

**STRATEGY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** 29 March 2010  
5.00 - 7.40 pm

**Present:** Councillors Taylor (Chair), Blackhurst (Vice-Chair), Bick, Boyce, Herbert, Howell, Shah and Ward

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**

**10/18/SR Minutes of the meetings held 18 January and 12 February 2010**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 January and 12<sup>th</sup> February 2010 were approved and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

**10/19/SR Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Dryden

**10/20/SR Declaration of Interest**

10/SR/30 Cllr Shah declared a personal interest due to previous involvement with the Cambridge Ethnic Network.

**10/21/SR Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

The committee resolved to vary the order of the agenda to take items 9 to 15 first.

**10/22/SR Key Decision - Consultation on Future Structure of the Council**

**Matter for Decision:** To be consulted on the proposed future structure of the Council.

**Decision of Executive Councillor:**

- The Chief Executive received comments from the members of the Scrutiny Committee on the proposed future structure of the Council.

**Reason for the Decision:** As set out in the officer's report.

**Any alternative options considered and rejected:** N/A

**Scrutiny Considerations:**

The Chief Executive introduced the report and outlined some of the themes that had been raised in the staff consultation process. The committee were advised that 110 responses had been received, some of which were from teams and others that had been provided from individuals. It was explained that there was general agreement in the responses on the principle of having three departments and that the majority of responses related to the configuration of different services.

The Chief Executive outlined the key themes arising from the consultation process for each proposed department.

People

- Whether there should be one or two Heads of Services focussing on Housing.
- The configuration of services within Arts & Recreation and Community Engagement, and whether there should be one or two Heads of Service.
- General agreement on the proposed transfer of Revenue and Benefits and Customer Services into the People Directorate.
- Within the proposed Arts and Recreation function, a number of comments about the most appropriate directorate for play area management.

Place

- Whether there should be one, two or three Heads of Services focused on Planning and Urban Design.

- The configuration of Streets & Open Spaces and Refuse & Environment related services.
- The possibility of centralising all enforcement activity into a single service.
- Following the transfer of local authority parking enforcement responsibilities back to Cambridgeshire County Council, whether the Head of Parking Services should remain a Head of Service level post.

### Support

- The configuration of Property & Building Services and Repairs & Maintenance, and whether Repairs & Maintenance would be more appropriately aligned with City Homes.
- Whether the S151 Officer designation would be more appropriately located at the Director level.

### Chief Executive Department

- Querying the need for a Chief Executive Department.
- Whether HR would be more appropriately aligned within the proposed Support directorate.

The Chief Executive explained that with regards to Bereavement Services, representations had been received suggesting it should be placed in anyone of the three directorates.

Cllr Howell asked whether any of the comments had questioned the ability of the different services to deliver, if there was a reduction in the number of Heads of Services and Directors. The Chief Executive explained that the majority of comments had focussed on the configuration of different services and the required cultural changes, rather than concerns about the number of managers

**Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None**

### **10/23/SR Key Decision - Procurement of CCTV Maintenance Contract**

**Matter for Decision:** To consider the mechanism for awarding a contract for the maintenance of CCTV systems in conjunction with other local authorities.

**Decision of Executive Councillor:**

The Leader of the Council authorised the Director of City Services to;

- Tender, and in consultation with the Director of Finance and Head of Legal Services award a contract for up to five years for the maintenance of the city's CCTV system.
- Negotiate with other local authorities within Cambridgeshire involving CCTV provision and St Edmundsbury Borough Council to undertake a joint procurement of services and inclusion within the tender document.

**Reason for the Decision:** As set out in the officer's report.

**Any alternative options considered and rejected:** N/A

**Scrutiny Considerations:**

The Director of City Services introduced the report.

The Scrutiny Committee considered the report and accepted the recommendation by 7 votes to 0.

**Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted):** None

**10/24/SR Key Decision - Council Enforcement Policy**

**Matter for Decision:** To consider the proposed Corporate Enforcement Policy.

**Decision of Executive Councillor:**

- The Leader of the Council approved the proposed Corporate Enforcement Policy.

**Reason for the Decision:** As set out in the officer's report.

**Any alternative options considered and rejected:** N/A

**Scrutiny Considerations:**

The Environmental Health Manager explained the changes to the policy following a question from the committee. The committee was advised that the policy had been updated in light of legislative and policy changes.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and approved the recommendations as amended by 6 votes to 0.

**Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted):** None

**10/25/SR Key Decision - Community Empowerment and Local Participation in Decision Making**

**Matter for Decision:** To consider proposals for greater community participation and involvement in the way the Council sets local priorities and provides local services.

**Decision of Executive Councillor:**

The Leader of the Council;

- Endorsed the approach outlined in the committee report to encourage local participation in decision-making.
- Directed Officers to prepare area profiles for each area by September 2010.
- Directed Officers to prepare and facilitate initial participatory events in autumn 2010, subject to a further detailed report at the next Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting.

