



SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING
THURSDAY, 27 APRIL 2006

REPORTS AND MINUTES

South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne, Cambridge
CB3 6ES

If the press and public are likely to be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that exempt information is to be considered, it will be necessary to pass the following resolution: "That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph (quoting relevant paragraph) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act."

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: The Chairman and Members of the
South Cambridgeshire District Council

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the next meeting of the **COUNCIL** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER** at **2.00 P.M.** on

THURSDAY, 27 APRIL 2006

and I am, therefore to summon you to attend accordingly for the transaction of the business specified below.

DATED this date

GJ HARLOCK

Finance and Resources Director

AGENDA

PRESENTATION

The Chairman will present Claire Billing, Fundraising Coordinator at Addenbrooke's Hospital, with a cheque on behalf of the Chairman's charity for the year, the da Vinci robotic system project for research and the care of patients with prostate cancer.

1. MINUTES

To authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2006 as a correct record.

(Pages 1 - 12)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

4. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND THE PUBLIC

4 (a) From Councillor CR Nightingale

"Could the Housing Portfolio Holder give an explanation on the authorized privileged dispensations that have been given to two tenants, One in Shelford the Other in Stapleford to that of other SCD Housing tenants. Complaints have been made about the two properties over a number of years.

"When can neighbours expect their quality of life to be resorted to that of other SCD tenants?"

5. PETITIONS

To note all petitions received since the last Council meeting. None received to date.

6. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet 13 April 2006

6 (a) Computerisation of Local Land Charges System (Minute 3)

Cabinet **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** that:

- (a) The local land charges / local search process be fully computerised at the earliest opportunity, starting 1 May 2006;
- (b) The following variance to cash limits and the budget for 2006/07 be approved to implement and support an electronic Local Land Charges system:

Supplier		
Northgate / MVM M3		
Software and Implementation	£77,000	<i>Capital one-off</i>
Data Conversion / Additional Costs	£50,000	<i>Revenue</i>
Annual maintenance	£2,500	<i>Revenue on-going</i>
Total	£129,500	

- (c) And that a contract to be placed with Northgate / MVM for the M3 system under the provisions of Contract Standing Order 4.5 (the Council considers it desirable in the best interests of the Council that a tender be negotiated with a contractor already engaged by the Council).

6 (b) Resources for Housing Choice Based Lettings (Minute 4)

Cabinet **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** that an 18-month fixed-term post of Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Project Officer be established to support the implementation of CBL, to be funded from a mix of Housing General Fund and Housing Revenue Account sources.

Transformation Committee 19 April 2006

6 (c) Appointment of Chief Executive

The Committee will be considering options for the appointment of a Chief Executive. Any recommendations will be distributed as soon as possible.

7. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

7 (a) Transformation Committee 20 March 2006

(Pages 13 - 16)

7 (b) Audit Panel 15 March 2006

(Pages 17 - 20)

8. QUESTIONS ON JOINT MEETINGS

**Cambridgeshire County/Cambridge City/South Cambridgeshire District
Environment and Transport Joint Strategic Forum**
Minutes of 22 March 2006 published on the bulletin 19 March 2006

9. UPDATES FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

10 (a) Standing in the name of Councillors R Hall and CR Nightingale

“In the event of Councillor Summerfield being re-elected to the Council as a Liberal Democrat, then the Transformation Committee should be reconstituted to make it more politically representative.”

11. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS

To note the Chairman's engagements since the last Council meeting:

Date	Venue / Event
19 March 06:	Foxton to meet The Venerable Lokki Abhayaratne, Archdeacon of Southern Sri Lanka.
7 April 06:	Opening of WI headquarters, Girton, by Earl of Wessex. Cllr Stewart, Vice-Chairman, also attended.
8 April 06:	Chairman's Charity Concert : Guilden Morden.
10 April 06:	Retirement Dinner for Admiral Sir Jock Slater, Director, Imperial War Museum, Duxford.
19 April 06:	Huntingdon District Council Meeting as guest of Cllr John Eddy, Chairman.
20 April 06:	Uttlesford District Council Civic Reception.
25 April 06:	SCDC Built Heritage Awards, Cambourne.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 23 March 2006 at 1.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs CAED Murfitt – Chairman
Councillor JH Stewart – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: SJ Agnew, Dr DR Bard, RE Barrett, JD Batchelor, RF Bryant, EW Bullman, BR Burling, NN Cathcart, JP Chatfield, Mrs PS Corney, Mrs J Dixon, Mrs SJO Doggett, R Hall, Mrs SA Hatton, Mrs JM Healey, Mrs EM Heazell, MP Howell, Mrs CA Hunt, HC Hurrell, Mrs HF Kember, SGM Kindersley, RMA Manning, RB Martlew, MJ Mason, DC McCraith, DH Morgan, Mrs JA Muncey, CR Nightingale, R Page, EJ Pateman, JA Quinlan, A Riley, Mrs DP Roberts, NJ Scarr, J Shepperson, Mrs GJ Smith, Mrs HM Smith, Mrs DSK Spink MBE, RT Summerfield, RJ Turner, Dr SEK van de Ven, Mrs BE Waters, DALG Wherrell, JF Williams, Dr JR Williamson, TJ Wotherspoon, NIC Wright and SS Ziaian-Gillan

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor SM Edwards, Mrs A Elsby, Dr SA Harangozo, JA Hockney and Dr JPR Orme.

PRESENTATION

The Chief Constable of Cambridgeshire, Mrs Spence, gave a presentation on “Developing the Police for Tomorrow” about policing challenges over the next 12 months. She outlined the main issues: workforce modernisation, neighbourhood policing and structural change; explained the new structures within the Cambridgeshire Force, particularly the proactive neighbourhood policing approach and gave comparative crime figures. Mrs Spence also outlined the functions of the new national Serious and Organised Crime Agency and the Constabulary’s opposition to the proposed merger of forces.

In answer to questions, Mrs Spence responded that

- She wanted local sergeants to talk to local councillors
- There were lessons to learn from the handling of the Fred Moss murder investigation, particularly the early stages
- Partnership working was essential, but it must be partnership with a purpose
- There was a concern that fewer people might be reporting crimes under the new call handling system
- Crimes on the level of burglary were being dealt with, lower level incidents were perhaps not dealt with so well
- Neighbourhood Watch still existed, any problems were related to particular areas: there was a good response when the Community Beat Officer was on duty, slower when he or she was not
- It was critical for neighbourhood teams to look at anti-social behaviour and adjust their reaction to the severity of the behaviour
- The government was putting in funding for PCSOs, so some communities would not necessarily lose.

1. MINUTES**23 February 2006**

The Chairman was authorised to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February

2006 as a correct record, subject to the addition, in the third paragraph of **Minute 11(b), Operation of Members' Code** of:

"the Leader responded to Councillor Mrs Spink's *request that posters should be confined to notice boards*, that he believed...."

Other matters raised included:

Minutes (Minute 1)

Councillor Page stated that the Chief Executive's response that figures referred to by Councillor Mason were not in the public domain had not been recorded in the minutes, and asked for a reply to his letter seeking confirmation of the answer. The Chief Executive apologised that that part of the letter had not been answered and promised to do so.

Reports of Meetings – Cabinet 9 February 2006 (Minute 11(a)) – Concessionary Fares
Councillor Scarr sought to clarify why the new scheme operated only within each district, and was advised that many Members had been receiving calls and letters about this. The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder advised that the Council was £250,000 short of the funds needed to join a totally free scheme throughout the county and authorities were doing the best they could until more money was available. The current scheme was, however, transitional as the bus operators did not yet know the costs or take up. He reported that representations had been made to the Government and that a press release had been issued.

At the end of consideration of the Minutes, the Chairman allowed further debate on the concessionary fares scheme. The scheme was regarded as a fiasco despite co-operation between and the best efforts of the local authorities and the bus operators to deliver a workable scheme and, the Leader pointed out, 100% the responsibility of the Government.

A request for the publication of FAQs was accepted, and Members were invited to send questions to the Portfolio Holder

Standards Committee 8 February 2006 (Minute 11(b))

Councillor Mrs Roberts having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in view of two complaints against her to the Standards Board, queried whether the complainants should also declare interests. The Monitoring Officer reported that the Standards Board had said there was no need for a Member complained against to declare an interest, although it was for the individual to decide, nor did the complainants have to declare an interest. Councillor Mrs Roberts nevertheless left the room while this part of the Minutes was discussed.

9 March 2006

The Chairman was authorised to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2006 as a correct record, subject to the following

Apologies

Add Councillor Mrs GJ Smith

Exclusion of Public (Minute 4)

Add record of Councillor Mrs SA Hatton's vote against the resolution.

Councillor R Page recorded his name against the authorisation of the Minutes.

Other matters raised included:

Statement by the Chairman (Minute 3)

Councillor Page claimed that the last sentence of the Minute did not reflect the words used by the Chairman; and stated that he had made a complaint about the Chairman to the Standards Board; that a request to the Monitoring Officer for the exact words used had not been answered; and that he had reported the Monitoring Officer to the Police for glaring at him. On a vote being taken, the Minute was declared correct, with four votes against, including Councillor Page.

Exclusion of Public (Minute 4)

Councillor Page claimed that it was wrong to say that he made accusations against the Council and that he would have expected protection under the Chairman and the Chief Executive to investigate officers acting wrongly.

Councillor Scarr asked whether the matter of recording meetings should not be re-visited and the Chairman invited him to bring this to another meeting.

Councillor Mrs Hatton claimed that she had seen 6 abstentions from the vote and asked that in future the electronic voting system should always be used.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:

JD Batchelor, SGM Kindersley, DC McCraith	As County Councillors
MJ Mason	By reason of a complaint against him registered by the Standards Board for England, no. 14128/06

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Batchelor gave a recognition of the late Councillor Dr Heap's career and person.

The Chairman reported:

- That the ODPM had held up the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment compiled by officers of the Council as a good example and was discussing its inclusion in a best practice guide
- Comments from a teacher at Comberton Village College on the way the debating competition had helped their students to grow and mature
- That CIPFA had ranked the Council 4th out of 120 benchmarked authorities for its management of its investments
- Some quotes from Gloria Buckley at the very worthwhile Traveller Issues workshop held the previous Friday

The Environmental Health Portfolio Holder then presented the Chairman with the award of Beacon status gained by this Council for recycling and waste management.

4. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND THE PUBLIC

4 (a) From Councillor JA Hockney

Councillor JA Hockney asked as a written question: "Could the Portfolio Holder update us on how the Housing reorganisation is progressing?"

The Housing Portfolio Holder responded that there had been a slight delay recently, but that:

“Cllr Hockney will be aware that reorganisation has affected four areas of the housing service over the past 12 months:

Shire Homes Management Team

These changes are estimated to deliver annual savings of £70,000 and the final appointment, of Property Services Manager, was made earlier this month.

DLO Review

The reorganisation was completed earlier this month with the appointment of Repairs Operations Manager.

Efficiency savings of £225,000 are projected to be realised by the DLO in 2005/06.

Housing Management

Appointments to the Supported Housing Manager, Housing Options Officer, Housing Services Team Leaders, and Housing Services Officers posts were completed last week.

Sheltered Housing

Appointments to the three Sheltered Housing Team Leader and forty Sheltered Housing Officer posts were made last week. 20 staff have been served with redundancy notices, of whom 10 applied for and were granted voluntary redundancy.

The new staffing arrangements, arising out of the sheltered housing review, are anticipated to yield ongoing annual savings of £460,000. For budget preparation purposes, one off redundancy and pension costs were projected to be £450,000 over 2005/06 and 2006/07. Actual costs are likely to be within that projection.

The operational arrangements for the new area teams are being finalised and meetings with scheme residents are scheduled to take place in April. A newsletter detailing the changes will be circulated in April.

A special briefing session is planned for Housing for Older People Advisory Group (HOPAG) members on Thursday 20 April at 11.30 am in the Council Chamber to brief them on progress with the sheltered housing review's implementation. All members are welcome to attend this briefing, which will also cover the future of residential care for older people.”

Councillor Mrs Heazell paid tribute and thanks to Pauline Gardner and Jill Mellors from the HR team for their conduct of a huge programme of interviews.

A copy of the answer would be sent to Councillor Hockney.

In response to queries and concern on whether scheme managers currently living on site would be required to move in the future, the Housing Portfolio Holder and the Housing and Environmental Services Director stated that it had never been the intention to remove scheme managers from their accommodation but that it was no longer a requirement for them to live on site. Until decisions had been taken on redundancies, it had not been possible to see the effect on accommodation. Any changes would only be achieved through negotiation and the Council's policies and procedures would be followed absolutely. The changes to the sheltered housing service had come about through the county-wide review as part of Supporting People: scheme managers would

now be on duty from 9 am to 5 pm; outside those times an emergency scheme of trained assistance would be available.

The Housing and Environmental Services Director indicated that the HOPAG meeting would be more than a briefing; it would be an opportunity to contribute.

Councillor Scarr declared a personal interest as a member of Unison since any negotiations would be likely to involve the union.

5. PETITIONS

None received.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET 6 MARCH 2006:

6 (a) Investment Strategy 2006/07

As recommended by Cabinet, Council

RESOLVED that the Investment Strategy 2006/07 be approved.

