

## **COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES**

**Date:** Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2008

**Time:** 10.30 a.m. – 5.05 p.m.

**Place:** Shire Hall, Cambridge

**Present:** Councillor A G Orgee (Chairman)

Councillors C M Ballard, J Batchelor, I C Bates, N Bell, B Boddington, K Bourke, M Bradney, J Broadway, P Brown, T Butcher, 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, G J Heathcock, W Hensley, S Higginson, P Humphrey, W Hunt, J Huppert, J D Jenkins, S Johnstone, E Kadić, G Kenney, A C Kent, S J E King, V H Lucas, D McCraith, L W McGuire, A K Melton, 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, J M Tuck, R Turner, J K Walters, J West, F Whelan, D White, K Wilkins, H Williams, M Williamson and L J Wilson

**Apologies:** Councillors B Bean, P E Hughes, C Hyams, S G M Kindersley, R Moss-Eccardt and F H Yeulett

### **270. MINUTES: 21<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 2008**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **271. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### Independent members of the Standards Committee

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting the three independent members of the Council's Standards Committee, David Boreham, Mary Sanders and Kazia Gaseltine.

#### Death of former Councillors

The Chairman reported with sadness the death of two former Councillors: Ken Spink, who had served on the Council from 1985 to 1993, representing Gamlingay; and John Brackenbury, who had served from 1981 to 1993, representing Histon. Members stood to observe a minute's silence in their memory.

#### Deputy Lieutenant

The Chairman led members in congratulating Councillor Lucas on his recent appointment as one of the Deputy Lieutenants for Cambridgeshire.

## New Councillor for Hardwick

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Councillor Fiona Whelan, the newly elected member for the Hardwick electoral division.

## Olympic athletes

The Chairman reported that he had invited the four Cambridgeshire medallists from the Beijing Olympics, Matthew Skelhon, Emma Pooley, Louis Smith, and Frances Williamson, to the meeting, but unfortunately due to training and other commitments they had been unable to attend.

## Awards and achievements

The Chairman led members in offering congratulations to all those who had helped the Council to win the following awards:

- The Best Corporate or Government Loaded Programme Award in the inaugural Prepaid Awards 2008, which had been awarded for the g2g card, Cambridgeshire's young people's entitlement card.
- A Gold award in the Best Internal Communications category in the East Anglian Pride Awards hosted by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations for the Council's Meet Vestor campaign for Investors in People.
- Shortlisting for the Inclusive Public Services Award at the European e-Inclusion Ministerial Conference and EXPO in Austria for the citizenfirst project, a European project with a range of partners seeking to overcome social and spatial isolation.
- Good Practice Awards from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust for Marianne Bishop, a nurse working for the Cambridge Learning Disability Partnership in Huntingdon, and Karen Parker, who helps run an Art Therapy Group in Cambridge.
- Shortlisting in the Efficiency and Modernisation category of the Local Government Chronicle awards for the Huntingdonshire Learning Disability Partnership's programme to modernise day services and cut costs.
- Shortlisting of the County Council's Trading Standards Service for the Local Government Chronicle's Management Team of the Year award.
- The Best Initiative Award in the Responsible Drinks Retailing Awards for the Community Alcohol Partnership.
- A commendation at the national Landscape Institute Annual Awards 2008 for planning guidance aimed at making new waste facilities more environmentally friendly, produced jointly by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council planners and landscape consultants FPCR.
- The 2008 Access Award from the British Horse Society for being the local authority most active in opening up equestrian routes.

- School of the Year award at the BBC East Sports Awards for Swavesey Village.

The Chairman also led members in congratulating all those who had contributed to the following service achievements:

- The two star rating given to Adult Support Services by the Commission for Social Care Inspection, with the accompanying judgement that Cambridgeshire was delivering good outcomes for service users, with promising capacity for continued improvement.
- The opening in November of the Milton Park and Ride Site.
- The SmartLIFE Houses 'Lessons Learned' report, which had been launched by the Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP in London on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2008. At the event, the Deputy Chief Executive – Environment and Community Services had highlighted Cambridgeshire County Council's leadership of SmartLIFE and the partnership with education, industry and government.

## **272. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following members declared personal interests under Paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct. The items to which the interests relate are shown in brackets.

- Councillors Bourke and Huppert as members of the Cambridge Cycling Campaign (Minute 281, Report of the Cabinet – Items for Information, Report of the Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2008, Item 8, Cambridge – Cycling Demonstration Town)
- Councillor Butcher as the Fenland District Council representative for Fenland Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Councillor Downes as his wife was a part-time trainer of advisers for Huntingdonshire CAB, Councillor West as a member of Fenland CAB and Councillor Williamson as his wife was a CAB volunteer (Minute 279, Motions, Motion from Councillor Harrison)
- Councillors Heathcock and Read as members of the Cambridge Older People's Enterprise (COPE), Councillor Melton as his mother was in receipt of carers' support and Councillor Whelan as a carer (Minute 281, Report of the Cabinet – Items for Information, Report of the Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2008, Item 6, Carers Strategy 2008-11)
- Councillor Kent as a Governor of Cambridge Regional College and Councillor Lucas as a Governor of Long Road Sixth Form College (Minute 281, Report of the Cabinet – Items for Information, Report of the Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2008, Item 5, 16-19 Education and Training: Future Arrangements)
- Councillor Kent as a Governor of Fawcett Primary School (Minute 281, Report of the Cabinet – Items for Information, Report of the Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2008, Item 4, Establishment of Trumpington Meadows Primary School: Determination of Promoter)

