

To: All Members of the County Council
All Chief Officers

From COUNTY SECRETARY'S
DEPARTMENT

Ask for David Roberts
Ext. 25562
Minicom 26611
My Ref. DR/
Your Ref.

CABINET
19 MAY 2003

MINUTES
ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

D A Ashley, D Beatty (Vice-Chairman presiding), R I N Gordon, M H T Janes,
J M Pitman, A M R Searing.

Other Members present:

M V Bayes, T G M Kent, B J Lamb, D B Lloyd, R Mays, I Simpson, R J Smith,
W A Storey

Upon consideration of the agenda for the Cabinet meeting on 19 May 2003 as circulated,
copy annexed, executive decisions were reached and are recorded below:

*Note: No conflicts of interest were declared by any member of the Cabinet in relation to
the matters on which decisions were made at this meeting and set out below.*

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the Cabinet held on 28 April 2003 were confirmed as a correct
record.

**2. HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN ALTERATIONS 2001 - 2016:
letter from the Government Office for the East of England
(Forward Plan Ref. A038/03)**

Decision

Council be recommended that, in response to the deposit consultation
responses and in particular the letter from the Government Office for the East
of England which records change in Government policy and that draft RPG14 is
due to be published in February 2004, the County Council resolves :-

1. that it is appropriate to postpone the holding of an Examination in Public into the Structure Plan review which was originally envisaged to be held in or about September 2003;
2. that the position as to progress on the draft RPG 14 and the timing of an EIP be kept under review by the Structure Plan Panel in order to advise Cabinet and full Council on appropriate action;
3. that the County Council continue to progress work on the Structure Plan in the meantime, including consideration of the responses made during deposit, examining the need for Pre Inquiry Changes, and updating the technical papers;
4. to merge the Structure Plan Panel and the Regional Planning Issues Panels, in order that the Structure Plan can be considered along with the developing regional planning context, and
5. that in the meantime and pending the publication of draft RPG 14 and the holding of the EIP, the deposit Structure Plan and the underlying technical work should be relied upon as material considerations in responding to any strategic planning consultations, emerging local plans and the emerging RPG 14.

Reasons for the decision

The option chosen gave the opportunity to clarify with Go-East the content and substance of their objections. In the meantime technical work such as summarising and considering the representations on the deposit version, and rolling forward technical work such as the Housing Capacity Study, could continue. The decision as to whether to take the Plan forward, could then be based on an assessment of whether work on RPG 14 was progressing to timetable, given that this was a key argument put forward by Go-East for the Structure Plan to stop.

Any alternative options considered and rejected

- (a) To carry on with the Plan and progress to the Examination in Public in the Autumn.
- (b) To stop the progression of the Plan completely.

3. CHILTERN AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY CONSERVATION BOARD

(Forward Plan Ref. A028/03)

An oral update was given by Richard Brown, Assistant Director of Environment (Environmental Management) on progress with discussions between local authorities and with DEFRA and the Countryside Agency

In connection with decision 3 below, Derrick Ashley commented that he would circulate the proposed response to Environment Scrutiny Committee Spokesmen before sending it to the Secretary of State.

Decision

1. That the County Council re-iterates its support in-principle for the creation of a statutory Conservation Board in the Chilterns AONB, subject to: -
 - the new arrangements complementing existing County Council activity;
 - representation for all appropriate Hertfordshire local authorities;
 - no significant cost increases, and
 - prior agreements being reached between the Conservation Board and County Council where powers are to be shared.
2. That, in response to the Secretary of State's proposals and in light of continuing discussions between all parties, the County Council underlines its concerns about:
 - (a) the scope of powers defined in the draft Establishment Order;
 - (b) the cost implications of Value Added Tax and Members Allowances, and
 - (c) the need for these issues to be resolved before the County Council agrees to the creation of a Conservation Board.
3. That the Director of Environment, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment, is authorised to respond to the Secretary of State and submit the response by 30 May 2003.

Reasons for the decision

The draft order for a statutory Conservation Board in the Chilterns AONB had been published and comments were requested by 30 May.

Analysis of the draft had revealed possible shortcomings in the scope of powers available which would mean the Board would be unable to effectively implement the AONB Management Plan.

Potential difficulties had also been identified over financing of the Boards operation because of the additional costs of VAT and members allowances.

Any alternative options considered and rejected

None

4. EFFICIENCIES PROGRAMME

Decision

That:

1. the timetable for the efficiencies programme be approved;
2. a Cabinet Panel be established, with five members, to provide an early sounding board for the proposals coming out of the Efficiencies Programme and to help maintain focus and momentum; and
3. the proposed starting points in the search for efficiencies be supported.

Reasons for the decision

The objective of the Efficiencies Programme was to realise £5m in cashable savings in each of the coming three financial years. The report outlined the initial programme to do this, including the areas proposed most promising in the search for such efficiencies.

Any alternative options considered and rejected

None

5. RESOURCES REQUIRED FOR SAFE BEST PRACTICE COMPLIANCE WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VICTORIA CLIMBIÉ INQUIRY

Decision

That the use of £243.5k of the special contingency provision, to implement the proposed practice improvements in line with the recommendations of the Climbié report, be approved

Reasons for the decision

At the time that this year's budget was agreed the recommendations of the Climbié inquiry were expected but the costs arising from the report were uncertain. £250,000 was agreed to as an uncertainty in the budget report and the use of the special provision was anticipated. There was therefore adequate provision to meet the estimated funding requirement.

Any alternative options considered and rejected

None

6. UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING AND REFUGEE CHILDREN
(Forward Plan Ref. A020/03)

Decision

That the Policy for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children, which outlines the commitments the County Council will make to asylum-seeking and refugee children, under the age of eighteen, who are unaccompanied by an adult, be approved.

Reasons for the decision

The numbers of unaccompanied asylum seekers had increased considerably in the last few years. The County Council was required to provide accommodation for any child who appears to require accommodation as a result of there being no person with parental responsibility for them.

The Policy set out the commitments the County Council will make to these children, and would guide the response of practitioners and services. The Policy was considered by Strategy Panel on 27 February 2003. The Panel welcomed the Policy and did not ask for any changes. It had subsequently been sent out to partner agencies for consultation, and their feedback had been factored into the Policy.

The costs of the service would be met from Quality Protects Special Grant, and from the Home Office grant set aside for this purpose.

Any alternative options considered and rejected

None

7. CAPITAL FUNDING FOR EARLY YEARS DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Decision

1. That the County Council capital funding released from the Ludwick/Squirrels scheme, through the use of external Government Grant, be re-used to part fund early years schemes at Birchwood and Rye Park.
2. Council be recommended that the development of Rye Park Early Years Centre be included in the County Council's 2003/2004 capital programme.

Reasons for the decision

As set out in the report.

Any alternative options considered and rejected

None

8. **DRAFT BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2003/ 2004**

(Forward Plan Ref. A082/02(b))

Decision

Council be recommended that the draft Best Value Performance Plan be approved, subject to:

(a) the following changes to Page 3 of Appendix 1

'Rising to new challenges together' a message from the Leader of the Council

Replace bullet point 4

'deciding to launch a rural warden scheme in 2002-03 which will provide a uniformed presence in the more isolated parts of the county' with

deciding to launch a **pilot rural warden scheme in August 2003** which will provide a uniformed presence in the more isolated parts of the county

Final paragraph

Replace

'Working with our partners, we will rise to new challenges together, doing our best to make Hertfordshire a better place to live, with better-educated, more prosperous citizens enjoying a better quality of life.'

with

'Working with our partners, we will rise to new challenges together, doing our best to make Hertfordshire a better place to live, **with more prosperous citizens enjoying a better quality of life, and offering a better future for our children.**', and

(b) further changes to the draft Best Value Performance Plan being agreed by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Executive Member, the Leader of the Council and the Opposition Group Leaders, before the Plan is published on 30 June 2003.

Reasons for the decision

The statutory publication date for the Best Value Performance Plan was 30 June 2003 however some of the information for inclusion in the Plan was not yet available.

Any alternative options considered and rejected

None