

Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee14 April 2008
5.00pm – 7.25pm

Present: Councillors Taylor (Chair), Blackhurst, Boyce, Bradnack, Ellis-Miller, Herbert, Ward and Shah

Also Present:

Councillor Ian Nimmo-Smith, The Leader

Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources, Rod Cantrill

Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth, Cllr Reid

For the Information of the Council**08/SR/12 Minutes**

The committee noted that the minutes of the meeting on 19 November 2007 were not available.

08/SR/13 Apologies

Apologies were noted from Cllr Sadiq.

08/SR/14 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Ward declared a personal interest in Item 08/SR/18 Local Trade Union Facilities Agreement as his wife belongs to a Trade Union.

Cllr Shah declared a personal interest in Item 08/SR/22 Climate Change Fund as his daughter worked for Cambridge Carbon Footprint.

Cllr Boyce declared a personal interest in Item 08/SR/22 Climate Change Fund as a Trustee of Kelsey Kerridge Sports Hall which was involved with Cambridge Carbon Footprint.

08/SR/15 Public Questions

None

08/SR/16 Consultation into the Future Structure for a Combined CCM & Tourism Public/Private Sector Partnership for Cambridge

The Head of Tourism and City Centre Management reported on progress following on from proposals in the initial report, "A Future Structure for a City Centre Management and Tourism Partnership for Cambridge" discussed at

the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting on 3rd September 2007. A series of consultation events had taken place to debate the way forward. The objective of these consultation events had been to engage all stakeholders in identifying the challenges, opportunities and aspirations for the city centre and to review whether in light of these, the current model is “fit for purpose.” They have sought to identify ways in which the council could work more effectively with other stakeholders in the city centre, particularly the private sector, in order to build organisational capacity, and through genuine effective partnership working, realise some of the aspirations for the city centre.

Part of the consultation process had also sought to review research which has been undertaken on other comparable historic city centres (notably York, Norwich, Worcester, Oxford, Bath and Norwich) in terms of their approach to both City Centre Management and Tourism. st (3rd April) and East Area Committees (17th April)

The findings would be reported to the April Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee regarding the findings of the consultation process, with the intention to then bring formal proposals to a special meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on a date to be fixed in June.

08/SR/17 2007/08 Estimated Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances

This officers' report presented a summary of the 2007/08 estimated outturn position (actual income and expenditure) for services within the Customer Services & Resources portfolio, compared to the current budget for the year. The position for revenue and capital was reported and anticipated variances from budgets are highlighted, together with explanations. Requests to carry forward funding arising from certain budget underspends into 2008/09 were identified, where they were anticipated at this stage.

The Committee supported the recommendations set out in the Officers' report by 6 votes to 0

The Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources approved the recommendations.

08/SR/18 Local Trade Union Facilities Agreement

The City Council's current Trade Union Facilities Agreement expires on 31 March 2008. This paper gives options for the Executive Councillor to

consider enabling continued provision of Trade Union facilities and associated funding.

A Trade Union Facilities Agreement had been in place since 1988 between the City Council and the recognised Trade unions; UNISON, GMB and UCATT. Prior to 2005 this Agreement was renewable annually with Member agreement. In November 2004 the Commercial & Human Resources Scrutiny Committee agreed proposals to:

- Increase the level of funding for the Trade Union Branch Secretary posts to 1 FTE each for UNISON and GMB.
- Extend the length of the Facilities Agreement, and corresponding funding, to 3 years with effect from 1 April 2005.

The Committee supported the recommendations set out in the Officers' report. Including the extension of the length of the facilities agreement by a further 3 years, by 6 votes to 0

The Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources approved the recommendations, as amended.

08/SR/19 Exclusion of Public: Appendix 1 to Item 9

Agreed that to enable the Committee to discuss Appendix 1 to the report under the next item, the public was excluded from the meeting by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

08/SR/20 Disposal of Site of 1-8 Elmfield Close, 9 & 11 Elmfield Road and Garden Land at Rear of 85-91 & 95-99 Scotland Road

The Executive Councillor for Housing had resolved in March 2007 to approve grant funding for a 40 X 2bed social rented unit scheme, specifically designed for the over 55's at Elmfield Close, Cambridge to be carried out by Hundred Houses Society. The scheme will be spread over land part currently owned by the Council and part already owned by the Society and this report concerns the disposal of the Council's element of the land to Hundred Houses Society.

The Committee supported the recommendations set out in the Officers' report by 6 votes to 0

The Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources approved the recommendations.

08/SR/21 Project Appraisal: Corporate Axis PAYe.net

The project would deploy a web based card, cheque and cash payment system supplied by Capita. The deployment of Axis PAYe.net modules would improve the methods in the way the Council handled payments, both through the website and Customer Services, supporting the Medium Term Objective of "Deliver high quality services in a fair & equal way to all sections of the community". It will minimise transaction times in both sections of the Customer Service Centre and enable self-service over the web.

The Committee supported the recommendations set out in the Officers' report by 6 votes to 0

The Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources approved the recommendations.

08/SR/22 Climate Change Fund

A Climate Change Fund with an initial investment of £250,000 had been agreed by the Council on 21 February 2008 to be used to provide funding for schemes or activities which would contribute to the achievement of the Council's climate change and carbon reduction Medium Term Objectives. Proposals for the overall structure and uses for the Climate Change Fund had been developed prior to more detailed development of the Fund governance, scope and operation for consideration by the Environment Scrutiny Committee in June 2008. These proposals would include arrangements for the administration of the fund and for the appraisal, evaluation, prioritisation and approval of bids made for use of the fund.

The Committee supported the recommendations set out in the Officers' report by 6 votes to 0

The Leader approved the recommendations

08/SR/23 Cambridge Climate Change Strategy: Draft for Consultation

On 22 September 2006 Cambridge City Council had signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change, the primary implication of which was for the Council to prepare a plan within 2 years with the local communities to address the causes and effects of climate change. On 22 January 2007 Strategy Scrutiny Committee had approved an action plan for the development of a Cambridge Climate Change Strategy. A draft strategy and

action plan had been prepared for public consultation prior to development of a final strategy for adoption by Council in September 2008.

The Committee supported the recommendations set out in the Officers' report by 6 votes to 0

The Leader approved the recommendations

08/SR/24 Estimated Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances for 2007/08 - Leader's Portfolio

The officers' report presented a summary of the 2007/08 estimated outturn position (actual income and expenditure) for services within the Strategy Services portfolio, compared to the current budget for the year. The position for revenue and capital was reported and anticipated variances from budgets are highlighted, together with explanations. Requests to carry forward funding arising from certain budget underspends into 2008/09 were identified, where they were anticipated at this stage.

The Committee supported the recommendations set out in the officers' report by 5 votes to 0

The Leader approved the recommendations

08/SR/25 Estimated Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances for 2007/08 - Overview

The officers' report presented a summary of the 2007/08 estimated outturn position (actual income and expenditure) for all portfolios, compared to the current budget for the year. The position for revenue and capital was reported and anticipated variances from budgets were highlighted. Explanations had been reported to individual scrutiny committees and were reproduced here. Requests to carry forward funding arising from certain budget underspends into 2008/09 were identified, where they were anticipated at this stage.

The Committee supported the recommendations set out in the officers' report by 6 votes to 0

The Leader approved the recommendations

08/SR/26 Progress Report on Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement

The report explained the background to the Local Area Agreement (LAA), a three-year agreement that set out the priorities for a local area agreed

between central government and local councils and their partners. The first Cambridgeshire agreement had been agreed in February 2006. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act required new agreements to be in place in all county and unitary areas by June 2008. The Act also gave the City Council and other named partners a statutory duty to co-operate with the LAA process and contribute the achievement of the LAA targets.

The LAA would be made up of up to 35 improvement targets chosen from the 198 indicators in the new national indicator set. In addition the LAA was to include 16 statutory education and early years' targets and could include any additional local targets agreed by partners.

The Council and its partners would be assessed through the new Comprehensive Performance Assessment Framework against the achievement of LAA targets.

This report also updated Members on the progress made in agreeing the indicators to be used in the agreement and the next steps in the process.

The Committee were invited to comment on the progress made which the Leader would take into account in future LAA negotiations.

The Leader noted members comments.

08/SR/27 Review of Charging of Central Overheads to Departments and Services

Under Rule 3.2 of the Conventions for Council Business the Committee noted that Councillor Ward had given notice of the following item for inclusion on the agenda for the Scrutiny Committee.

The committee requests the Head of Internal Audit to bring to its next meeting a scoping report outlining the options for carrying out a review of the manner in which the council charges central overheads to departmental and service budgets. The review should address the following:

- (1) an explanation of how the current system works.
- (2) an explanation of which parts of the current system are statutory, which parts follow accepted accounting practices, and which parts are local policies which may be easily changed.
- (3) options for change, taking into account best practice in other comparable authorities.

Prior to the meeting Cllr Ward had discussed the extent of his request with the Director of Finance, who had undertaken to carry out the work requested by Cllr Ward, on the basis of setting out the budget costs for 'back office' administration, a summary of recharges to the 'front office' of these costs and an overview of the basis for the apportionment of the recharged costs.

The Meeting closed at 7.25pm

CHAIR