

**STRATEGY
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**26 January 2004
6.00pm – 8.00pm

PRESENT: Councillors Schofield (Chair), Adey, Bradnack, Coleman, Durrant, Reid, Julie Smith, Stuart and Ward.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Ian Nimmo-Smith, The Leader.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**04/STR/01 MINUTES**

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2003 as a correct record, and the minutes were signed by the Chair.

04/STR/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology was received from Councillor Bagnall.

04/STR/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

04/STR/04 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present who wished to ask a question.

**04/STR/05 THE COUNCIL'S COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE
ASSESSMENT**

The Leader and Councillors Bradnack and Stuart acknowledged the work of the Council's officers, senior management and Councillors themselves, which had contributed towards the Audit Commission rating of Excellent. The Chief Executive stated that the Service Improvement Plan was likely to focus on the areas of weakness, including procurement, performance management and the Council's Scrutiny Committees. Members noted that the Chief Executive would send the draft Service Improvement Plan to the Leader, Chair and spokes before agreeing it with the Audit Commission.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed the recommendation for the Leader by 7 votes to 0, (noting that the draft would be sent to Leader, Chair and spokes).

The Leader agreed the recommendation.

04/STR/06 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003

In introducing the report, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services clarified the position that dispersal and removal from a designated area can last for up to six months maximum, but an application can be made by the police to renew it (paragraph 4.2).

Councillor Stuart requested that Group Leaders be notified when the Leader receives requests from the police, along with his decision, at the time rather than await the report to Strategy Scrutiny Committee. The Leader agreed that this would be done.

The Leader advised the committee that the Code of Practice on the use of these new powers was yet to be issued by the Home Office, although a Cambridgeshire Code was being developed which would be available for members of the Council and the public.

Councillors Bradnack and Stuart proposed an addition to the recommendations:

‘That the Council propose to the police that Mill Road should be considered for designation as a locality for dispersal of groups and removal of persons under 16.’

The Committee agreed to this additional proposal by 3 votes to 2.

Action by: Strategy and Partnerships/Legal Services

The Committee agreed the recommendation in 2.2 (of the report) for the Leader by 7 votes to 0.

The Leader agreed the recommendation in 2.2 of the report.

Resolved (by 7 votes to 0) -

(i) To agree that the Leader may make decisions of the following kind without the Scrutiny Committee being first consulted, but to inform Group Leaders at the time of any decision:

Responding, on behalf of the Council, to requests from the Police for the Council's approval to the designation of localities within the City for the purposes of section 30, Anti-social Behaviour Act, 2003 (dispersal of groups and removal of persons under 16).

(ii) That the Council propose to the police that Mill Road should be considered for designation as a locality for dispersal of groups and removal of persons under 16.

Action by: Strategy and Partnerships/Legal Services

04/STR/07 **KEY DECISION – FOR THE STRATEGY PORTFOLIO SERVICE PLAN (Strategy & Partnerships) AND GENERAL FUND REVISED REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGETS 2003/04, DRAFT BUDGETS 2004/05 AND FORECAST 2005/06**

In introducing the report, the Senior Strategy Officer explained that because the next meeting of Strategy Scrutiny Committee would be in May, applications for Safer City capital grants over £5,000 and received in the last quarter could not be considered by members before the end of the financial year. He requested that the Leader carry forward into 2004/05 any underspend on Safer City capital grant so that the Strategy Scrutiny Committee could consider applications over £5,000 at its 4 May meeting. The Leader agreed to this proposal.

The Committee was advised of some amendments to the Strategy & Partnerships Service Plan 2003/04 (part 2):

Area Decision making – would be included in the review of decision making structures during the coming year.

Community Strategy - July 2004

In response to a request from Councillor Stuart, the Senior Strategy Officer undertook to provide a more detailed analysis of the violent crime BV indicator and circulate it to members.

Action by: Senior Strategy Officer

The Committee agreed (by 6 votes to 0) the recommendations for the Leader, noting the additional carry forward request of Safer City capital grant.

The Leader agreed the recommendations.

04/STR/08 **THE COUNCIL'S GENERAL FUND REVISED REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGETS 2003/04, DRAFT BUDGETS 2004/05 AND FORECAST 2005/06**

The Director of Finance circulated an update, which detailed the Executive's likely recommendations to Council ahead of the meeting of the Executive on 29 January.

The Director of Finance advised the Committee that the Local Government Final Settlement would be announced on 5 February, although any changes if made were expected to be minimal. The Committee noted the figures for Tax Base were still being adjusted to reduce the discount to second homes and long term vacant properties (paragraph 8). The Director of Finance stated that if this had not been completed by Council on 12 February, he would seek delegated authority to finalise the calculation of Tax Base.

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

The Leader agreed the recommendations.

04/STR/09 KEY DECISION – CITY COMPACT WITH VOLUNTARY SECTOR

The Grants Manager tabled a submission from the Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service, which had been received that afternoon. This is interleaved with the minutes. The Grants Manager recommended that the submission be included as Part 2 of basic Compact text (appendix 3). It was noted that as a consequence recommendation 2.3 would be amended to read ‘...to adopt the amended text...’

The Chair recommended that the Executive Councillor for Community Development & Leisure represent the Council on the proposed Compact Forum.

The Committee agreed the recommendations, as amended above, for the Leader by 6 votes to 0.

The Leader agreed the recommendations.

04/STR/10 SAFER CITY GRANT

The Committee agreed the recommendation by 7 votes to 0.

The Leader agreed the recommendation.

04/STR/11 EAST AREA COMMITTEE – RE. CHANGE TO FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS AND BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED IN A COMMITTEE CYCLE

Councillor Durrant introduced the item. He was concerned about the service to the public by not knowing if a planning application was to be heard at a particular meeting because of too much business. He was also concerned about the quality of the decisions being made by the committee in trying to get through all business within two to two and a half hours.

The Leader stated that it was too early in the process to agree to Councillor Durrant’s proposal. It was noted that the East Area Committee was due to consider five applications at its February meeting, which was more in line with the projections done prior to the introduction of Area Committees. He stated that Area Committees would be included in the review of decision making due to report in July. The Leader agreed that the Area Committee Chairs may make provision for a second meeting if the business requires it, but that it should be determined cycle by cycle by the Chair and officers, rather than accepted as the usual practice.

04/STR/12 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The Committee agreed to exclude the public on the grounds that, if they were present, there would be disclosure to them of information defined as exempt from

publication by Categories 8 and 9 as defined in the Council's Constitution part 4B (pages 181-3)

04/STR/13 KEY DECISION – **BANKING CONTRACT**

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

The Leader agreed the recommendations.

The meeting ended at 8pm

CHAIR