

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on  
Tuesday, 6 October 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

Portfolio Holder: SM Edwards

### **Councillors in attendance:**

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors: R Hall and MB Loynes

Opposition spokesmen: RB Martlew and RT Summerfield

Also in attendance:

### **Officers:**

Phil Bird	Revenues Manager
Adrian Burns	Head of Accountancy
Alex Colyer	Executive Director, Corporate Services
Susan Gardner Craig	Human Resources Manager
Guy Moody	Democratic Services Officer

### **16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from GJ Harlock, Chief Executive.

### **17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **18. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

### **Matters Arising**

A review of the counterparty list will be presented at the next meeting.

### **19. REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES: LAND CHARGES**

The Executive Director, Corporate Services presented a report proposing that the Council introduce a new type of search, a 'refresher search', where an identical residential site plan was being searched again within six months of a full official search, for a Home Information Pack, by the same applicant (Solicitor/Conveyancer).

The Portfolio Holder was advised that the proposed charge was part of a raft of measures designed to bring the Land Charges account back into balance over the next three years.

The Portfolio Holder was further advised that it was proposed to set the fee at a level proportionate to the charge for a full 'official' search in order to encourage solicitors to carry out an 'official' search with the Council initially rather than using a Personal Search Company.

There being no questions or comments the Portfolio Holder **APPROVED** the introduction of a 'refresher' search at a fee of £45.

**20. BALSHAM - PRECAUTIONARY ITEMS**

The Portfolio Holder **APPROVED** the drawing of £3,900 from Precautionary Items to meet the associated costs of the Balsham by-election held on 4 June 2009.

**21. RURAL RATE RELIEF**

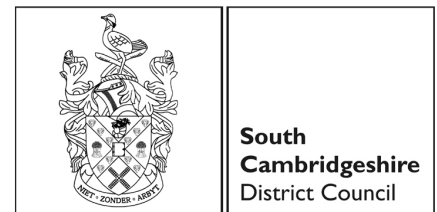
The Revenues Manager presented a report requesting the Portfolio Holder to review and determine the boundaries of Rural Settlements for the administration of Rural Rate Relief ('Village Shop' Relief) in accordance with section 42B of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997.

The Portfolio Holder was advised that there had been no significant population changes and that no changes were proposed to the existing boundaries.

In reply to a question it was confirmed that discretionary rural rate relief was awarded to 72 small rural businesses, at a cost to the Council of £27,925.42, in 2009/11.

The Portfolio Holder **AGREED** the Rural Settlement list for 2010/11 as follows:

***Designated Rural Settlements in South  
Cambridgeshire with a Population Less Than 3,000  
2010/2011***



Settlement	Settlement	Settlement
Great Abington	Fen Ditton	Steeple Morden
Little Abington	Fen Drayton	Newton
Abington Pigotts	Fowlmere	Oakington
Arrington	Foxton	Orwell
Babraham	Little Gransden	Over
Balsham	Grantchester	Pampisford
Barrington	Graveley	Papworth Everard
Bartlow	Hardwick	Papworth St Agnes
BARTON	Harlton	Rampton
BASSINGBOURN	Harston	Little Shelford
Bourn	Haslingfield	Shepreth
Boxworth	Hatley	Shingay-Cum-Wendy
Caldecote	Hauxton	Shudy Camps
Carlton	Heydon	Stapleford
Castle Camps	Hildersham	Stow-Cum-Quy
Caxton	Hinxton	Swavesey
Childerley	Horningsea	Tadlow
Chishill	Horseheath	Teversham
Comberton	Ickleton	Thriplow
Conington	Kingston	Toft

Coton	Knapwell	Weston Colville
Croxton	Landbeach	West Wickham
Croydon	Litlington	West Wrattling
Dry Drayton	Lolworth	Whaddon
Duxford	Longstanton	Whittlesford
Elsworth	Longstowe	Great Wilbraham
Eltisley	Madingley	Little Wilbraham
Great Eversden	Meldreth	Wimpole
Little Eversden	Guilden Morden	

## 22. PAY AWARD 2009/10

The Human Resources Manager presented a report seeking approval from the Portfolio Holder to implement a 1% pay award retrospective to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009.

The Portfolio Holder was advised that 1% was in line with the agreement made by authorities covered by the NJC scheme and that both UNISON and GMB unions had balloted their members and had formally confirmed that an increase of 1% would be acceptable to their members.

### Questions and Comments

In reply to a question the HR Manager confirmed that the national pay agreement had included the addition of an extra days leave for new staff, however this additional entitlement had not been considered locally as SCDC staff received two extra statutory days leave in addition to their allowance.

The Portfolio Holder was advised of the differences between the RPI, RPIX and CPI measures of inflation and further advised that CPI was the government's preferred indicator.

The Portfolio Holder was advised that the unions had been informed that there was no budget provision for a pay increase in the year 2010/2011.

The Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to the implementation of a 1% increase to conclude the 2009 pay negotiations, and to backdate the award to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009.

## 23. RELOCATION ASSISTANCE POLICY

The Human Resources Manager presented a report to seek approval from the Portfolio Holder for a revised Relocation Assistance Policy and procedure.

The Portfolio Holder was advised that the revision formed part of the HR policy review process and that the Relocation Assistance Policy and procedure were last reviewed in October 2003.

The Portfolio Holder was further advised that the unions had been consulted in relation to the proposed changes and that no feedback from either UNISON or GMB had been received.

In reply to a question the Portfolio Holder was advised that rental expenses would not cover the cost of rents or deposits.

In reply to a further question the Portfolio Holder was advised that disciplinary action could follow in the event of an employee making a false or inappropriate claim. It was confirmed that dismissal within the 36-month period would lead to the recovery of 100% of the total assistance paid to the employee.

It was proposed that the policy could be further revised to encourage new employees to move to an address no more than 3 miles distant from the place of work. The HR Manager was requested to investigate this, or a sliding scale of assistance payments dependant on the distance of the new address from the place of work, at the next policy review.

**Action: Susan Gardner Craig**

The Portfolio Holder **AGREED**, subject to agreement from the unions:

1. the proposed amendments to the relocation policy and procedure;
2. an uplift in the total amount to £7000.

## **24. FINANCIAL POSITION STATEMENT**

The Head of Accountancy presented a report to provide the Portfolio Holder with an updated position statement on the General Fund, HRA and Capital Expenditure.

The Portfolio Holder was advised that there had been favourable movement in the General Fund since the July update and it was currently forecast to outturn with an overspend of £635,600 (4.11%).

The Portfolio Holder was further advised that once the savings, identified as £481,000, had been factored in the forecast overspend would reduce to £479,600 (3.1%).

In reply to a question the Portfolio Holder was advised that there remained concerns over the levels of income from interest.

The Portfolio Holder expressed his thanks for the levels of savings identified and the report was **NOTED**.

## **25. FORWARD PLAN**

Following consultation with officers and monitors the Portfolio Holder agreed that the meeting schedule be redrafted with the meeting held in the third week in the month. The Portfolio Holder further advised the meeting that he wished for his meetings to start at 6pm.

The Democratic Services officer was requested to draw up a meeting schedule.

**Action: Guy Moody**

*Note, since the last meeting the schedule has been agreed as:*

*Thursday            18 November*

*Wednesday 16 December*  
*Wednesday 20 January 2010*  
*Wednesday 17 February 2010*  
*Wednesday 17 March 2010*  
*Wednesday 14 April 2010*

*All meetings will start at 6pm.*

The following changes to the Forward Plan were agreed.

November:

Add

- Revenues and Benefits Shared Services
- Counterparty List review

Move

- Staff Satisfaction Survey – to December meeting.

## **26. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 18 November 2009.

The meeting will start at 6pm and be held in the Jeavons Room.

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**The Meeting ended at 10.42 a.m.**

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