- Councillor Jenkins as a lay member of Cambridgeshire Community Services and Councillor Lucas as the Chairman of Cambridgeshire Community Services (Minute 275, Corporate Leadership Team Restructuring and Minute 281, Report of the Cabinet – Items for Information, Report of the Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2008, Item 9, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Cambridgeshire: Phase 2) and Councillor Ballard as his daughter was in receipt of social care (Item 9 only)
- Councillor Melton as he was an employee of the Improvement and Development Agency (Minute 281, Report of the Cabinet – Items for Information, Report of the Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2008, Item 11, Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee: Review of Member Training and Development)
- Councillors Melton and Read as members of the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA), Councillor J Reynolds as the Chairman of EERA and of Renewables East and Councillors Bates, Jenkins and Tuck as members of the EERA Executive (Minute 279, Motions, Motion from Councillor Hunt)
- Councillor Whelan as she had a child attending Comberton Village College (Minute 281, Report of the Cabinet – Items for Information, Report of the Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2008, Item 1, Secondary Provision for Cambourne).

## **273. REPORT OF THE COUNTY RETURNING OFFICER**

Members noted that Fiona Whelan, a Liberal Democrat, had been elected to the Hardwick electoral division in the by-election held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2008.

## **274. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Mr Spike Jackson attended the meeting on behalf of Grantchester Parish Council and asked the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure, Councillor Bradney, about the Council's policy on interactive speed signs. He explained that the Parish Council had raised £5,000 to install and maintain two speed signs on Coton Road where the average speed was 40% over the speed limit. 64% of respondents to the consultation on the Parish Plan had supported the installation of interactive signs on this road, which was crossed by children during peak traffic hours. He asked the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure to review the Council's policy on the installation of interactive signs in cases in which the local community would provide capital and revenue funding and where there was proven support.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure explained that the Council's policy was to restrict the installation of interactive signs to accident cluster sites at which speed was a contributing factor, to control their proliferation, which would otherwise reduce their impact on motorists. He acknowledged the frustration of Grantchester Parish Council, which had begun its fundraising before this policy had been introduced, and noted that the policy would be reviewed by the Growth and Environment Policy Development Group and by Cabinet in the new year.

A transcript of the question is available from Democratic Services.

## 275. CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM RESTRUCTURING

With the agreement of Council, the Chief Executive introduced his report on the restructuring of the Corporate Leadership Team. Members were then invited to raise technical questions with him. The following issues were discussed:

- Several Liberal Democrat members expressed concern that the Council was being asked to make a decision on the restructuring without sight of the detailed financial case. The Chief Executive was asked to make this information available to all members, on a confidential basis if necessary.

Responding, the Chief Executive reminded members that the proposed changes were expected to result in an annual saving of £142,000, with payback being achieved in three to five years, depending on the detailed decisions about appointments to the new structure taken by the Appointments Committee and the resultant transitional costs. The Chief Executive noted that the detailed financial case had been shared with the Cabinet on a confidential basis, but that the sensitivity of the information about salary costs and possible redundancies meant that it was not appropriate for it to be shared more widely at this stage. However, he would ensure that the details were shared with the Appointments Committee on a confidential basis and that appropriate reports were brought to all members on the costs of transition and implementation during the lifetime of the project.

Liberal Democrat members expressed their dissatisfaction with this stance, suggesting that at the time of the previous organisational restructuring, it had been possible to share the financial case with all members on a confidential basis.

- The need to manage risks effectively during the transition period was emphasised, particularly in terms of morale and effective management, and especially in children's and adults' social care.

The Chief Executive agreed that it would be essential to manage the transitional process effectively. As Mike Parsons was on sabbatical, Gordon Jeyes would be leading on Corporate Services issues and would be managing the transition process, including project management arrangements to address risks. Adrian Loades would be the Acting Deputy Chief Executive – Children and Young People's Services and would be considering whether short-term changes were appropriate in advance of any formal restructuring to make more explicit the Council's leadership arrangements for children's social care.

- Members discussed the proposals relating to Audit and Scrutiny. One member suggested that it would be more appropriate to have a Service Director responsible for Audit, rather than a Head of Service reporting to a Corporate Director.

The Chief Executive noted that once the Corporate Leadership Team appointments had been agreed, the detailed supporting structure would also be reviewed. Issues relating to the establishment of the Audit function within the Finance, Property and Performance Corporate Director's portfolio would be discussed with the current postholders and with the Audit and Accounts Committee.

- Members asked whether Council was committed to using the Hay job evaluation scheme, given the growing concern nationally about inflation of senior management salaries and a widening gap with salaries for more junior posts.

The Chief Executive noted that the Council had many years' experience of using the Hay evaluation scheme but that this could be changed; an initial discussion had taken place at the Appointments Committee.

- The Chief Executive was asked to ensure as Community and Adult Services developed that the Council continued fully to involve partners to develop and deliver the most effective services possible for vulnerable children and adults.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Council would continue to work closely with partners, particularly those in health. The new structure also proposed a Service Director with explicit responsibility for children's social care.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Tuck, moved receipt of the report of the Cabinet meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2008, to enable item 1 on the Corporate Leadership Restructuring to be debated alongside the Chief Executive's report.

The following motion was proposed by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor J Reynolds, and seconded by the Leader of the Council:

To agree the restructuring of the Council's Corporate Leadership Team as set out in paragraphs 4 and 5 of the report to the Council meeting.

Members then debated the motion.