6 (b) Alarm System Service Charges

Council **RESOLVED** that from 1 May 2006

- (a) the reduced charge be maintained for those in receipt of benefit; and
- (b) all alarm system service charges be increased by 2.5% for inflation, bringing the full charge to £3.61 per week (where the Council supplies the alarm) and £2.92 per week (where the user supplies the alarm), and the reduced charge to £2.30 (where the Council supplies the alarm) and £1.63 (where the user supplies the alarm).

Councillor R Page recorded his vote against this decision.

6 (c) Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy

Arising from the policy on the protection of vulnerable adults, Cabinet had recommended that all councillors be CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checked. The Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee advised that the Committee had been told that checking could not be compulsory for councillors and could not be made so retrospectively for anyone already with the Council. The opportunity for checks had been available voluntarily for two years.

A number of Members spoke in favour of CRB checks since councillors inevitably came into contact with vulnerable people. It was noted that the checks were organisation specific so could not be transferred. There was, consequently, a cost implication. However, any individual could carry out their own check via the Internet or through the Licensing Act.

Councillor Batchelor reported that at the County Council checking for those already in office was voluntary, but acceptance of checking was included as part of the declaration of acceptance of office and he assumed a similar system could be adopted.

The principle was accepted and the difference between standard and enhanced checks discussed. It appeared that the need for enhanced checks depended on the extent of

involvement with vulnerable people. Council

RESOLVED that all District Councillors be Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checked, with advice to be sought in each case whether this should be standard or enhanced checking.

7. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Councillor Bryant, as Chairman of the Constitution Review Working Party, introduced changes required by government regulation. This requirement was the reason it had not been felt necessary to take the changes to the Working Party. Councillor Bryant acceded to a request for the relevant pages to be reproduced for Members to insert into the Constitution.

Council **RESOLVED** that the following changes be made to the Access to Information Procedure Rules in the Constitution:

Delete existing paragraph 10.4 on pages E-3 to E-5 and **insert** the following:

10.4 Meaning of exempt information

Exempt information means information falling within the following categories (subject to any relevant conditions):

	Category	Condition
1.	Information relating to any individual	
2.	Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual	
3.	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	Information is not exempt information if it is required to be registered under – (a) the Companies Act 1985 (b) the Friendly Societies Act 1974 (c) the Friendly Societies Act 1992 (d) the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965 to 1978 (e) the Building Societies Act 1986 (f) the Charities Act 1993
4.	Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.	
5.	Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.	
6.	Information which reveals that the authority proposes – (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.	

7.	Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.	
8. (7A)	Information which is subject to any obligation of confidentiality.	Relates to meetings of Standards Committee/sub-committee convened to consider a matter referred under the provisions of paragraph 10 of the Schedule
9. (7B)	Information which relates in any way to matters concerning national security	Relates to meetings of Standards Committee/sub-committee convened to consider a matter referred under the provisions of paragraph 10 of the Schedule
10. (7C)	The deliberations of a standards committee or a sub-committee of a standards committee reaching any finding on a matter referred under the provisions of Section 60(2) or (3), 64(2), 70(4) or (5) or 71(2) of the Local Government Act 2000.	

Information is not exempt information if it relates to proposed development for which the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission pursuant to regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992.

Information which

- (a) falls within any of categories 1 to 10 (7C) above; and
- (b) is not prevented from being exempt by virtue of the conditions attached to paragraph 3 or regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992

is exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Delete existing paragraph 24.1 on page E-10 and **insert**:

24.1 Material relating to previous business

All members are entitled to inspect any document which is in the possession or under the control of the Cabinet or its committees and contains material relating to any business previously transacted at a private meeting unless it appears to the Monitoring Officer that it discloses exempt information

- (a) as described in categories 1, 2, 4, 5 or 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act; or
- (b) relating to any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract; or
- (c) involving the disclosure of advice provided by a political advisor or assistant

Exempt information as described in category 3 (except to the extent described in 24.1(b) above) or category 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A is open to inspection by members.

8. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

The Minutes of the following meetings were **RECEIVED**, subject to matters considered in Minutes 8(a) to 8(c) below:

Cabinet	9 March 2006
Transformation Committee	20 February 2006
Transformation Committee	6 March 2006
Development and Conservation Control Committee	1 March 2006
Employment Committee	23 February 2006
Licensing Committee	23 February 2006
Scrutiny and Overview Committee	16 February 2006

8 (a) Cabinet 9 March 2006**Declarations of Interest** (Minute 2)

It was noted that Councillor Kindersley was a governor of Gamlingay First School, not the Village College, and that Councillor Mrs Healey was a governor of Impington Village College, not Linton.

Alarm System Service Charges (Minute 4)

Councillors Mrs Heazell suggested that further words of hers, commenting on the loss of revenue to both the HRA and Council Tax payers due to deferral of the decision, should be included in order to clarify the proposal.

Bassingbourn Dual Use Sports Facility Project (Minute 6)

Councillor Cathcart voiced thanks for the grant to the Village College and commented on the likely charging policy.

8 (b) Transformation Committee

Councillor Dr Bard asked that a decision taken by the Committee on 20 March should not be implemented until the Committee had reconvened to reconsider, as he believed the decision to be ultra vires. Members of the Committee agreed to this request.

8 (c) Scrutiny and Overview Committee 16 February 2006

Councillor Dr van de Ven advised that she would seek some amendments when the Committee considered the Minutes.

Public Questions (Minute 4)

Councillor Scarr, referring to Councillor Dr van de Ven's comments at the last Council meeting about the treatment of this questioner, commented that the Minutes indicated nothing untoward. He agreed that Councillors should be courteous to questioners.

Draft Agenda Programme and Programme of Key Decisions (Minute 5)**Energy Efficient Housing**

Councillor Mrs Hatton stated that a simple way of increasing energy efficiency would be to insist on low E glass in all windows. The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder had sympathy with this approach and stated that he was, with the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder, trying to press the green agenda. However, he had been advised that window glass was not a matter for planning policy documents but for Building Control, where there were national standards. Councillor Mrs GJ Smith commented that some councils were praised for their action and asked that the Climate Change Group should investigate this anomaly.

The Environmental Health Portfolio Holder reported on the scheme being run with British Gas for cavity wall insulation, where people taking up the offer had a £50 discount from their Council Tax and the Council received £15.

Concessionary Fares

Councillor Mrs GJ Smith reported that she had made extensive enquiries at the County Council about the new scheme and that information was available on their web site. However, figures were not yet available from the operators. She suggested that the Committee should review the operation of the scheme, possibly in about May, when some experience would have been gained. The Chairman of the Committee indicated that he would take this up.

9. QUESTIONS ON JOINT MEETINGS

None received.

10. UPDATES FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Local Government Re-organisation

The Leader reported on a meeting between the Minister and Leaders and Chief Executives from the East of England. The feeling from authorities had been that the present system was working well enough and should not be touched. The Minister had indicated that any reorganisation would be guided by local authorities, but that they would bear the cost. It was hoped that the response had got through to the Minister. A recent local government journal article indicated that David Miliband had lost some of his enthusiasm for local government reorganisation.

As a result of this meeting, the new Director of GO-East had been invited to come to South Cambridgeshire. He had accepted the invitation and the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder would be making the arrangements.

Cambridgeshire Horizons Conference

The Leader reported that at the conference, the Highways Agency had stated that some development at Northstowe would be permitted without changes to the A14. The message had been sent, and should be reinforced, that this Council, as Local Planning Authority, would decide when development at Northstowe could begin and under what conditions. A similar point had been made at the Joint Strategic Forum the previous day.

Councillor Morgan reiterated his request that improvements to the A14 must include further improvements to the A428, and referred to the particular problem in School Lane, Cambourne, which was becoming a cut-through from the A428 to the Caxton By-pass. The Leader repeated that he would raise the A428 wherever possible and Councillor Mrs Spink, agreeing that the A428 needed upgrading before the A14, reminded Members that anyone could write on this issue.

Archives Advisory Panel

Councillor Mrs GJ Smith reported that the threatened £100,000 cut in the County Council heritage budget was not now taking place and that the Historical Research Centre was to proceed with a £10.7m PFI. It was to open in 2007/08. The Panel's argument that the building was of little use if it had restricted opening hours and limited staff numbers and been accepted, and planned cover was reasonable.

A Local Heritage Initiative grant had been obtained for a Community Archives project, in which 40 community archives groups across the county would be assisted with the

digital archiving of local records.

Old West Drainage Internal Drainage Board

Councillor Mason reported on being contacted concerning an incident of serious pollution at Smithy Fen. He would pass details to the Environmental Health Portfolio Holder with a view to a meeting to address public health issues.

Cambridge Southern Fringe

Councillor Nightingale asked Members from the Southern Fringe villages to challenge the traffic management plans for the Addenbrooke's access road since the County traffic figures were seriously flawed.

11. NOTICES OF MOTION

11 (a) Standing in the name of Councillor JP Chatfield

Councillor JP Chatfield presented his motion, urging the Council to work towards Fair Trade status, and gave examples of some of the support being given elsewhere, including Parliament, and the increase in Fair Trade products available. He argued that free trade was not working properly as it was not allowing third world countries to get into the market. The motion was seconded by Councillor SJ Agnew, who favoured setting a good example with staff first and then becoming more proactive, and called for a small group of Members to monitor sustainable progress.

During debate, concerns expressed included:

- a) That Fair Trade products were not necessarily produced or transported in an environmentally friendly way
- b) That Fair Trade imports could damage the viability of locally grow products
- c) That Fair trade organisations could de-stabilise rural communities by causing people to move away
- d) Achievement of Fair Trade status was not easy
- e) There were cost and staffing (in research and monitoring) implications
- f) It would be impossible to make all villages support the scheme
- g) No problems were seen in serving Fair Trade tea and coffee, but the Council did not have the resources to go further

However, some of the concerns were countered by support expressed as:

- h) Fair Trade organisations had strict criteria
- i) Fair Trade encouraged trade within and between adjoining countries
- j) Lack of support condemned the companies to go out of business
- k) Free trade is retarding Fair Trade
- l) The Council should do what it could to support Fair Trade in a practical way
- m) A start could be made by serving Fair Trade tea and coffee at meetings

A number of Members supported the need for a small monitoring group, and Councillor Page stated that, despite his concerns, he would be happy to contribute to such a group. It was suggested that this could be Member-led and not involve much officer time.

Councillor Dr DR Bard proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Mrs DP Roberts, that a decision on the motion be deferred for a report setting out the full implications. The amendment was lost by 18 votes against to 17 for.

Councillor Chatfield emphasised that the motion was intended as a first step, and not to be as resource intensive as suggested. Council then, by 21 votes to 14 with 1 abstention,

RESOLVED that South Cambridgeshire District Council will research, develop and support a strategy to facilitate the promotion and purchase of goods with the Fairtrade mark, as part of its commitment to the pursuit of sustainable development and to give producers a fair deal. This will involve a commitment to serving Fairtrade tea and coffee at all council meetings and making Fairtrade products as widely available as possible. The Council will commit to working towards achieving Fairtrade status.

12. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Chairman's engagements undertaken since the last meeting were **NOTED**.

The Chairman reminded Members of the concert on 8 April in aid of her charity for the year

The Meeting ended at 5.12 p.m.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Transformation Committee held on
Monday, 20 March 2006 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor SGM Kindersley – Chairman

Councillors: Dr DR Bard JD Batchelor
NN Cathcart RT Summerfield

Officers: John Ballantyne Chief Executive
Susan Gardner Craig Human Resources Manager

Councillors RF Bryant, SM Edwards, R Hall, Mrs EM Heazell, MJ Mason, Mrs CAED Murfitt, A Riley, Mrs DP Roberts and Mrs DSK Spink MBE were in attendance, by invitation.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2006 were confirmed as a correct record.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

The Committee **RESOLVED** that the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that discussion is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor MJ Mason declared a personal interest by reason of a complaint against him registered by the Standards Board for England, no. 14128/06.

4. ADVERTISEMENT FOR CHIEF EXECUTIVE POST

The re-drafted advertisement was considered and it was confirmed that the same wording would be used for internal and external advertisement. Concerns were expressed that some wording might be seen as imposing a direction on the new Chief Executive and that there was duplication. After discussion, the Committee, noting that publication was due later in the week,

APPROVED the advertisement for the new Chief Executive for final drafting, subject to the deletion of the last two sentences in the second paragraph and other typographical changes; the final draft to be circulated to the Committee for typographical checking before publication.

5. ASSIMILATION EXERCISE

The Human Resources Manager reported on the results of the assimilation exercise, where pertinent features of the new roles were compared against the existing job descriptions of staff eligible to be considered. Where only one candidate matched 80% of the job description of a new role they would be automatically assimilated as of right; where there were two or more candidates with the right match, a competitive process would have to be undertaken.

Members expressed some concern that the result was the second of the two senior Management Team posts being filled first, whereas the intention had been to allow the new Chief Executive an input into recruitment to this post, and

AGREED that part of the fee to the consultants to the project should be withheld on the grounds that certain advice relied upon had proved incorrect.

Given the next item on the agenda, the Committee on a majority vote,

RESOLVED that the Housing and Environmental Services Director be assimilated to the post of Executive Director.

6. LETTER FROM THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES DIRECTOR

The Committee considered the request of the Finance and Resources Director that his application for voluntary redundancy be reconsidered. The application still stood despite the results of the assimilation exercise.

The Committee was advised that, if the application were accepted, thought must be given to the location of Section 151 financial responsibilities as these must be held by a financially qualified person. It was quite common in other authorities for these responsibilities to be held at second tier level. The Committee had no wish to add section 151 duties to the role of Chief Executive, noting the principle that the senior management team should be strategic.

