batchelor expressed concern that the respective roles of Cabinet and the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee in monitoring implementation of the action plan were unclear. He asked the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor Curtis, to clarify these.

Councillor Lucas welcomed the recommendations of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and sought assurance that the County Council and its partners would work closely together to ensure that there were no failures of information-sharing.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Children noted that the Local Safeguarding Children Board had primary responsibility for monitoring implementation of the action plan, but that the County Council would also monitor those elements for which it was responsible. He noted that safeguarding was already included on the Scrutiny Committee's next agenda and confirmed that he welcomed the Committee's full involvement.

Chairman: