

**STRATEGY
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**7 July 2003
(6.00 –7.46pm)

PRESENT: Councillors Smart (Chair), Bagnall, Bradnack, Durrant, Reid, Schofield, Julia Smith, Stuart and Ward. Councillor Hipkin as alternate member.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor David Howarth, The Leader.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**03/STR/36 MINUTES**

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meetings on 24 March and 22 May as correct records which were signed by the Chair.

03/STR/37 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Adey.

03/STR/38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

03/STR/39 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No members of the public wished to address the Committee.

03/STR/40 GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND CAPITAL FINAL OUTTURN FOR 2002/03 AND BUDGET CARRY FORWARD REQUESTS *(see also Record of Decision 03/STR/17)***03/STR/41 GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND CAPITAL FINAL OUTTURN FOR 2002/03 AND BUDGET CARRY FORWARD REQUESTS (OVERVIEW)** *(see also Recommendation to Council and Record of Decision 03/STR/18)*

The Chair took the two reports together.

In response to concerns expressed by Councillor Stuart over the EFS overspend, the Leader advised the Committee that the Executive Councillor for Community Development and Leisure would be monitoring the service closely.

The Committee agreed (by 6 votes to 0) the recommendations for the Leader.

The Leader agreed the recommendations.

03/STR/42 MEDIUM TERM STRATEGY 2003/4-2008/9 *(see also*

Recommendation to Council & Record of Decision 03/STR/19)

The Director of Finance introduced the report and referred to the updated project Appraisal for the Computerisation of Land Charges which he had circulated separately. All Scrutiny Committees had received an Executive Summary, which had been seen to work better than last year's process. He stated that regarding the General Fund the main issue for the Council (page 63) would be when the protection of the 'floor' was to be phased out by Government and how the Council would meet the resultant reduction in grant. The MTS had developed a series of assumptions to demonstrate that the proposed strategy was both viable and sustainable. Risk analysis had also been used to cover variations in the key assumptions. Referring to capital, the Director of Finance stated that page 15 illustrated a balanced position over the period which reflected the increased ability to use right to buy receipts following the achievement of debt free status.

Councillor Stuart opposed the built in assumption of a 4% increase in Council Tax. He also was concerned that Best Value Reviews were not generating enough predicted savings, nor challenging enough. The Director of Finance referred to page 139 which indicated that savings were anticipated from the BVRs and would be dealt with through the budget process.

The Leader responded on the level of Council Tax, concurring with the Director of Finance's comment that the figure was based on the predicted level of increase in Government's Assumed National Council Tax 2004/05 (pages 66-69) and that the administration would be held to account for its budget proposals in February 2004. The Leader stated that the MTS also provided the administration with £500,000 of policy space.

The Committee agreed (by 6 votes to 0) the recommendations from the Leader.

The Leader agreed the recommendations.

03/STR/43 SINGLE STATUS NEGOTIATIONS *(see also Record of Decision 03/STR/20)*

The Committee agreed (by 6 votes to 0) the recommendation for the Leader.

The Leader agreed the recommendations.

03/STR/44 REVIEW OF 2002/03 SAFER CITY GRANTS AND FUNDING STRATEGY FOR 2004/05 *(see also Record of Decision 03/STR/21)*

In introducing the report, the Head of Strategy & Partnerships advised the Committee that Councillor Hart had also indicated her support for the projects in Abbey Ward.

In answering a question from Councillor Bradnack about mapping poverty data (para 4.1.0), the Head of Strategy & Partnerships stated that the Community Safety

Strategy, on which the safer city grant criteria was set, had used mapping poverty information.

Councillor Stuart asked that the Committee receive at some stage a review of the Domestic Violence Co-ordinator funding/work as it fell outside the terms of this annual review.

Councillor Durrant proposed that the Council should involve the public more in the debate on crime, and mentioned the Committee of Inquiry process undertaken in other areas of Council policy in the late 1990s. Members of the Committee agreed that the Area Committees could perform a role in the on-going debate. The Leader requested that the Council should also consider involving the University of Cambridge's Criminology Department. The Head of Strategy & Partnerships suggested that the best time to have a focused debate with the public would be at the time when the Community Safety Strategy was revised in 2004/05.

The Committee agreed (by 6 votes to 0) the recommendation for the Leader.

The Leader agreed the recommendation.

03/STR/45 **SAFER CITY GRANTS** (*see also Record of Decision 03/STR/22*)

The Committee agreed (by 6 votes to 0) the recommendation for the Leader.

The Leader agreed the recommendation.

03/STR/46 KEY DECISION **ANNUAL REVIEW OF COUNCIL GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY GROUPS 2002/03** (*see also Record of Decision 03/STR/23*)

The Head of Strategy & Partnerships proposed that in the Corporate Framework for Grants (page 50), the first bullet point in the second section should be amended (in italics) to read:

'base grant programme priorities on its Medium Term Objectives, *informed by its work on mapping economic disadvantage in the city....*'

Councillor Stuart requested that matters he raised at Environment Scrutiny Committee be followed up namely: the Council consider a performance indicator which measured grant applicants and recipients satisfaction with the process. He also queried the benefit of the Grantfinder service based on such low usage. The Leader agreed that these matters could be looked at further.

The Committee agreed (by 6 votes to 0) the recommendations for the Leader as stated in the report.

The Leader agreed to the recommendations.

03/STR/47 **RACE EQUALITY SCHEME ANNUAL REPORT** (*see also Record of*

Decision 03/STR/24)

Councillor Bagnall suggested that the Council needed to be more robust in ensuring that the areas of employment and procurement are effectively monitored. The Leader agreed that the officers should look into this further.

The Committee agreed (by 7 votes to 0) the recommendations for the Leader as stated in the report.

The Leader agreed to the recommendations.

03/STR/48 CAMBRIDGE LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP – CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS (*see also Record of Decision 03/STR/25*)

The Committee noted the additional information circulated at the request of Councillor Bradnack. The Committee requested that the Leader raise the following matters at the next meeting of the LSP:

- to include under Issue A (7) energy conservation - both in new housing and business developments (ie. that both the development sites, and the buildings on them, should be sustainable);
- to ensure that the objectives of the LSP are deliverable;
- to ensure that the Cambridge LSP and South Cambridgeshire LSP are seen to be 'joined up'

The Leader agreed to pass on these comments.

03/STR/49 GRANTS TO TWINNING ORGANISATIONS (*see also Record of Decision 03/STR/26*)

The Committee was advised that the outstanding financial information from the Heidelberg Association had been received. The Committee agreed to a request from the Director of Central Services that the grants should be delegated to the officers up to £2,500 in future years.

The Committee agreed (by 6 votes to 0) on the recommendations for the Leader as stated in the report, and by 7 votes to 0 that future years grants be delegated to officers up to £2,500.

The Leader agreed to the recommendations.

03/STR/50 COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT - UPDATE (*see also Record of Decision 03/STR/27*)

The Committee agreed (by 6 votes to 0) on the recommendation for the Leader.

The Leader agreed to the recommendation.

03/STR/51 **APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES** (*see also Record of Decision 03/STR/28*)

The Committee agreed to the nominations of Councillors Ward and Todd-Jones for Cambridge Police Consultation North and Councillors Smart and Dryden for Cambridge Police Consultation South (the latter by 2 votes to 1 for Councillor Howell).

The Leader agreed to the recommendation.

The meeting ended at 7.46pm.

CHAIR