Councillor Huppert expressed disappointment that the proposals had been presented by the Chief Executive and not the Leader of the Council. He also expressed disappointment that the restructuring proposals were being put forward without any financial case to underpin them and noted that the Liberal Democrat group would not be able to support them for this reason.

Councillor Jenkins commented that there was much in the proposals that the Liberal Democrat group supported, but that members were concerned not only about the lack of a financial case but also about rising senior management salaries, and the time being taken to appoint a statutory Director of Adult Social Services.

Councillor Harrison expressed concern that the lack of a financial case to support the proposals was indicative of a growing reluctance on the part of the Cabinet to share information with Opposition and backbench members.

Speaking as Chairman of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Batchelor expressed concern that members and officers had not previously had an opportunity to comment on the proposed separation of Scrutiny and Audit. He asked for this issue to be revisited.

Speaking as the Chairman of the Audit and Accounts Committee, Councillor Stone also noted that the current synergy between Scrutiny and Audit was very positive, and that he would like more detail about the proposed restructuring of these two services before deciding whether he supported their separation.

Councillor Downes expressed concern at the upheaval caused by frequent restructuring and asked the Leader of the Council to consider imposing a moratorium on restructuring for a given period, to give services some stability.

Councillor Heathcock expressed concern at the further delay to restructuring that the recruitment of the Executive Director for Community and Adult Services might cause, and emphasised the need to maintain momentum following the recent increase to a two-star rating for Adult Support Services. He asked how members would be involved in the Executive Director's restructuring of lower tiers.

Councillor Reid welcomed the creation of a Service Director for Community Engagement (Fenland), but suggested that the fact the post was needed was an admission of the Administration's shortcomings in relation to this part of the County during the time it had been in office.

Councillor Johnstone welcomed the removal of the Area Director posts in Children and Young People's Services, since these reflected an out-of-date Primary Care Trust structure. She also supported the strengthening of the locality teams, which were working well.

Councillor Melton welcomed the creation of a Service Director for Community Engagement (Fenland). He reminded members that despite Cambridge's world-class reputation, Fenland still had significant levels of deprivation, which it was the Council's duty to address.

Speaking on behalf of the Labour group, Councillor Sales welcomed the proposed new structure as being more service-focussed, particularly in creating dedicated leadership for adult social care and a Service Director for Community Engagement (Fenland).

Councillor Ballard also welcomed the proposals, including the focus on Fenland, where attention was most needed. He commended the proposal that the Corporate Directors of Finance, Property and Performance; People, Policy and Law; and Customer Service and Transformation report directly to the Chief Executive, as would be standard practice in a commercial organisation. He emphasised the need for minimum turbulence in implementing the new structures, capitalising on the existing officers' experience and expertise. He accepted that it was not possible for full details of the financial case to be shared with all members, but asked for Group Leaders to be kept fully informed.

The Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Pegram, welcomed the new structure's increased focus on adult social care. He also noted that the post of Service Director for Community Engagement (Fenland)

had been created as a pilot, reflecting levels of need identified in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Tuck, reminded members that it was the role of the Chief Executive to implement a staffing structure to deliver the priorities of the Administration. She emphasised that she would be working closely with the Chief Executive to ensure a 'one team' approach, and that the changes were implemented swiftly and effectively. The Leader of the Council also gave notice that she would be reviewing the Cabinet portfolios in light of the restructuring and would advise all members of any changes by the end of the week.

Summing up, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor J Reynolds, emphasised that as much information as possible had been shared openly with members through the consultation process. He underlined the importance of keeping the Council's senior management structure under regular review; it would not be appropriate to restrict the Chief Executive's ability to do this by imposing a moratorium on further change. He emphasised that the Council was already investing in Fenland, and that the creation of the Service Director for Community Engagement (Fenland) was a continuation of this focus. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services also commented that he saw no reason to review the Council's use of the Hay evaluation system at present.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

[Voting pattern: Conservative and Labour groups in favour, Liberal Democrats against.]

## **276. REPORTS OF CABINET MEETINGS – ITEMS FOR DETERMINATION**

Members noted that the reports of the Cabinet meetings held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2008 and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2008 contained no items for determination.

## **277. WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

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

- Councillor Harrison had asked the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor Harty, about the shortage of school places in parts of the County
- Councillors Hughes and Sales had asked the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor Curtis, about the County Council's arrangements for child protection.

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

## **278. ORAL QUESTIONS**

Fourteen oral questions were asked under Council Procedure Rule 9:

- Councillor Higginson asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Tuck, whether she regretted the recent comparison in an advertisement for the Council's budget consultation of services for disabled people with recycling.

He noted that one Cambridgeshire family had written to her taking exception to the comparison. Responding, the Leader of the Council emphasised that these were fundamentally different services and that there had been no intention directly to compare them. She would check if the family had written directly to her and if so would write in response.

