

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 26 October 2006 at 2.00 p.m.

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

Councillors: Dr DR Bard, RE Barrett, JD Batchelor, Mrs PM Bear, AN Berent, NCF Bolitho, RF Bryant, EW Bullman, BR Burling, NN Cathcart, JP Chatfield, NS Davies, Mrs SJO Doggett, SM Edwards, Mrs SM Ellington, Mrs A Elsby, Mrs VG Ford, Mrs JM Guest, R Hall, Mrs SA Hatton, JA Hockney, Mrs CA Hunt, PT Johnson, SGM Kindersley, Mrs JE Lockwood, RMA Manning, RB Martlew, MJ Mason, RM Matthews, DC McCraith, CR Nightingale, AG Orgee, EJ Pateman, Mrs DP Roberts, NJ Scarr, Mrs HM Smith, RT Summerfield, Mrs VM Trueman, RJ Turner, Dr SEK van de Ven, Mrs BE Waters, JF Williams and NIC Wright

Officers: Holly Adams Democratic Services Officer
Steve Hampson Executive Director
Greg Harlock Chief Executive
Richard May Democratic Services Manager

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor TD Bygott, Mrs PS Corney, Dr SA Harangozo, Mrs EM Heazell, MP Howell, Mrs HF Kember, DH Morgan, R Page, JA Quinlan, Mrs DSK Spink MBE and TJ Wotherspoon.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2006 at 2.00pm were confirmed as a correct record to be signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

Minute 8(d) Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, 20 July 2006:

Amend second paragraph to read:

“The Housing Portfolio Holder undertook to respond in writing to Councillor Mrs SA Hatton’s *financial* concerns about the eleven bungalows at The Green Road, Sawston.”

Substitute *passes* for *tickets* in the fifth paragraph.

Minute 9 Questions on joint meetings

Amend the second paragraphs to begin:

“Councillor CR Nightingale reported that the Southern Fringe Member Reference Group had considered five *bridge* options...”

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2006 at 5.27pm were not agreed as a correct record. In response to a question, the Chief Executive advised that the deferral of a decision whether to proceed with four-yearly elections did not affect the validity of the consultation process which had taken place. Council **RESOLVED** that the Minutes be amended to reflect that the Motion had not been carried unanimously, and that a revised version be brought forward for approval at the next meeting.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors JD Batchelor, SGM Kindersley, DC McCraith and AG Orgee declared personal interests as elected Cambridgeshire County Councillors.

3. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Local Development Framework Core Strategy

The Chairman announced that the Council had been the first in England to receive the Inspector's report on its Local Development Framework Core Strategy document and that the strategy had been declared sound. Members and Officers from the Planning Policy section were congratulated for their hard work in developing the strategy.

Disability Equality Scheme

The Chairman advised that the Council was required to have in place a Disability Equality Scheme by December 2006. Work on developing the scheme was being progressed, and Members who wished to have an input were requested to contact Tim Wetherfield, Head of Policy and Communication.

4. **REPORT OF THE RETURNING OFFICER - THE ABINGTONS WARD BY-ELECTION**

Council noted the result of the bye-election held in The Abingtons Ward on 19 October 2006 and formally welcomed Councillor Tony Orgee to the Council.

5. **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND THE PUBLIC**

5 (a) **From Councillor Dr SEK van de Ven to the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Dr SEK van de Ven asked the following question:

"In view of the themes emerging from the excellent 'Sustainable Community Strategy Workshop' held earlier this month, will the new Community Strategy be wide-ranging and aspirational, or will it focus on what is realistically achievable for South Cambs residents, given the Council's severe shortage of funds?"

Councillor JA Hockney, Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder, replied that many individuals entered politics for aspirational reasons, and that the Council would be working with its partners to achieve as many of the Strategy's aims as possible.

Councillor Dr SEK van de Ven expressed the hope that the Community Strategy would be a credible document.

5 (b) **From Councillor SGM Kindersley to the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder**

Councillor SGM Kindersley asked the following question:

"What steps are being taken to minimise the impact of a major increase in householder planning applications for domestic wind turbines given that they are now available from companies such as B&Q for £1498 inclusive? As they require planning consent is there any developing policy to fast-track the applications and/or reduce the planning application fee to encourage sustainability?"

In the absence of the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder, Councillor Dr DR Bard, Leader of the Council, drew Councillor Kindersley's attention to a forthcoming article in the Council's magazine on the subject. He advised that, at present, domestic wind turbines required planning permission, however it was anticipated that the Government would produce legislation which would allow turbines to be constructed under Permitted Development Rights. Councillor Dr Bard did not anticipate that the Council would be inundated by requests for planning permission, given that there were likely to be few locations in the district where average wind speed was sufficient for the turbines to operate effectively. In many areas residents should be encouraged to invest in alternative energy-saving technologies which were likely to be less expensive and more effective.

As a Supplementary Question Councillor SGM Kindersley asked the Leader of the Council to focus on the question of fast tracking applications. In addition he requested that the Council develop a policy in respect of domestic wind turbines with a degree of urgency.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that the issue of domestic wind turbines would be considered in the development of local planning policy. He advised, however, that in due course he expected the majority of applications to be determined under Officers' delegated powers.

There followed a brief debate on the issue of domestic wind turbines; it was considered that the Climate Change group established at the last meeting would have a key role to play in encouraging the development of this and other energy-saving initiatives.

6. PETITIONS

The Chairman advised that a petition had been received on 26 October 2006 from the residents in Cottenham in respect of the manager's flat on the sheltered housing site at Franklin Gardens. The petition was referred without discussion to the Chief Executive for a response.

7. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

7 (a) ARBURY CAMPS: Section 106 Agreement

Council **RESOLVED** that, Cabinet having considered that there was not any urgency to make the payments and, preferring that a formal legal agreement be drafted between the two authorities, a decision be deferred until after such time as Anglian Water adopted the drain.

7 (b) Information & Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy 2006-2009 (Cabinet 10 October 2006)

Council **RESOLVED** that:

- (1) The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy be adopted.
- (2) Authority be delegated to the Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder and Chief Executive for approval of any subsequent changes.

7 (c) Thatch and Thatching in South Cambridgeshire

Council **RESOLVED** that the document *Thatch and thatching in South Cambridgeshire* be adopted as Council policy.

7 (d) Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2011: Draft

Council **RESOLVED** that the posts previously approved in principle be approved, with cash limits for the 2006/07 financial year being relaxed to provide funding for those posts being added to the authorised establishment from the 1st January 2007.

8. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO THE SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Council **RESOLVED** that Councillor AG Orgee be appointed to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee in place of Councillor PT Johnson.

9. PROGRAMME OF COUNCIL MEETINGS FOR THE 2007-2008 CIVIC YEAR

Council considered a report recommending a reduction in the number of Council meetings for the 2007-2008 Civic Year. The Leader of the Council urged Members to support the recommendations as they would aid more efficient decision-making and free up senior Officer time. Agreement of the recommendations could be seen as a step towards the adoption of new ways of working.

In response to other Members' concerns that the reduction would lead to backbench Members being increasingly isolated, the Leader advised that, should the recommendations be agreed, detailed work would be undertaken to review the Council's scrutiny arrangements to ensure a meaningful role for all Members.

Councillor Dr DR Bard proposed and Councillor JA Hockney seconded the recommendation set out in paragraph 15 of the report, subject to the dates of the meetings in July and October 2007 being reviewed to avoid clashes with school holidays.

Councillor NJ Scarr requested a recorded vote on the Motion. In accordance with Standing Order 16.5, the request was not supported by six Members of the Council and was therefore not allowed.

RESOLVED

That meetings during the 2007-2008 Civic Year be scheduled as follows:

24 May 2007

26 July 2007 (subject to alteration to avoid clashes with school holidays)

25 October 2007 (subject to alteration to avoid clashes with school holidays)

31 January 2008

28 February 2008

24 April 2008

22 May 2008

10. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

The Minutes of the following meetings were **RECEIVED**, subject to matters outlined in minutes 10(a)-10(f) below:

Cabinet
Licensing Committee (2003 Act)

12 October 2006
10 August 2006

Licensing Committee	19 September 2006
Planning Committee	6 September 2006
Audit Panel	14 September 2006
Scrutiny and Overview Committee	21 September 2006

10 (a) Cabinet, 12 October 2006

Councillor SM Edwards drew Council's attention to Minute 4 – Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy 2006-2009. He advised that inconsistencies in the financial information had been identified, and that he had requested a Supplementary Paper clarifying the figures. The Supplementary report had been tabled prior to the meeting.

In response to a question regarding Cabinet consideration of the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Chief Executive advised that transfers between the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account could only be performed if provided for by legislation.

Some Members expressed concern that the Council's representations to the government in respect of the costs of the growth agenda might strengthen the case for the development to be handled by an urban development corporation. The Leader of the Council advised that, whilst the Council would be unable to finance the development programme entirely from its own resources and the Council Tax, he was hopeful additional funding could be secured without the creation of an urban development corporation.

With regard to Minute 15 – Matters referred by Scrutiny and Overview Committee, Council was advised that a meeting was shortly to take place between the Chairman of the Committee, Leader of the Council and Chief Executive, in order to review the Council's current scrutiny arrangements and investigate ways to increase the effectiveness of the process.

10 (b) Licensing Committee (2003 Act) 10 August 2006 *

The Chairman advised that the Appendix referred to on Agenda page 29 contained lists of Membership for Hearings Panels. The appendix had not been printed with the Agenda but was available on the Council's website or from Democratic Services.

10 (c) Licensing Committee, 19 September 2006 *

Noted without comment.

10 (d) Planning Committee, 6 September 2006 *

Noted without comment.

10 (e) Audit Panel, 14 September 2006

With regard to the Corporate Governance Inspection the reference to the 'Relations Manager' in the second paragraph should be amended to refer to the 'Relationship Manager.'

10 (f) Scrutiny and Overview Committee, 21 September 2006

Noted without comment.

11. QUESTIONS ON JOINT MEETINGS

There were no questions arising from the joint meetings referred to in the Agenda.

12. UPDATES FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor NCF Bolitho advised that he was shortly to attend the next meeting of the Mepal Outdoor Centre.

Councillor R Hall advised that he would be attending the meeting of the Archives Advisory Group on 13 November 2006.

Councillor Mrs JM Guest advised that the Melbourn Community Sports Limited Group was working well and was seeking to recruit more members.

13. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS

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

The Meeting ended at 3.38 p.m.
