

STRATEGY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**10 July 2006**

6.00pm –9.40pm

PRESENT: Councillors Adigun-Harris, Armstrong, Boyce, Herbert, Hymans, Shah, Stafford and Ward (Vice-Chair in the Chair).

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Ian Nimmo-Smith, The Leader.
Executive Councillor Julie Smith for 06/STR/27. Councillor Blencowe for 06/STR/32.
Councillor Bradnack for 06/STR/29,34,35

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**06/STR/23 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting on 3 April 2006 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Vice Chair.

06/STR/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bruce.

06/STR/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Herbert declared a personal interest re. 06/STR/27 as his partner worked for Cambridgeshire Horizons.

Councillor Adigun-Harris indicated that he had a personal and prejudicial interest in the disposal of land at Clay Fram 06/STR/32 and said that, if the specific issue of Clay Farm was to be debated, he would withdraw from the meeting

06/STR/26 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A member of the public referred to 06/STR/32. He asked the Leader to ensure that the Council sought to maximise value for its land when sold to invest in the wider community and that not all housing development on council owned land should be affordable. The Leader responded that the officer report addressed some of the issues for the Council on any land asset disposal. The Council would want to take into consideration how best it would achieve its objectives e.g. higher environmental standards.

06/STR/27 CAMBRIDGESHIRE HORIZONS – QUALITY OF LIFE DOCUMENTS (See also Record of Decision 06/16)

The Scrutiny Committee received a presentation on the objectives and next steps for the Quality of Life Strategies, the Programme and how they should be incorporated within the Council's own practices.

The Leader, in acknowledging that the documents were at various stages of readiness, stated that the revenue implications for the major sports and cultural venues were not well

covered. These proposals in particular would rely for delivery on a wide partnership of interested parties. Therefore, it was better to take a minimalist view of the proposals at this stage.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed the recommendations by 6 votes to 0.

The Leader approved recommendations in 2.1. The Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation approved the recommendations in 2.3. (The decisions for the Executive Councillor for Planning and Transport, who was not present, would be taken at a later date)

06/STR/28 REVENUE & CAPITAL OUTTURN 2005/06 – STRATEGY PORTFOLIO
(See also Record of Decision 06/17)

In response to a request from Councillor Herbert, the officers undertook to provide the Scrutiny Committee with more information on the Organisation Development Programme carry forward.

Action – DoF/HoHR

Councillor Herbert proposed that the Scrutiny Committee not agree recommendation (b), relating to the Organisation Development Programme, so that any request for carry forward in 2006/07 could be scrutinised. The Committee agreed to the amendment by 3 votes to 0.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed the recommendations (a) and (c) only for the Leader by 6 votes to 0.

The Leader approved recommendation (a) and (c).

06/STR/29 REVENUE & CAPITAL OUTTURN 2005/06 - OVERVIEW *(See also Record of Decision 06/18 and Recommendation to Council 20 July 2006)*

In introducing the report, the Director of Finance amended the figures included as follows
Appendix A – Environment Environmental Services Carry Forward Requests £62,060; Net variance (£125,057)

Appendix B – Final Carry Forward Requests Environmental Services £62,060; Total £877,400. Page 50 delete nos. 1 and 2 as listed.

[nb – subsequent to the meeting, it was further amended in the reports to Council to reflect that these decisions were taken under the Planning & Transport portfolio and not Environmental Services].

Councillor Bradnack expressed concern that there was not sufficient scrutiny of the carry-forward requests. The Leader replied that the service Scrutiny Committees had received the reports for pre-scrutiny and commented. Councillor Herbert proposed an amendment:

- a. That the Leader review in detail the £890,000 allocations before allowing carry forwards, and that other priorities including increased resourcing of CCTV and the growth agenda including affordable housing and the funding of over 60s free buses be also investigated at the same time.
- b. That a new rigorous process for deciding both revenue and capital carry forwards, and mid-year variances, be implemented before the next rounds, including Strategy Scrutiny Committee taking the lead role.