- Councillor Sales asked the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor Curtis, whether he was satisfied with the progress and efficiency of the new children's services information system, given that differing reports of its usefulness were being received. The Cabinet Member for Children reported that the migration of data to the new system had gone well, but that issues relating to bandwidth and capacity had emerged the previous week, which were being followed up. He noted that there was much debate nationally about the new system. It would be essential to maximise the amount of time that social workers could spend on casework, but would also be important to support them to use the new system effectively, for example by providing typing training. Councillor Sales asked the Cabinet Member for Children to comment on the fact that data loss often emerged as a key issue in child protection inquiries. The Cabinet Member for Children acknowledged this and emphasised the importance of ensuring that all data was saved and secure.
- Councillor Walters drew attention to recent coverage in the Cambridge Evening News of Council officers' use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) to gather evidence about the illegal employment of paper boys. He asked the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor J Reynolds, what specific surveillance techniques had been used, and whether it had been essential to use RIPA powers, or whether this approach had been overly cautious. Responding, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services explained that Council officers had been positioned on the highway outside the shop, watching paper boys entering and leaving. RIPA powers could be used to investigate any criminal offence, and were there to protect individuals' right to privacy and to ensure that evidence-gathering techniques were appropriate and proportionate. A detailed briefing note had been circulated to members and the Deputy Leader, Councillor McGuire, had been asked to investigate the matter further, involving Scrutiny as appropriate.
- Councillor Huppert drew attention to recent accidents caused by ice on pedestrian and cycle routes in Cambridge, for example on the Green Dragon bridge and next to the Tesco on Newmarket Road. He asked the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure, Councillor Bradney, to review the Council's policy on the gritting of such routes to check that it was adequate. The Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure agreed to do so.
- Councillor Reid asked the Leader of the Council whether the Administration would be submitting to the Transport Commission formal evidence of its views of the best way to tackle congestion in the Cambridge sub-region. The Leader of the Council confirmed that it would. Councillor Reid asked the Leader of the Council how and when this evidence would be developed and how Council approval for it would be obtained. The Leader of the Council stated that she would send a written answer.

- Councillor Bourke reminded the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure that in response to a question at the previous meeting, he had agreed to carry out a review of the Council's policy on 20mph speed limits. Given continuing campaigning, particularly by residents of Histon and Impington, he asked whether the review was underway and what form it would take. The Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure reported that the review was taking place and that a report would be brought to the Growth and Environment Policy Development Group in the new year.
- Councillor Griffiths drew attention to a recent Respect Matters training day organised by looked after children and expressed concern that it had not been well attended by members and that the Cabinet Member for Children had not been present. She asked the Cabinet Member for Children to allow the young people to present a seminar for members, to help raise awareness of their corporate parenting responsibilities. Responding, the Cabinet Member for Children reminded members that the Respect Matters training days were run on a regular basis; he would continue to promote their importance. He also noted that he was already discussing with the Participation team and looked after children their contribution to members' induction following the 2009 elections.
- Councillor Williamson drew attention to recommended procedures published by the Office of Surveillance Commissioners for local authorities using RIPA powers. He asked the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services whether Cambridgeshire had such procedures in place. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services confirmed that the Council already had procedures in place to regulate the use of RIPA; the Deputy Leader had been asked to review these to ensure that they were being used appropriately. Councillor Williamson asked the Council to make its procedures publicly available on its website. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services stated that he would send a written response to this request.
- Councillor White asked the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure what consideration had been given to the impact on the local environment and community of new stops for guided buses. The Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure reported that a written response was already being prepared on this issue, which he would send to all members. Councillor White drew particular attention to the impact of the proposed stop on Castle Hill in Cambridge, between the Isaac Newton pub and the exit from the Shire Hall site. He asked the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure to respond within seven days to a letter of representation sent by local businesses on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2008 on this issue. The Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure agreed to do so.
- Councillor Stone asked the Leader of the Council to comment on the suggestion that the appointment of Sir Brian Briscoe to the Transport Commission lacked credibility. The Leader of the Council responded that she saw no difficulty with the appointment of someone of his calibre. Councillor Stone noted that the suggestion had come from Cambridge City Council's Conservative Spokesman. The Leader of the Council noted that she was unable to comment on other people's views.

- Councillor Downes drew attention to the Government's current initiative to identify 'coasting' schools, noting that local authorities had been given until the end of January to identify such schools. He asked the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor Harty, whether he was aware of the extent of the anxiety this initiative was causing, and sought clarification of the Council's policy for identifying the schools. He noted that the professional associations were particularly concerned at the Secretary of State's recent announcement that schools meeting one or more of the Government's identifying criteria would be classified as coasting, which could cover up to 50% of schools. The Cabinet Member for Learning reported that work to address this initiative was in progress and would be brought back to members.
- Councillor King asked the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure to do all he could to ensure a speedy resolution to the roadworks on Cromwell Road in Wisbech associated with the new Lidl store. The Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure agreed to do this.
- Councillor Jenkins asked the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure to give an assurance that all of the specified noise barriers and landscaping would be in place when the first buses ran on the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway. The Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure noted that progress would be monitored closely and that everything possible would be done to ensure that the required noise barriers and landscaping were in place when the first buses ran.
- Councillor Whelan drew attention to the recent by-election in Hardwick, in which the Conservative candidate, John Ionides, had stated his opposition to congestion charging. She asked the Leader of the Council whether the Conservative group had already decided that it was opposed to congestion charging, or whether the candidate had been attempting to mislead the electorate. The Leader of the Council noted the election candidate had been expressing his own view. The Conservative group had not yet determined its position and would consider all possible options in order to achieve the best outcome for Cambridgeshire.

A transcript of the questions is available from Democratic Services.

## **279. MOTIONS**

Two motions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10:

### Motion from Councillor Hunt

With the agreement of Council, Councillor Hunt tabled a revised version of his motion, copies of which had been circulated to members. The revised motion is set out below and was proposed by Councillor Hunt and seconded by the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure, Councillor Bradney:

This Council welcomes the decision of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, published on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2008, to reject proposals by Multiplex Stannifer Ltd for the development of a 5,100 home new settlement called 'Mereham' on prime arable land between the villages of Stretham and Wilburton on the A10 south of Ely. This

decision comes after a lengthy public inquiry at which the County Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, 13 local Parish Councils, 78 members of the public, the local MP, local residents and interest groups presented evidence against the proposals, and after a 10,000+ signature petition was handed to the Department of Communities and Local Government. On Friday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2008, the Secretary of State re-published her rejection in response to the Mereham petition on the 10 Downing Street website.