Deep concerns were expressed about the effects of this loss and the Committee, with extreme reluctance, and with one abstention,

RESOLVED that the application from the Finance and Resources Director for voluntary redundancy be now accepted, negotiations to proceed on timing.

7. OTHER MATTERS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION

Compromise Agreements

The principle of restrictive covenants was discussed and differences of opinion voiced. It was, however, believed that management team had some form of restriction already included in their contracts of employment. It was agreed that this should be checked and Members advised.

Audit Trail

External Audit had been given assurance about the audit trail of decisions.

Allowance for career counselling

Other than already agreed for the Chief Executive, no reason was seen to depart from the figures contained in the redundancy policy.

Costings

A number of calls were made for updated costs and predicted savings to be made available in view of the number of enquiries received by Members. The Leader believed that the latest information was contained in the Medium Term Financial Strategy reported to Cabinet on 9 February, but was happy that this should be emailed to Members again. He was aware of the promise to report costings to Cabinet every three months and reiterated that it was essential that the Transformation Project deliver savings, otherwise other budgets would have to be cut further.

Notices of wish to dismiss

It was noted that notices of the wish to dismiss had been served on Cabinet members in respect of the two management team posts already made redundant, as required by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001, and that no objections had been received in the time allowed.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be agreed; timing subject to any need for an urgent meeting to resolve the issue of restrictive covenants.

The Meeting ended at 3.35 p.m.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Audit Panel held on
Wednesday, 15 March 2006

PRESENT: Councillor MP Howell

Councillors: RF Bryant
NN Cathcart
DC McCraith
Mrs GJ Smith

Officers:	John Ballantyne Steve Hampson Greg Harlock Minesh Jani Paul Swift	Chief Executive Housing and Environmental Services Director Finance and Resources Director Internal Auditor Policy and Performance Review Manager
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External Audit:	John Golding Paul Winrow	External Audit External Audit
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Councillors RT Summerfield, SGM Kindersley and Mrs DP Roberts were in attendance, by invitation.

1. APOLOGIES

None were received.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th October were agreed as a correct record.

John Golding stated that he would liaise with the Finance and Resources Director regarding the audit strategy for 2006/07 and External Audit's charges for the forthcoming year would form part of the discussion.

Minesh Jani explained that the ICT Audit was not in this year's plan and would be carried out next year.

4. INTERNAL AUDIT: QUARTERLY REPORT OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2005

Minesh Jani presented this quarterly report for October to December 2005. He explained that there had been six reports, all of limited assurance and two of the Performance Indicators for the service internal audit provide to the Council were not meeting their targets.

Performance Indicator: % of FTE Staff Fully CCAB Qualified

It was understood that the percentage of FTE staff fully CCAB qualified target of 35%, which at the end of the third quarter was on 34%, would be at least 35% by the end of the year as more qualified staff were being used to complete a greater proportion of the internal audit plan in this year's final quarter.

Performance Indicator: % of Responses to the Draft Report on Time

It was noted that the target of 15 days for responding to draft reports would be missed if offices had more urgent work to attend to. Minesh Jani added that although the target was 95%, actual performance had never been much above 40%. It was suggested that the target needed to be altered.

Stock Control

Minesh Jani explained that a limited assurance had been given for DLO stock control because of limited control regarding access to the stock and concerns over the accuracy of the relevant records. Concern was expressed regarding this limited assurance and the damage any discrepancies could do to the Council's reputation. The Finance and Resources Director announced that the value of the stock as at March 2005 was £37,000 and this included diesel. In previous years the stock had been worth over £160,000. The Panel understood that Stock Control would become the responsibility of an external organisation and it was agreed that any new controls that were introduced should be cost effective.

Orchard System

Minesh Jani explained that out of the five planned maintenance commitments checked on the Orchard System, only one was accurate. This had led to a limited assurance.

It was understood that the Head of Shire Homes and the Principal Project Manager had left the Council in mid-2005 and this affected the work of the DLO during this quarter. However, the Housing Asset and Investment Manager had succeeded in improving the service since then.

The Director of Housing and Environmental Services explained that concerns raised by Internal Audit that were below Priority 1 would be referred to his officers. He agreed to e-mail the Councillors present with details of the response given by officers to the priority 1 recommendations made by Internal Audit regarding the Orchard System and the management of the reduction of the responsive repairs budget.