The Leader stated that he and Executive Councillors ensured that the officers gave sound reasons for why variances had occurred and the necessity for carrying forward monies into the new financial year. He also noted that a substantial percentage of the carry forward request was made up of Planning Delivery Grant and Organisational Development. The Chair said that although there was some merit in the points put by the Labour councillors, the best opportunity for scrutiny of carry-forward requests was at the service scrutiny committee level (the rejection by an Executive Councillor of two carry forward requests following Environment Scrutiny Committee being the obvious example).

The amendment was lost by 0 votes to 6. The Leader indicated that he would meet with Councillor Herbert to discuss Labour Councillor concerns relating to the current process.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed the recommendations (a) and (c) only for the Leader by 6 votes to 0.

The Leader agreed recommendation (a) and (c) for approval by Council.

06/STR/30 **MEDIUM TERM STRATEGY 2006-2011** (*See also Record of Decision 06/19 and Recommendation to Council 20 July 2006*)

The Director of Finance introduced the report and highlighted that the timescale for production had been tight and it would be sensible to revert to a September scrutiny/approval process in 2007. It was noted that the Council was broadly in line with its long term projections. Members thanked the Director of Finance for the considerable effort in producing the document.

The Leader wished the Scrutiny Committee to consider adding a recommendation endorsing the new Medium Term Objectives for approval by Council; these had been included in the MTS at Appendix D. Councillor Boyce proposed an additional recommendation 2.10 to that effect which was supported by 6 votes to 0.

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

The Leader agreed the recommendations for approval for Council.

06/STR/31 **DOCUMENT IMAGE PROCESSING – PROJECT APPRAISAL** (See also *Record of Decision 06/20*)

The Head of ICT Client Services introduced the report. In response to questions from the Scrutiny Committee, he stated that if approved, the procurement and project planning would be incorporated within the Customer Access Strategy and reported to Customer Services and Resources Scrutiny Committee as appropriate.

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

06/STR/32 **CONSIDERATION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN ASSET DISPOSALS** (See also *Record of Decision 06/21*)

The Head of Community Services Strategy introduced the report. The Scrutiny Committee noted that the report had taken into account: The Local Development Framework/Local Plan and the Cambridgeshire Horizons Quality of Life Document ‘Balanced & Mixed Communities.’

The Scrutiny Committee noted that the matter would be considered at the Council meeting on 20 July 2006.

In response to a question from Councillor Blencowe, members noted that the disposal of land at Clay Farm would be re-submitted for consideration by the Executive Councillor for Customer Services & Resources (and the CS&R Scrutiny Committee). Councillor Blencowe stated that with the Clay Farm decision, the Council had been too quick to go for an option agreement and not given enough consideration to 100% affordable housing on the site. Councillor Boyce did not agree that single tenure housing on any site was appropriate.

Councillor Herbert proposed amendments to the recommendations:

In 2.2 “ To seek to maximise the proportion...”

Delete 2.4

The amendment was lost by 0 votes to 5.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed the recommendation for the Leader by 5 votes to 0.

The Leader approved the recommendations.

06/STR/33 **RESEARCH INTO THE NEEDS OF GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

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

The Leader approved the recommendation for approval by Council.

06/STR/34 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY REVIEW 2006

Councillor Herbert welcomed the various internal working groups that the Council had established. Members commented that the Council still needed to do a lot of work to ensure a more representative workforce of the community it served. In response to a question from Councillor Adigun-Harris, the Head of Strategy & Partnerships undertook to provide the Scrutiny Committee with a briefing paper about the way in which some of the BME statistics are collected.

In response to comments by members, the Vice Chair undertook to discuss with the Head of Strategy & Partnerships how the Strategy Scrutiny Committee could better consider the equalities agenda and the work of the Equalities Panel (this had been an action outstanding from his time in the Chair).

Action by Cllr Ward/Head of Strategy & Partnerships

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

The Leader approved the recommendation for approval by Council.

06/STR/35 SAFER CITY GRANTS 2006/07 – ROUND 2

Councillor Bradnack queried the funding of CCTV cameras using this Fund and commented that it had taken too long to come forward for a decision. The Leader stated that an underspend on the Fund was not confirmed until recently hence the application only now being considered. In the light of this application, the Scrutiny Committee agreed that the way the Fund was allocated and the criteria applied to it, be reviewed at the next meeting.

Action by Strategy Officer (Community Safety)

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

The Leader approved the recommendations.

The meeting ended at 9.40pm

CHAIR