Yet, within weeks of the Secretary of State's decision, new proposals for a settlement at 'Mereham' have been put forward by Aldersgate Investments Ltd to the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) for consideration within the Review of the East of England Plan. The Council is concerned that, contrary to the EERA's own guidance on submissions, the EERA feels obliged to consider it. Continuation of the proposal will inevitably incur substantial costs and will oblige the Council to expend considerable further time and effort assessing Mereham as a location for future major housing growth and will further perpetuate the anxiety already raised within the community.

The Council therefore requests that the Leader of the Council writes to the Government asking it to:

1. Request the EERA to remove the 'Mereham' proposal from the Review list on the basis that it does not meet the EERA's qualifying criteria. (The Mereham application was rejected by the Secretary of State, in part, on the grounds that 'the proposal has substantial deficiencies in terms of its failure to meet locational policy set out in CSR1 of the East of England Plan' – Paragraph 60 of the decision letter.)
2. Amend the planning regulations and introduce financial requirements to deter developers from submitting proposals for developments via the route of the Regional Spatial Strategy, if those developments are substantially the same as applications subject to appeals recently rejected by the Secretary of State following a public inquiry. (This would be in line with the powers already available to local authorities to reject repeated direct planning applications).

On being put to the vote, the motion was agreed unanimously.

#### Motion from Councillor Harrison

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Harrison and seconded by Councillor Jenkins:

Voluntary sector agencies such as Citizens' Advice Bureaux offer vital services to people needing advice about managing debt, applying for benefits, securing decent housing and other issues. As a result of the current credit crunch and economic downturn, many people in Cambridgeshire are facing severe financial pressures and are increasingly turning to these organisations for help. The agencies need extra funding to employ additional advisors in order to meet the demand.

This Council requests Cabinet to allocate £100,000 to these agencies for immediate use during the current financial year, and to consider what further sums should be made available during the next two financial years.

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor Tuck and seconded by Councillor Pegram:

Delete the original wording and replace with:

‘The Council recognises that as a result of the current credit crunch and economic downturn, many people in Cambridgeshire are facing severe financial pressures.

In recognition of this, the Council requests Cabinet to make additional investments in the third sector to complement existing funding and to consider the implementation of a package of measures worth £500,000 to boost the voluntary sector including:

- £100,000 this year and next for emergency assistance, pump priming projects targeted at preventing residents losing their homes and jobs
- £100,000 next year to fund voluntary sector rental holidays, rent-free office space and technical support
- £200,000 to be drawn from the Invest to Transform reserve to give the voluntary sector extra support in 2009/10 in areas which are currently poorly served.

In order that the Cabinet may implement the measures relating to the current financial year at the earliest opportunity, the Council confirms that the proposals may be implemented without further reference to the Council and that the Council consents to any amendment to the agreed Policy Framework in order for this to be achieved.’

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

- Noted that Cabinet was already considering measures to support the voluntary sector and Cambridgeshire’s wider community during the economic downturn. The amendment proposed a wider package of measures than the original motion; these measures would be taken forward through the Council’s Integrated Planning Process and delivered with a range of partners through Cambridgeshire Together.
- Noted that whilst the work of the Citizens Advice Bureaux was invaluable, there were also a number of other important advice agencies operating within the County, such as Directions Plus.
- Noted that the Government had recently announced an additional £10 million for Citizens Advice Bureaux nationally and an additional £5.8 million for organisations dealing with debt issues. The amendment proposed a complementary package of measures, for which bids would be sought from providers to ensure that the best possible value for money was achieved.

Members speaking against the amendment made the following points:

- Challenged the first bullet point, which proposed a total of £200,000 aimed at 'preventing residents losing their homes and jobs'. Members questioned how this sum would be applied to achieve these outcomes. It was suggested that direct investment in Citizens Advice Bureaux would be much more effective, since the Bureaux could assist a large number of residents and had a proven track record of leveraging in benefits and other forms of assistance.
- Noted that the additional funding for the Bureaux proposed in the original motion could be taken forward immediately, since savings on debt charges, themselves a windfall resulting from the economic downturn, could be used.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was carried. [Voting pattern: Conservative and Labour groups in favour, Liberal Democrats against.] A recorded vote was requested by more than 15 members of the Conservative group and is attached as Appendix A to these minutes.

The following amendment to the substantive motion as amended was then proposed by Councillor Jenkins and seconded by Councillor Reid:

Add the following sentence as the second paragraph:

'Voluntary sector agencies such as Citizens' Advice Bureaux offer vital services to people needing advice about managing debt, applying for benefits, securing decent housing and other issues.'

Amend the first bullet to read:

'£100,000 this year and next year to the aforementioned agencies to enable them to employ additional advisers to meet growing demand.'

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

- Emphasised that it removed the uncertainty relating to the first bullet point of the substantive motion as amended and reintroduced specific and immediate funding for the Citizens Advice Bureaux, supporting their proven track record of benefiting Cambridgeshire residents.
- Noted that take-up of benefits was lower in Cambridgeshire than in many other local authority areas, and direct advice provided by the Council to non-service users was very limited, making investment in independent advice services particularly important.

Members speaking against the amendment made the following points:

- Emphasised that the substantive motion as amended proposed a package of measures that would be taken forward with a range of partners to maximise their effect.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was defeated. [Voting pattern: Liberal Democrat and Labour members in favour, Conservatives against.] A recorded vote was requested by more than 15 members of the Liberal Democrat group and is attached as Appendix B to these minutes.