Minesh Jani explained that Internal Audit had met with Directors to discuss the 1st Development Plan. Recommendations had been made regarding stock control and the Orchard System. The resulting report had been finalised and would indicate whether the recommendations had been accepted to Internal Audit's satisfaction.

Councillor Kindersley commented that while Directors should respond to high category risks, lower risks should be delegated.

Budget Working Papers

Concern was expressed that the budget working papers used by the Head of Shire Homes and the Principal Project Manager, who had since left the Council, could not be presented to Internal Audit when requested. The Director of Housing and Environmental Services regretted that the paperwork had not been available at the time but he assured the Panel this did not mean that all copies of the document had been destroyed. The Panel understood that the information held in budget working papers was often sparse, but it was agreed that this documentation should be readily available for inspection. Councillor RT Summerfield stated that there was always a risk of working papers going missing when staff left the Council.

Internal Auditor Sickness

The Finance and Resources Director expressed his disappointment at the apparent absence of a contingency plan when two audits remained uncompleted when an internal

auditor was on sick leave. Minesh Jani explained that the unexpected sickness of an internal auditor had delayed the completion of these audits, as it had been unclear when the officer would be able to return to work, which presented a dilemma over whether to restart the audit with a new officer or wait until the original officer was able to complete his work. He was happy to report that the audits had now been completed and reports would be issued shortly.

General Ledger

The Finance and Resources Director explained that carrying out reconciliations to the General Ledger had to take their turn in an ever changing list of priorities. Although the prompt completion of reconciliations was important, other more urgent items sometimes took precedence. In response to questioning, the Finance and Resources Director explained the reconciliations under discussion did not involve agreeing cash received to the individual accounting system, which would be awarded a much higher priority, but involved reconciling individual systems to the Financial Management System (FMS).

Managing Risk

John Golding from External Audit explained that following capping an increase in the number of limited assurances was inevitable. The task facing the Council was to manage the risk to avoid any major problems. It was noted that the number of recommendations from Internal Audit had increased for the year 2005/06, but the Panel would be able to discuss the true situation at its next meeting where the final figures for 2005/06 would be available.

5. EXTERNAL AUDIT: USES OF RESOURCES JUDGEMENTS 2005/06

John Golding explained that the Use of Resources Judgements 2005/06 document was a draft summary of the full report.

Paul Winrow explained that on a scale of 1-4, with 1 being inadequate and 4 being innovative practice, the Council had achieved a score of 2 for the 2005/06 judgements, which represents an assessment of performing adequately on the Audit Commission's scoring system. It was understood that the Council had achieved a 3 for Financial Reporting and a 2 for Financial Management, Financial Standing, Internal Control and Value for Money. John Golding explained that the 2006/07 assessment was expected to be a harder test, which would have a longer list of items that Councils "must have" to achieve an adequate rating. The 2006/07 score will inform the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) score.

Councillor Summerfield and Councillor Kindersley congratulated the Finance and Resources Director and his staff for achieving an overall score of 2 and ensuring that there were no areas where the Council failed to achieve Level 2, or an adequate performance. The Chief Executive stated that the aim should be to strive and maintain this level of performance for 2006/07, as the Council could not afford to allocate resources into achieving Level 3 or higher.

John Golding stated that the figures for all District Councils would become available in May and it was expected that the Council's achievement would compare favourably with other District authorities.

The Finance and Resources Director explained that details of the self assessment would go to the next Resources and Staffing portfolio holder meeting, with a view to the portfolio holder and Leader, in the light of available resources, making known their view as to how aggressively officers should pursue achieving a higher assessment rating for 2006/07.

6. MATTERS OF TOPICAL INTEREST**Annual Audit Letter**

The Finance and Resources Director explained that the Council had not yet seen the Annual Audit Letter in respect of the 2004/05 financial year. Paul Winrow announced that a draft version should be available by the end of the week and that it would be included in the next agenda for Audit Panel.

Accusation of Financial Mismanagement

In response to a question on how to reply to allegations of financial mismanagement, John Golding explained that an individual elector has the right to ask the External Auditors to investigate an alleged irregularity in the accounts. Alternatively the Council could instruct the External Auditors to carry out an investigation, which could then be passed to any residents who had expressed concerns.

Transformation Project

It was suggested that the Panel needed to consider how the implementation of the Transformation Project would affect the Panel's working arrangements.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was understood that the following items would need to be discussed by the Panel in the next few months:

- Annual Audit Letter 2004/05
- Direction of Travel Statement
- Audit Plan 2006/07.

It was agreed that the responsibility for calling the next meeting should be delegated to the Finance and Resources Director.

The Meeting ended at 4.25 p.m.