**Reason for the Decision:** As set out in the officer's report.

**Any alternative options considered and rejected:** N/A

**Scrutiny Considerations:**

Members of the Committee in principle welcomed the report. The following comments were raised by the Scrutiny Committee;

- The need to be clearer on the intended tangible outcomes. A more detailed report was requested at the next meeting of the committee, although it was emphasised that this request should not be used to delay the implementation of the project.
- The need to manage expectations effectively to avoid members of the public withdrawing from the process if their expectations were unachievable.
- The need to ensure the structures and systems are properly resourced.
- The need to undertake a wider review of Area Committees to assess what works well, and what doesn't.
- The possibility of delegating more responsibility to Ward Councillor level to maximise the use of limited budgets.
- Whether it would be more appropriate to undertake the process in stages over 5 years.
- The lack of a political "imprint" on the proposals
- The importance of enhancing and empowering the role of local ward members and improving participation in decision making.
- Lack of clarity on the level of the budgets that would be delegated to the committee.
- Clarification was sought on the format of the participatory events.
- Concern about the potential to miss the needs and views of some groups by focussing solely on area based approach, particularly with new and ethnic communities who were dispersed throughout the city.
- Whether the timescales were too tight specifically with the effects on officer workload; training requirements for members and whether September was a good time to engage with young people.

The Head of Strategy and Partnerships and the Leader of the Council welcomed the comments from the members of the Scrutiny Committee.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and approved an amendment requesting officers to prepare a more detailed report for the July 2010 Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting by 7 votes to 0. The Leader of the Council agreed to the amendment.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and approved the recommendations as amended by 6 votes to 1.

### **10/26/SR Non Key Decision - Policing and Safer Neighbourhood Update**

**Matter for Decision:** To consider the priorities set over the last 12 months at Area Committees and to consider future improvements to the Policing and Safer Neighbourhoods work in Cambridge.

#### **Decision of Executive Councillor:**

- Noted the report and priorities set over the last 12 months
- Instructed officers and partner agencies to prepare an update in an appropriate format regarding lessons learnt and progress made against the priorities.

**Reason for the Decision:** As set out in the officer's report.

**Any alternative options considered and rejected:** N/A

#### **Scrutiny Considerations:**

The Director of Community Services introduced the report.

The committee welcomed the report and the enhanced level of engagement from Police with regards to the priority setting process. The committee generally agreed that it would be useful to understand in greater clarity of outcome of different priorities and any associated learning.

Members welcomed the shifting nature of the priority setting process and the willingness of the Area Committees to challenge the priorities proposed by the Police. A number also suggested that it would be helpful if there was greater clarity and alignment between the priority setting processes for area and city

wide issues. A specific concern was raised as to whether the Police were over-resourcing meetings. Members also raised concern about the willingness of the Police to supply specific information and sufficient information to allow the Area Committees to make an informed proactive decision on the setting of priorities.

Concern was raised about the Community Safety Partnership and its accessibility to the public. The Director of Community Services agreed to ensure that the publicity of meetings was improved, and confirmed that there was a public question time opportunity at each Community Safety Partnership meeting.

The difficulties of engaging with the wider community were highlighted, and that the current structure made it very difficult for certain groups to engage. It was agreed that other forms of communications such as E-Cops may be more successful in certain communities. The importance of clarifying the link and role of Neighbourhood Action Groups was emphasised, and a member nomination on each Neighbourhood Action Groups was requested.

The Scrutiny Committee considered an amendment to instruct officers and partner agencies to prepare an update in an appropriate format regarding lessons learnt and progress made against the priorities identified at Area Committees. The amendment was approved unanimously and welcomed by the Leader.

The Director of Community Services agreed to review whether it would be possible for the Police to provide funding towards the Area Committee. It was clarified that the Police did already provide significant profiling support to the Area Committees.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and approved the recommendations as amended unanimously.

**Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None**

**10/27/SR Non Key Decision - Freedom of Information Publication Scheme**

**Matter for Decision:** To consider measures to further improve public accessibility to information about the Council.

**Decision of Executive Councillor:**

- Agreed the measures set out in the committee report to further improve public accessibility to information about the Council

**Reason for the Decision:** As set out in the officer's report.

**Any alternative options considered and rejected:** N/A

**Scrutiny Considerations:**

The committee welcomed the report from the Head of Strategy and Partnerships.

The Head of Strategy and Partnerships agreed to investigate whether the URL would change if responses were moved from the current to archive section of the site.

Clarification was sought on the nature of the benefits in kind currently published. The Head of Strategy and Partnerships explained that currently a list was provided of what was available to members, but for specific areas such as car parking the current monitoring systems made it difficult to provide more detailed information. Specific concerns were raised about the health and safety implications of publishing detailed information about individual councillor car park use. Members asked whether it would be possible to simply list the Councillors who had received permits, rather than providing a detailed breakdown of usage.

In response to a question, the Head of Strategy and Partnerships confirmed that it was not the intention to publish the name of the person or organisation submitting the Freedom of Information request. A suggestion was made by a member of the committee regarding the possibility of introducing system to identify anonymously requests from the same individual or organisation. The Head of Strategy and Partnerships suggested that such a system would potentially be difficult to manage, and it may be possible to identify the person or organisation making the request by cross referencing against other sources. The possibility of including the cost of preparing response, within the response was suggested.

Cllr Howell asked whether it would be possible to work in conjunction with the “What do they Know” website, and manage the publishing of requests and responses through that site. The Head of Strategy and Partnership explained that the work was virtually complete on the new site.

Clarification was requested under what circumstances a request would be supplied but not then published on the website. The Head of Strategy and Partnerships said he thought that all requests would be published through the process outlined in the committee report, but that a checking mechanism would be required to ensure all material could be published in that form.

The new “Modern.Gov” website was welcomed by members of the committee. Cllr Herbert suggested that declarations of interest made at meetings should be clearly published. It was noted that the system supported this type and publication, but that currently no data had been uploaded.

The possibility of recording the time commitment of Councillors to being a Councillor was raised. Reference was made to a previous project for members to complete timesheets. Cllr Boyce responded to the comment, and explained that the timesheets had been a pilot project requested by the Independent Remuneration Panel, but few members took part.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and approved the recommendations unanimously.

**Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted):** None

**10/28/SR Non Key Decision - Revised CIPFA treasury Management Code**

**Matter for Decision:** To consider the revised CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice

**Decision of Executive Councillor:**

- Adopted the CIPFA’s revised “Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes” and the four clauses shown in Appendix 1 to the committee report.

- Approved the “Treasury Management Scheme of Delegation” in Appendix 2 to the committee report.
- Approved the “Treasury Management Role of the Section 151 Officer” in Appendix 3 to the committee report.
- Adopted the revised “Treasury Management Policy Statement” shown in Appendix 4 to the committee report.

**Reason for the Decision:** As set out in the officer’s report.

**Any alternative options considered and rejected:** N/A

**Scrutiny Considerations:**

Clarification was sought regarding the Executive Councillor responsibility for Treasury Management issues. The Leader confirmed the current arrangements, but advised that the forthcoming constitutional review would provide greater clarity.

The Director of Finance was asked regarding the principles outlined in appendix 1, what would happen in the event of a conflict between the different principles. The Director of Finance advised that he had never encountered a scenario where there was an issue, but the principles were designed as a system of “checks and balances”.

Members of the committee sought clarification on the comment regarding the availability of training. The Director of Finance explained the different training available to members and officers, and encouraged any member to contact him regarding any treasury management training requirements.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and approved the recommendations by 6 votes to 1.

**Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted):** None

**10/29/SR Key Decision - Vehicle replacements 2010/11**

**Matter for Decision:** To consider the project appraisal and procurement report for the vehicle replacement programme 2010/11

**Decision of Executive Councillor:**

- Approved the 2010/11 Vehicle Replacement Programme (PR017) with £397,000 additional funding. The capital cost of the items identified for replacement totals £1,103,000, to be funded from R&R funds held at City Services. There are no additional revenue costs associated with the replacement vehicles.
- Approved the carrying out and completion of the procurement of the Vehicle Replacement Programme. If the quotation or tender sum exceeds the estimated contract value by more than 15% the permission of the Executive Councillor and Director of Finance will be sought prior to proceeding.

**Reason for the Decision:** As set out in the officer's report.

**Any alternative options considered and rejected:** N/A

**Scrutiny Considerations:**

The Director of City Services confirmed that the funding (£397k) was already approved but the request was to accelerate the replacement a year earlier than planned of a number of vehicles with high revenue and maintenance costs.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and approved the recommendations by 7 votes to 0.

**Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted):** None

**10/30/SR Non Key Decision - Sponsorship Policy and Procedures**

**Matter for Decision:** To consider the revised sponsorship policy and procedures

**Decision of Executive Councillor:**

- Approved the revised Sponsorship Policy and Procedures for implementation across the Council.

**Reason for the Decision:** As set out in the officer's report.

**Any alternative options considered and rejected:** N/A

**Scrutiny Considerations:**

The Scrutiny Committee considered and approved the recommendations by 7 votes to 0.

**Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted):** None

The Scrutiny Committee resolved to exclude members of the public from the meeting on the grounds (Items 10/SR/36 and 10/SR/37) that, if they were present, there would be disclosure to them of information defined as exempt from publication 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.

### **10/31/SR Key Decision - Disposal of Site K1 at Orchard Park**

**Matter for Decision:** To consider the recommendations as contained within the confidential report.

**Decision of Executive Councillor:**

- Approved the recommendations within the confidential report.

**Reason for the Decision:** As set out in the officer's report.

**Any alternative options considered and rejected:** N/A

**Scrutiny Considerations:**

The Scrutiny Committee considered and approved the recommendations unanimously.

**10/32/SR Non Key - Disposal of Former Yasume Club, Auckland Road, Cambridge**

**Matter for Decision:** To consider the recommendations as contained within the confidential report.

**Decision of Executive Councillor:**

- Approved the recommendations within the confidential report.

**Reason for the Decision:** As set out in the officer's report.

**Any alternative options considered and rejected:** N/A

**Scrutiny Considerations:**

The Scrutiny Committee considered and approved the recommendations unanimously.

The meeting ended at 7.40 pm

**CHAIR**