Speaking on the substantive motion as amended, Councillor Harrison expressed her disappointment that Council had voted down the opportunity to provide immediate support to the Citizens Advice Bureaux.

Members then voted on the substantive motion as amended [the text set out on page 13 of these minutes beginning 'The Council recognises that as a result of the current credit crunch and economic downturn ...'] and the motion was carried. [Voting pattern: Conservative and Labour groups in favour, Liberal Democrats against.]

## **280. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES**

The following appointments to Committees and outside bodies were proposed by the Chairman, Councillor Orgee, seconded by the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Oliver, and agreed unanimously:

- Councillor Whelan to replace Councillor Sims on the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee
- Councillor Jenkins to be appointed as a substitute on the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee
- Councillor Hyams to replace Councillor Harper on the Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee.

## **281. REPORT OF THE CABINET – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Tuck, moved receipt of the report of the Cabinet meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2008.

### Report of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2008

#### 1) Secondary Provision for Cambourne

Councillor Wilson welcomed the Cabinet's decision on secondary provision for Cambourne and commended the work of the officers involved.

Councillor Downes also welcomed the decision, noting that it was in line with his party's policy of providing good schools as locally as possible, to reduce pupils' need to travel.

Councillor Whelan asked the Cabinet Member for Learning to ensure that a proper traffic management plan was prepared for the school, as this would be very important to local residents.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor Harty, noted that the process to reach this decision had been difficult but that the outcome was very welcome. He also thanked officers for their work.

2) Major Planning Application for up to 950 Dwellings and Associated Development on Land at Upper Cambourne

Councillor Wilson urged the Council to apply learning from the development of Cambourne to the development of Northstowe, particularly in terms of minimising conflict between the local authority and developers.

3) Policy Framework for Zero Carbon Schools

Councillor Kent welcomed the policy framework but expressed concern that it applied only to new schools. She emphasised the importance also of considering the carbon impact of investment in older buildings.

Councillor Ballard expressed concern that reserves of fossil fuels were declining, making it essential to reduce energy consumption, to invest in alternative sources of energy such as wind and solar power, and to design buildings effectively in terms of ventilation.

Councillor Reid welcomed the policy framework but suggested that the Administration was not being proactive in addressing climate change, but was taking action only when required to do so by Government.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor Harty, agreed that it would be essential to consider existing as well as new buildings. The Administration was making progress on climate change issues, but had always to take into account the cost of construction and improvements.

4) Building Schools for the Future (BSF): Revised Expression of Interest

Councillor Downes asked the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor Harty, what he had learned from his discussions with members about BSF at the Children and Young People PDG on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2008 and the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2008, and whether the comments from these meetings had been reflected in the Council's final submission.

The Cabinet Member for Learning reported that the key issue emphasised by members at both meetings had been the importance of prioritising need when allocating schools to BSF programme waves. This had been reflected in the Council's submission and a response from Government was now awaited.

5) 16-19 Education and Training: Future Arrangements

Councillor Sales welcomed the proposed sub-regional arrangements for 16-19 education and training as an appropriate long-term approach.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor Curtis, agreed that a sub-regional approach was sensible, especially as the economic market was based on the sub-region.

6) Carers Strategy 2008-11

Councillor Higginson reported that he and two Liberal Democrat colleagues had attended the launch of the Carers Strategy. He expressed disappointment that no Administration members had been present to meet carers and listen to their views.

Councillor Carter welcomed the Carers Strategy. She particularly highlighted the impact of caring on young carers and asked the Council to do all it could to address the issues these young people faced.

Councillor Griffiths also expressed concern about the responsibilities of young carers and suggested that ideally, young carers should not have responsibilities for providing care. She urged the Council to listen to young carers' views and provide young carers with the support they wanted.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor Curtis, emphasised that he was very aware of the needs of young carers. He noted that some of these young people chose to care and agreed that they should be supported appropriately in so doing.

The Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Pegram, apologised that he had been unable to attend the launch as he had been unwell. He noted that Cambridgeshire had approximately 1,470 young carers, whose needs were recognised throughout the Strategy and whose support was a priority for the Council and its partners.

7) Huntingdon to St Ives Bus Priority Measures

Councillor Downes welcomed the decision not to introduce a bus lane along Hertford Road, given its likely environmental impact. He noted that there was still considerable debate locally about the merits of the Old Houghton Road measures. He commented that the discussions about these proposals highlighted some of the challenges of working with commercial operators, now that bus services had been deregulated.

8) Cambridge – Cycling Demonstration Town

Councillor Sales welcomed the Cycling Demonstration Town (CDT) project and in particular its focus on cycle safety training.

Councillor Kenney also welcomed the project and suggested that it might be possible to address a number of danger spots on cycleways, particularly in villages.

Councillor Jenkins asked the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure to ensure that Parish Councils were involved at an early stage in the planning of schemes. He particularly highlighted the need for a safe junction with the A14 for cyclists travelling from Cottenham, Histon and Impington into Cambridge. He requested a timetable of proposed actions. He noted that it was intended to recruit a manager to support the project and asked whether savings would be needed

elsewhere to fund this post.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure, Councillor Bradney, explained that CDT funding would be used to pay for the project manager. He confirmed that Parish Councils would be fully involved and that a safe junction with the A14 for cyclists from Cottenham, Histon and Impington was a high priority.

9) Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Cambridgeshire: Phase 2

Councillor Ballard welcomed the Phase 2 report and drew attention to the information about adults aged 19-64 with a physical disability. He expressed concern that this social care client group was the only one not covered by a formal agreement with health partners. He noted that there was a close link between disability and poverty, that disabled adults were likely to have less disposable income than their peers, and were likely to be unsuitably housed. He emphasised the need for better joint working and more preventative services for this client group.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Pegram, emphasised that the Council already worked closely with health services to deliver complementary services for adults with a physical disability. He reminded members that the Phase 2 report was accompanied by an action plan, which would now be taken forward.

10) Publication of the 2007/08 Annual Report for the Council

11) Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee: Review of Member Training and Development

The Chairman of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Williamson, welcomed the Cabinet's support for the findings of this member-led review. He advised members that all of the other local authorities to which the review group had spoken had supported the appointment of a lead officer responsible for member training and development. He urged Cabinet to take this recommendation particularly seriously, since an effective post-holder could bring in considerable additional benefit for the authority.

Councillor Stone reported that the Liberal Democrat group fully supported the recommendation that the Council sign up to the Improvement and Development Agency's member development charter. He also welcomed the recommendation relating to revised role descriptions. Councillor Jenkins reported that the group had appointed its member training and development champion and was looking forward to action in the near future.

Responding, the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor McGuire, reported that he would work with members to take forward the review, especially to ensure that a full member training and development scheme was in place following the 2009 elections.

12) Petitions Received: Changes to the Names of Electoral Divisions

## Report of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2008

### 1) Corporate Leadership Team Restructuring

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting, as recorded under Minute 275 above.

### 2) Extension of Age Range of Parkside Community College

Speaking as a representation on the Parkside Trust and the local member for Coleridge, Councillor Ballard fully welcomed this decision.

Councillor Downes welcomed the decision but expressed concern that 240 pupils was the smallest size recommended for a sixth form; he asked for the new sixth form's relationship with other providers to be monitored closely.

The Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor Harty, welcomed members' support.

### 3) Shirley Community Primary School, East Chesterton, Cambridge

Councillor Williamson noted that Shirley was the catchment school for a deprived area within his division and sought assurance that schooling for children from this area would remain a priority.

Councillor Batchelor expressed concern that land at this site had been given by the Council to the Old Schools Trust, a charitable trust, and it now appeared that the Council might have to pay full market rates to get it back. He requested an update on this situation.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor Harty, explained that negotiations between the Council and the Old Schools Trust were continuing to resolve this issue.

### 4) Establishment of Trumpington Meadows Primary School: Determination of Promoter

Councillor Downes emphasised the importance of obtaining a clear commitment to community use of the new school.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor Harty, agreed with Councillor Downes about community use. He noted that the Council continued to learn about the competition process and paid tribute to the bidders.

### 5) Childcare Sufficiency

Councillor Kent paid tribute to the Early Years and Childcare team for their work with the private and voluntary sectors to develop and quality assure childcare. She reminded members that there were a number of different ways of delivering childcare, for example through childminders as well as through nurseries; and that most childcare was provided for children of school age, not pre-school children. She expressed concern

that some families were still unable to afford childcare and commented that where appropriate, families should be supported to care themselves.

The Cabinet Member for Learning noted that Cambridgeshire was generally well provided for in terms of childcare; however, the action plan would continue to be monitored and developed.

6) Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste Development Scheme and Revision to the Timetable for the Preparation of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Plan

Councillor Read highlighted the concerns of residents of Sutton, Earith, Haddenham and adjoining communities about heavy commercial vehicles (HCVs) from minerals and waste sites passing through their villages. He asked the Cabinet Member for Economy, Environment and Climate Change, Councillor Brown, to work with operators to agree routing agreements and travel plans to reduce the impact on these communities.

Councillor Jenkins also expressed concern about the effect on local communities of HCVs transporting minerals from the north to the south of the County to support new development. He suggested that the current slowing of growth in the County provided an opportunity to review the links between the Minerals and Waste Plan and the Local Transport Plan and to consider alternatives for haulage such as rail and canal.

Councillor Kent drew attention to local residents' objections to the proposed new recycling centre at Trumpington, and uncertainty over how they could take part in the decision process. She noted that a number of alternative sites had been proposed and asked how these would be considered.

Councillor Lucas welcomed the discontinuation of importing hazardous waste from London and the Midlands. He also noted that some site operators were proposing additional activity not covered by the consultation to date, and sought assurance that this would be consulted on properly in due course.

Councillor Broadway reported that she had recently attended a joint member meeting at which they had been advised that an additional 20 schemes would be consulted on over the next six to eight weeks. She congratulated officers on their work on the plan to date.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Economy, Environment and Climate Change confirmed that consultation on the additional schemes would be carried out shortly. He noted that there would be further opportunities for Trumpington residents to discuss the recycling centre proposals, and commented that he shared members' concerns about HCV routes through villages.

7) Waste Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Delivery Board: Terms of Reference and Waste Management Budget

Councillor Downes asked the Cabinet Member for Economy, Environment and Climate about the interaction between the Waste PFI and the District Councils' waste collection mechanisms. He expressed concern that because the new landfill facility in Waterbeach was not yet ready, waste from Huntingdonshire was currently being transported to Alconbury and then being brought back to Buckden for landfilling. He asked whether the District Council was being compensated for the additional cost involved in taking waste to Alconbury, when it could be taken directly to Buckden.

Councillor Harrison asked when a detailed report on the financial implications of Waste PFI had last been made and when a report would next be taken to Cabinet. She emphasised the significance of the Waste PFI as a long-term contractual commitment.

The Cabinet Member for Economy, Environment and Climate agreed to send written responses to Councillors Downes and Harrison.

8) Ely Market Town Transport Strategy

9) Local Transport Plan Progress Report

Councillor Jenkins welcomed the progress made, but expressed concern that the condition of footways in the County was poor and deteriorating. He asked the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure, Councillor Bradney, whether there had been a halt to expenditure on minor repairs to roads and footways.

Councillor Harrison welcomed the introduction of a 20mph speed limit in part of Ely and expressed the hope that this could be treated as a pilot prior to rolling out 20mph speed limits much more widely. She reminded members that research showed that the single transport improvement requested most by cyclists was a reduction to vehicle speeds.

Councillor Higginson expressed his opposition to shared foot and cycleways. He also expressed concern at the lack of joined-up thinking relating to new developments, which meant that although some houses were now being built with level entrances, the same houses did not have dropped kerbs allowing access to the pavement from the road.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure reported that he was discussing expenditure on minor repairs with officers. He emphasised that the 20mph speed limit in Ely was not a pilot, but that the Council's policy on 20mph speed limits would be reviewed through the Growth and Environment Policy Development Group. He also noted that the District Councils were the planning authorities for new housing developments, with the County Council as a consultee.

10) Establishment of Cambourne's Third Primary School: Modification to Approved Admission Arrangements

Councillor Whelan welcomed the decision to increase the size of Cambourne's third primary school, as it was in line with her party's policy to provide good schools close to where people live, and in particular would help to reduce journeys by car to Hardwick Primary School.

11) Neighbourhood Panels

Councillors Stone and Jenkins welcomed the efforts being made to engage local communities, but expressed concern that the County Council's approach should not be too heavy-handed by imposing a preferred model; rather, local people should be encouraged to take a bottom-up approach to address issues that concerned them. It would also be important to engage Parish Councils effectively.

Councillor Downes expressed concern that the establishment of Neighbourhood Panels risked creating a parallel structure on the margins of the existing democratic process. Given the multi-agency input to the Panels, he also asked who would be responsible for ensuring that actions were followed through.

Councillor Carter expressed concern that the Cambridge City Council Area Committee that she attended was not engaging effectively with the public. Councillor Harrison reminded members that City Council Area Committees were different from Neighbourhood Panels. In her experience, Area Committees involved the public well and were well supported by the police and other agencies. Councillor Sales agreed that in his experience, Area Committees were well attended and effective, although their role in determining planning applications could mean that meetings ran late into the evening.

Councillor Shuter commented that Neighbourhood Panels were working very effectively in East Cambridgeshire and that the recent Cabinet discussions would help ensure that their role was further enhanced. Councillor Read agreed, noting that the East Cambridgeshire Neighbourhood Panels enabled local people to agree priorities for action and to ensure positive outcomes.

The Chairman of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Williamson, reminded members that the Committee had carried out a member-led review of community engagement. The review group had agreed that a bottom-up approach to Neighbourhood Panels should be encouraged, but had also noted that examples of best practice should be shared both within the County and from other local authorities.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Tuck, emphasised that the County Council would not be imposing Neighbourhood Panels, but would be working with partners to develop local arrangements across the County. She reminded members that two Neighbourhood Panel Liaison Officers had been appointed to ensure that issues from Panels were followed up effectively.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Pegram, encouraged members to take part in their Neighbourhood Panels. The County Council's aim was to show leadership in developing the Panels, whilst working with partners and local people to help communities pursue their aspirations.

12) Integrated Finance and Performance Report – September 2008

Councillor Ballard noted that the £2 million underspend on the debt charges budget was concealing a £600,000 overspend on other services. He expressed particular concern about the overspend for Cambridgeshire Music, and urged that this service be brought to a sustainable financial footing. He also expressed concern at overspending on adult social care, especially on the community equipment service.

Councillor Harrison welcomed the use of prudential borrowing to support unsupported borrowing in the capital programme. She asked the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor J Reynolds, to advise members of the total amount the Council could potentially borrow, how much of this had been used and for what purposes.

Councillor Reid noted that of the £11.5 million of unsupported expenditure in the capital programme, £9.9 million was not clearly attributed to specific schemes. He asked how this money would be used. He also asked how large the anticipated shortfall in capital receipts was expected to be.

Councillor Jenkins expressed disappointment that the three November member seminars on the Integrated Plan and budget had been combined into a single event, and that the same had now been agreed for the three January seminars. He asked for this decision to be revisited. He also asked when the proposed package of measures to limit the impact of a recession on residents and on voluntary and community organisations would be considered further.

The Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing noted that NHS Cambridgeshire was working with the County Council on a funding package to address overspends in adult social care, which would be reported back through the Cambridgeshire Care Partnership.

Responding, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services agreed to send a written response to the questions from Councillors Harrison and Reid about prudential borrowing and the capital programme. On Cambridgeshire Music, he noted that three years had been allowed to bring this service back into balance, and he believed this was achievable. On the member seminars, he noted that attendance at the November meeting had been disappointing. The intention in combining the three January meetings was to reduce duplication and provide a single opportunity for members to raise questions across the Council's services.

13) Rural Passenger Transport: Update on Action Plans from Scrutiny Review

Councillor Williamson emphasised that if bus usage was to be increased, services had to be reliable and proper information had to be made available to service users.

The Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure, Councillor Bradney, reminded members that Cambridgeshire's rising levels of bus usage meant that the County was bucking national trends.

Chairman: